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HANDGUNNER

The First 10mm Revolver

AMERICAN

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1990

# HANDGUNNER

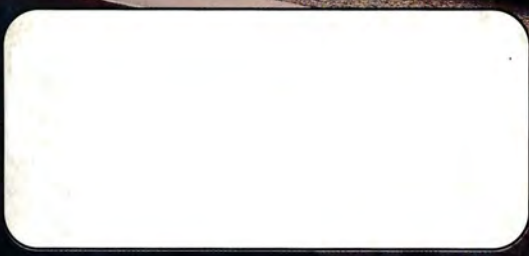
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**COMBAT  
.45  
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**CUSTOM  
RUGER  
.44 SPECIAL**







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That Goes  
15 Rounds!**

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Only Ram-Line's® **Syn-Tech™** .22 caliber pistol delivers it all in a tidy 20 ounce package. Engineered from the ground up, the **Syn-Tech™** pistol combines special polymers, steel, and aluminum alloy, to provide strength, durability, and unmatched balance. The design is based around several Ram-Line® patented innovations\*, and the latest in computer and aerospace technology.

The "dynamic" grip is easy to hold, and feels natural in your hand. The unique **constant force sear** gives you the feel of a target grade trigger right out of the box. The Ultralight 5½" barrel\* is damped by the polymer to yield unexpected accuracy.

The 15 round magazine give's continued shooting enjoyment. This unique Ram-Line magazine makes reloading a pleasure - **NO MORE THUMBUSTING** as with the "Heavyweights." With the magazine's **patented** constant force spring\*, the last round is as easy to load as the first.

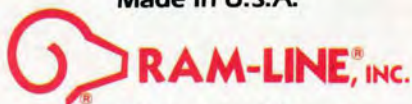
The **Syn-Tech™** pistol was designed with safety and X-ray detectability in mind. A double motion of the safety is required to put the pistol in the "fire" mode. This is easily accomplished on the **Syn-Tech™** pistol by a natural down and forward motion of the thumb, without breaking your grip. In the safe position, the hammer, trigger, and sear are all blocked, and the trigger is disconnected from the sear.

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**So when it comes time to punch paper, cans, or varmints, rely on the Ram-Line® Syn-Tech™ pistol.** **\$199.97**

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\*Patent #4,509,283,  
#4,769,938





Claudio Salassa's masterpiece of custom gunmaking, his remarkable .45 Bianchi Cup Model. Photo by Ichiro Nagata.



# AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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**\$279.00**

## TRAIN WITH THE BEST

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What do shooters like **Rob Letham, Jerry Barnhart, John Pride, Charles Grabbatin, Brian Enos and Chip McCormick** have in common, besides winning a pistol match or two? They all train with PACT Championship Timers. Now let's face it, these guys can have any timer they want. So maybe there's a reason why they choose PACT, over all others, for their vital practice sessions.

### Why do I need a timer?

Whether you are training for competition or self defense; if you are going to improve you've got to keep track of the two elements of marksmanship that you are striving to master: **accuracy** and **speed**. Would you consider practicing without a target? Of course not, because without a target you have no measure of your accuracy. By the same token, without a timer, you have no accurate measurement of your speed and no way to tell if a given technique is helping or hindering your progress.

Of course shooting timers, like guns, are **not created equal**. A well designed shooting timer is an invaluable training aid which will dramatically improve your practice sessions. A poorly designed timer, with functions that are inconvenient or difficult to use, becomes nothing more than an expensive buzz box that distracts you from your shooting each time you use it.



### Advanced display

The PACT MKIII features an **advanced 32 character display** instead of the four digit display commonly found on other timers and cheap alarm clocks (sorry guys, but facts are facts). This display allows the MKIII to display **all** of the information about a given shot (shot number, split time, total time) at a glance and eliminates the hassle of having to "toggle" back and forth between functions in order to review your shot string.

### Full function keypad

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- A buzzer that's **loud** enough to hear with your earphones on
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### 30 Day Money Back Guarantee

We designed the MKIII, we build it, and we sell it factory direct to you. We take full responsibility for your satisfaction. If you are not 100% satisfied with any PACT product, return it to us undamaged (no fair driving over it) within 30 days, and we will refund your money. That's our promise and you can depend on it.

### Lifetime Warranty

The MKIII features a real **simple repair policy**. If it breaks due to a defective part or faulty workmanship we'll **fix it free**. If you break it (people really have driven over them, ask Mickey Fowler) we will fix it for cost. No hassles and no questions asked.

### Shop Around & Call Us Last

Before you buy a shooting timer take the time to do a little research. Call the different manufacturers and get their literature. Compare each timer feature for feature and watch out for bizarre operational limitations, like the inability to review shots when using a PAR time or the requirement for two machines to run a Man vs Man event. You'll find that dollar for dollar and feature for feature the PACT MKIII gives you more honest "bang for the buck" than **any** other shooting timer on the market.

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Battery Powered Printer.....\$125  
Extra Printer Paper (6 rolls).....\$12  
Extra Skyscreens. \$25 each \$45 pair

\*Shipping & Insurance \$5.50 UPS ground/\$10 UPS 2nd day air. Extra shipping for bracket (separate package) \$3 ground/\$6 2nd day air. Bank service charge for VISA/MC. COD fee \$2.50. Write or call for foreign rates. Texas residents add appropriate sales tax.

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# AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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## Free Press?

Your March/April 1990 issue contained a letter from Al Faller of Cincinnati concerning the advertisements of Paladin Press for books on making explosives, converting a weapon to function as an automatic, making silencers, etc. You brought up "freedom of the press" and "censoring another publisher," but I say "Close, but no cigar."

Freedom of speech and press does not entitle one to say (or print) anything he pleases, under any circumstances he please or in any way he pleases. "Fighting words" are not protected under the Constitution. One cannot scream "Fire!" in a crowded theater.

Pornography is not protected by our Constitution, yet it seems that I could advertise porno flicks in your magazine. Libel is excluded from protection under the Constitution as is false advertising.

The main point, though, is that the criminal illegality of the subject matter is not protected by freedom of the press. How about "How To Cheat On Your Federal Income Tax Return" or "How To Successfully Assassinate The U.S. President"? Would you let me advertise those

in your mag?

Illegal subject matter is not protected by our Constitution.

Gerald J. Clark  
Painted Post, NY

Dear Gerald,

On behalf of the people who work very hard to make American Handgunner the premier handgunning magazine in the world, I would like to respond to the freedom of speech and press issues raised in your letter.

You're absolutely correct when you state in your letter that "illegal subject matter is not protected by our Constitution." However, neither the Paladin Press advertisements nor the books listed therein are illegal subject matter for the simple reason that no American court has ever found such advertisements or books to be illegal.

You are doubtlessly familiar with the recent controversy in Cincinnati, Ohio, over the exhibit of Robert Maplethorpe's photographs. Some residents of Cincinnati consider the photographs to be blatantly obscene and have called for the closure of the exhibit. Other Cincinnati residents consider the photographs to be artistically significant.

Gerald, it would of course be illegal for someone who had just viewed the Maplethorpe photographic exhibit to go out and commit a sexual crime. However, it is not illegal for anyone not a minor child to view the exhibit of Maplethorpe's photographs. It would likewise be illegal for someone who had just read the Paladin Press title "Surreptitious Entry" to commit burglary. But advertising a book with the title "Surreptitious Entry," or possessing a book with that title, does not equate to committing the crime of burglary, and it is important to make that distinction.

A republican form of government—which is what Section 4, Article IV, of our Constitution guarantees us—functions best when ideas circulate freely. Some people think that the unfettered interchange of ideas is dangerous and should not be permitted.

But you and I, Gerald, have the Constitutionally enumerated freedom to choose among all those frequently chaotic ideas and select whatever appeals to our personal ethos. We are, in effect, practicing censorship, but it is a censorship we perform for ourselves. No one else decides what we may or may not see, hear or speak.

The First Amendment to our Constitution enumerates other rights than just those relating to speech and press, and yes, there are limits to those rights. Oth-

## Winners Use Dillon Progressive Reloaders

**Los Angeles April 24, 1990.** 193 of the world's best handgunners gathered to compete in the 10th Steel Challenge. 174 of them loaded their match ammunition on Dillon progressive machines.

**Dillon 9 out of 10.** Only one shooter in the top ten used a non-Dillon machine. He finished in eighth place and bought a Dillon machine after the match.

**Why Dillon?** More Dillon progressive machines have been sold than all other makes combined and the reasons are simple. Dillon machines have the best value per dollar and a toll free 800 number for service, plus free replacement parts.



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**Coming Soon:** If you are not on Dillon's customer/mailling list send us your name, address and phone number, so you won't miss the first edition of *The Blue Press*, Dillon's newspaper for active shooters.

**ORDER NOW:** All Dillon products are backed by a simple sales policy. Try our products for 30 days, if you are not completely satisfied, simply return for a full refund. If it ever breaks, we'll fix it free— for life. Visa or MasterCard or, if you prefer, we will ship C.O.D.  
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Dillon's most popular machine, the RL-550-B, loads all popular rifle and pistol calibers. (with powder measure)  
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erwise liberty would disintegrate into license.

However, history teaches that we must be very, very careful where those limits are set. As you state, "One cannot scream 'Fire!' in a crowded theater just for fun." Some limits we set ourselves: we choose whether or not we wish to see the exhibit of Maplethorpe photographs. Other limits are set by government.

But the far-sighted patriots who crafted our Constitution in 1787 had the idea that government should exist to serve the people—a fascinating concept at a time when all other established governments believed that people existed to serve their governments!

Perhaps the greatest strength of the United States of America as a nation is the fact that our diversity of races, cultures, creeds and religions gives all of us the tolerance to acknowledge the validity of ideas which may differ from our own.

Thanks, Gerald, for your letter, and for our Constitution which protects your freedom to write and my freedom to respond.

James E. Fender  
Attorney-At-Law  
Special Projects Editor

### Collector Gets Credit

Thought I'd better drop you a note and set straight the circumstances sur-

rounding the arrangements for the Ruger Collectors Association's Bisley featured in the July/August issue of *American Handgunner*.

Bowen Classic Arms cannot claim credit for the gun. Thomas Russell, who is a noted collector of Ruger Bisley models, conceived of this revolver, provided the gun and marshalled the craftsmen who participated. The "TSAB" on the topstrap is his designation for Target Single Action Bisley.

While I am pleased to have contributed the color case hardening, I want to point out that I did little else. Even Roy Fishpaw executed the grips to Thomas' pattern and design.

The name of the director of this production was somehow left off the credits—the rest of us are just the cast and bit players. Thomas Russell deserves the credit for putting together the Bisley project.

Hamilton S. Bowen  
Bowen Classic Arms  
Louisville, Tenn.

### Lumps On Ayoob's Head

I thoroughly enjoyed Wilfrid Ward's article on duelling (July/August) but whoever wrote the captions for the illustrations need to take a second look. Page 65: *The Duke of Wellington's duel over Catholic Emancipation shows the Duke depicted as a lobster.*

A lobster? The Duke is, in fact, depicted as Punch (short for Punchinello) of Punch and Judy fame implying that the Duke is a comical figure.

Next I'll pound a few lumps on the pointed head of your resident gun snob, Massad Ayoob. Offence has been taken at his "Dubious Achievement Awards," specifically his D.U.M.B. Award. I own a C.O.P. (Compact Off-Duty Police) and it's far from hideous and is *not* larger than a Detective Special. The stiff trigger pull is a necessity on this type of weapon.

Massad Ayoob writes in *The Ayoob Files* of a victim shot four times with a .38 Special at close quarters and the victim survived. Is this testimony favoring six shots of .38 Special over four shots of .357 Magnum?

This little gun packs quite a kick so perhaps if Massad's testosterone level rises significantly he may seriously evaluate the maligned C.O.P. I may be D.U.M.B. but at least I'm not associated with the .44 J.A.G. (Just Another Gun).

James R. Darcy  
Charlotte, NC

*The Duke of Wellington was indeed portrayed as a lobster and not as Punch as Mr. Darcy alleges. In a color version (not used) of the same illustration, the Duke's head is clearly a large red lobster claw, humorously alluding that Wellington is a soldier. British soldiers were once called lobsterbacks because of*

# Introducing the ultimate refinement of the .380 pistol

These new Beretta "F" Frame pistols look for all the world like their big brother, the legendary 92F...and include many of the same features. Like open slide design, double action with firing pin block, a new combat style light alloy frame and Beretta's sleek, matte black Bruniton<sup>®</sup> finish.

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## Beretta U.S.A.

Model 84 F-13 round magazine; Model 85 F-8 round magazine. Satin Nickel finish and wood grips available.



Presenting

# A Golden Tribute To Samuel Colt

A 24-Karat Gold Plated Limited Edition of Samuel Colt's First Successful Six-Shot Revolver and the Biggest Colt Revolver Ever Made—The Model 1847 Walker

Model: 1847 Walker Revolver  
Caliber: .44 (6 shots)  
Overall Length: 16"  
Barrel Length: 9"  
Weight: 4 lbs., 9 oz.  
Plating: 24-Karat Gold



"... (a) half-dozen men armed with the large six shooter (can) go on expeditions when with ordinary arms it would be considered unwise to move with less than fifty men."

Lt. Col. "Fighting Joe" Hooker—1847

**S**amuel Colt's Model 1847 Walker. It is a rare, milestone firearm—Samuel Colt's first successful, six-shot revolver and the first revolver purchased for military use by the U.S. Government.

It is also the *biggest* and *heaviest* Colt revolver—16 inches long and nearly five pounds in weight. It was so enormous it had to be carried in a specially-designed holster on a soldier's horse.

This revolver had to be powerful and accurate. Hence the size. Captain Walker of the U.S. Mounted Rifles helped Samuel Colt design it for savage fighting on the American frontier against the fierce Indian Braves and the well trained Mexican Soldiers.

Now, The American Historical Foundation is proud to announce the Samuel Colt Golden Tribute Model 1847 Walker. It honors one of the world's foremost firearm inventors, Samuel Colt, while it also pays tribute to Captain Samuel H. Walker, the man after whom Colt himself named this revolver.

## Hand Engraved; 24-Karat Gold

Each Walker is hand engraved with full coverage of classic gun scrolls and special commemorative elements memorializing Colonel Samuel Colt.

The massive cylinder is roll engraved with the scene of the U.S. Mounted Rifles engaged in battle.

Each component is individually polished and totally plated with genuine 24-Karat Gold. The Revolver is then fitted with the distinctive, elongated grip—as designed by Captain Walker himself—crafted of burl walnut, and finished to presentation-grade.

## Limited Edition Only 950

Only 1,100 original Walkers were ever made.



A Walnut Display Case, with a brass powder flask, bullet mold, and a 24-Karat Gold plated combination tool, is available. The locking glass lid protects your investment from dust and unauthorized handling.

Fewer than 200 of these are known to exist today and are among the rarest and most valuable Colts in the world. This special edition is limited to only 950 guns, worldwide, fewer than originally built by Colonel Colt for the U.S. Government. This is your immediate assurance of collector value.

The gun's limited edition serial number is engraved along the backstrap and inscribed on the accompanying Certificate of Authenticity, which attests to the purity of the 24-Karat Gold and the edition limit.

## Fires .44 Caliber Lead Roundballs

Just as the originals, this six-shot Revolver fires .44-caliber lead roundballs, and it can also fire conical lead bullets. Each gun is proof tested prior to delivery to you.

As the Colt factory no longer makes any black-powder revolvers, the Foundation selected the master gunsmiths of Uberti, regarded as the world's best at recreating 19th Century Colt firearms, to hand build this edition.

## Satisfaction Guaranteed

The Model 1847 Walker Commemorative is available exclusively from The American Historical Foundation, the leader in the field of military arms collecting. Because this is a blackpowder firearm, a Federal Firearms License is not required, and your Revolver can be delivered directly to you (ex-

cept in California, where we will help arrange delivery after your reservation is received here).

To reserve, call toll free, 1-800-368-8080 or 1-804-353-1812 or return the Reservation Request. Satisfaction is guaranteed or return it within 30 days for a full refund. With your reservation you will be made a Member of the Foundation.

Through your ownership and display of this landmark firearm, you have the opportunity to share with your family and friends the biggest—and one of the most historically significant—firearms ever designed by Samuel Colt.

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- My deposit (or  credit card authorization) of \$95 per Revolver is enclosed. Please  charge or  invoice the balance...
  - in eight equal monthly payments of \$225, or  in full.
- My payment in full (or  credit card authorization) of \$1895 is enclosed.
- I also wish to reserve the optional velvet-lined Walnut Display Case at \$229 each.

Name .....

Address .....

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For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, please send account number, expiration date and signature. Va. residents please add 4.5% state sales tax.



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### Customizing: ● ● ●

Want to add a hand carved stock to your favorite long gun? Or how about an engraved hunting scene complete with gold inlay? **GUNS'** monthly Classic Gun section will show you some of the finest work around and help you choose a craftsman for the job.

### Hunting: ● ● ●

Regular hunting features in **GUNS** will help you decide what's the right gun and load for the game you're after. Hunting big game in Africa? Then the .425 express might be just what you need. But if you want to know more, you have to read **GUNS**.

**GUNS Magazine** also has regular columns for the shotgunner, rifleman, handgunner, handloader and airgunner. So if you want to get the most out of your guns, make sure you get **GUNS Magazine** every month. Start your subscription today.

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Presenting the

# WORLD'S FIRST LIMITED EDITION MILITARY COMBAT SHOTGUN

A firing, hand engraved, Vietnam-era pump shotgun issued to honor the Vietnam War.



*"The shotgun spoke immediately and with authority."*

—A former company commander on the weapon selected for use by his point men in Vietnam.

American troops, from the Delta to the DMZ, depended on it. Huey pilots stashed one behind the cockpit. It patrolled out of Pleiku... ran recon out of Cam Ranh... roved on "Rat Patrol" searches for VC mines... covered convoys out of Long Binh. The point man trusted it. Charlie feared it.

The shotgun is an American military tradition that dates back to our very beginnings. From the forests of Jamestown, through the trenches of World War I, into the jungles of the Pacific during World War II to Vietnam, the combat shotgun has ably served Americans in our fight for freedom.

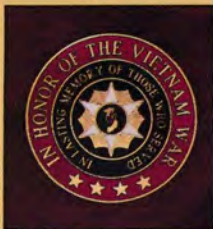
As a tribute to this proud legacy and to honor the Americans who bravely served in Vietnam, The American Historical Foundation proudly issues the Vietnam War Commemorative Combat Shotgun—the first ever limited edition military combat shotgun.

## The Last Savage Pump Shotguns

This Commemorative is identical to the shotguns Savage Industries supplied to our troops in Vietnam.

Even the butt stock is the shorter 12" version, not the 14" stock found on the civilian model. This Vietnam War Commemorative Combat Shotgun is the last of the pump shotguns ever made by Savage. Production has been permanently discontinued. A Letter of Authenticity verifying this, signed by the president of Savage, accompanies each Commemorative.

Each Shotgun is individually serially numbered between 001 and 750, with the prefix "VN" for Vietnam. These special numbers further enhance the his-



A large cloisonne medallion is inset in the butt stock.

torical and collector value of this unique Commemorative.

## Hand Engraved

Special commemorative inscriptions are hand engraved and gold-gilt infilled across the mirror-polished and blued receiver. Hand-engraved military firearms are a tradition for special presentations, but they are also very rare, which further enhances the collector and investment value of this special Shotgun.

## 24-Karat Gold

Inspect the 24-Karat Gold plated trigger as you grasp the gleaming stocks—finished with seven coats of hand-rubbed lacquer. Sight down the polished and blued barrel across the 24-Karat Gold plated safety and front bead sight. Catch the glint of the jeweled steel of the bolt and lifter as you rack open the bolt and hear that heavy, fine-tuned mechanical sound only a good shotgun can make.



You'll even find that the sling swivels are polished, 24-Karat Gold plated and mounted with a deluxe black leather, adjustable military sling—features you find only on the finest collector-grade firearm. Even the forearm caps and safety switch are mirror polished and plated with 24-Karat Gold.

## A Firing Shotgun

This Vietnam War Commemorative Combat Shotgun is more than just a showpiece. It's a firing shotgun that could be called upon to defend your home and family. With its 18" straight cylinder bore, it fires 2 3/4", 12-gauge shotgun shells used in Vietnam and readily available in gun shops.

## Collector Interest

As a collector, you know the value of a hand-engraved, limited-edition "first" such as this Shotgun. This is the world's first commemorative military shotgun—and the last of the Savage pump shotguns—an important firearm destined to increase in historical and



The optional Walnut Display Case (45" x 14" x 4") is lined with jungle green velvet and is easily wall mounted or displayed flat. The locking, acrylic-glass lid protects your investment from dust and unauthorized handling.

collector value.

## Satisfaction Guaranteed

The Vietnam War Commemorative Combat Shotgun is available exclusively through The American Historical Foundation. To reserve, return the Reservation form or call our Member Services staff, toll free, at 800-368-8080. If you don't have a Federal Firearms License, we will coordinate delivery through your local firearms dealer, once we receive your reservation. If you have a license, send a signed copy and your Shotgun will be delivered directly to you. Satisfaction is guaranteed, or you may return it for a full refund anytime within 30 days.

### RESERVATION

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Richmond, Virginia 23220  
Telephone: (804) 353-1812  
TOLL FREE 24 hours: (800) 368-8080



Yes, I wish to reserve the firing, hand-engraved, 24-Karat Gold plated Vietnam War Commemorative Combat Shotgun. Only 750 will be made worldwide. I will also receive a Certificate of Registry from the Foundation, a Letter of Authenticity from the maker, Savage Industries, operating instructions and membership in the Foundation. Satisfaction guaranteed.

- My deposit (or credit card authorization) of \$95 per Shotgun is enclosed. Please  charge or  invoice the balance due per Shotgun prior to delivery...
  - in six equal monthly payments of \$250, or  in full.
- Please also send the Walnut Display Case, at \$225 for each Shotgun reserved.
- My payment in full is enclosed (\$1595 per Shotgun; Display Case add \$225).
- Please engrave my name and other information on the Shotgun, at \$29; immediately send me the Engraving Form.

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their red uniforms. *Lobster* is also an archaic term for a stupid or awkward person.

## Kudos For Kent

I am writing to bestow my own personal award to a gunsmith who has "gone the extra mile" many times for me. His name is Kent Miller of Miller Custom, 210 E. Julia St., Clinton, IL, 61727.

I first learned about Kent through your pages in the Sept/Oct 1988 issue. His innovative MercComp N-frame Smith caught my eye immediately and I called to order one. That was the beginning of "a wonderful relationship" as Bogart used to say.

The MercComp he made for me has a specially sculpted hammer, trigger, cylinder release and sight system. He has developed a beautiful form of color-casing that really offsets well against the deep bluing he offers.

He loves the challenge of customizing every part of the pistol, no matter how minor.

He re-did a Detonics Mark 7 for me that is now my favorite .45. He made it reliable and breathtakingly beautiful. No, I am not going to start a Kent Miller Fan Club, but I believe in giving praise to highly talented people who deserve it.

As a special cluster to the award, I think it bears mentioning that several

times Kent has met with misfortune but has still continued to keep going on customer guns. This truly beyond the call of duty.

In addition, he gives the most complete, detailed bills that are great for insurance purposes or just fun to read to become aware of all the work that was done.

If a fire should ever break out, I would grab the kids and then head for the Miller Customs!

Craig B. Mardus, Ph.D.  
Williamstown, Mass.

## Unsafe Ammo

Rob Leatham, reigning IPSC world champion, was named "Shooter Of The Decade" in the last issue of *American Handgunner*. He deserves the honor. However, in the same issue he writes in *Leatham's Column* that he rather fancies shooting the 9mm Luger cartridge loaded to "major" in IPSC matches.

Frank James wrote about European shooters using "9mm Major" in the issue before that, March/April 1990. At the risk of running against the current fad, I respectfully differ with the opinions of these two gentlemen on the issue of 9mm Major.

The question is: Can a 9mm make major safely? The answer is no.

Frank James notes that he has heard of some Europeans who were able to boost

the 9mm to major within European limits. If they could do it, why couldn't we?

There are, as some of you know, some Europeans shooters that claim to make major at a pressure level just under the maximum acceptable level. But there are some things that may have an influence.

First, there are quite a few 9mm's in Europe with groove diameters up to .359". Second, some shooters are using non-standard rifling (such as polygonal). Third, there may be some chamber dimension differences between CIP and SAAMI (the European and U.S. source for ammunition standards, respectively.)

The 9mm is a small capacity, moderately high pressure, tapered (as compared to straight-walled like the .38 Super), handgun round. It was developed around the turn of the century, before many of its current fans and detractors were born. In its day it was a high-intensity round, having been developed for use in sub-machine guns. Pressure levels for the cartridge are a good bit below those for magnum class handgun cartridges such as the .357 Magnum and Maximum.

There have been optional routes taken to get to 9mm Major. Most notable is the path taken by people such as Paul Miller. Paul has lengthened the throat in his gun, seated the bullets way out (to about the same over-all length as a .38 Super), and shot heavy bullets through a longer barrel.

Although the gun is theoretically a

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9mm Major, it is not a 9mm. By changing the throat, the gun is technically a different chambering. By changing the dimensions of the cartridge, you have a different cartridge.

In a standard 9mm Luger pressure barrel, his ammunition was in the proof-load range. Due to the aforementioned dimensional changes, it was not that high in *his* gun.

To be honest, our testing has seen some loads developed for 9mm that delivered the needed velocity. But the pressure level was always over 40,000 copper units of pressure (CUP). Proof level for this cartridge is 47,500 CUP, with a minimum acceptable at 41,400 CUP.

So a shooter duplicating those rounds is feeding the weapon a steady diet of rounds approaching proof level. At present manufacturers do not certify their guns for constant overloads. Feeding a gun a constant diet of these loads will most definitely reduce the service life of the gun. If it is rated at 40,000 rounds of nominal service ammo, constant abuse may drop that to under half the expected life.

If you stress a gun, it breaks. It doesn't matter who built it, or how much they charged you. Now for those of you that are sitting in the back of the room with a big grin thinking, "I've been shooting 9 Major for years, and nothing broke," there is something you should consider.

The fact that you do not *see* any signs of excessive pressure on the ejected brass does not mean you are loading within allowable limits. When I was young and stupid, I loaded some 275 grain bullets in a .44 Mag case over enough ball powder to get the velocity of five shots to average almost 1,700 feet per second.

Every one of them literally fell out of the Ruger cylinder as it was rotated around. Later testing showed that particular load to be well into the proof range. Yet there were none of the classical visible indications of excessive pressure.

Solutions such like this are begging the question. They permit the shooter to have high capacity, but they are not true 9mm solutions. If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, it's a duck.

If it has a chamber like a .38 Super, has an overall length like a .38 Super, uses the same bullet as a .38 Super, and the high-capacity of a 9mm, it's a high capacity duck.

Marty Liggins  
Accurate Arms Powder Co.  
McEwen, Tenn.

### A Man Who Owns One

The 9mm Parabellum cartridge loaded to IPSC "major caliber" has once again become a controversial issue. Years ago there was a cliché made famous by the Packard Automobile Company, "Ask the

man who owns one." Well, as a man who owns one—actually, six Major Nine's—I find it difficult to sit idly by as the 9mm Major is continually attacked.

My wife and I have shot Major 9's competitively for more than four years with over 200,000 rounds expended. When the Major 9 is set-up properly, it becomes superior to the .38 Super cartridge. A 1911 pistol with a fully-supported barrel is ideal.

The key is the overall length of the cartridge which is 1.250" to 1.280". By free-boring the barrel .361" to .362" diameter .250" ahead of the chamber, larger, longer and heavier bullets can be used, thus greatly reducing pressure. With the aid of .38 Super magazines, these Major 9 cartridges can easily be fed.

Being owner and operator of Colorado Cast Bullets, I designed three bullets for Major 9 and .38 Super. For several years I have used a load consisting of my 164 gr. cast bullets sized to .357" with 7.2 grs. of WW 571 powder and a Federal #100 small pistol primer. The lube band of my bullet is close to the base so it is completely within the brass.

This load was used when I won the Canadian IPSC National Championship in 1988. In fact, Major 9 pistols placed first, second and fourth in that match.

There are no gimmicks, no magnum primers, no rifle primers and, best of all, there are no flat primers or any signs of

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excessive pressure. Due to a tapered case, the case capacity of Major 9 becomes slightly larger than .38 Super. Other advantages of Major 9 include the tapered case feeding and extracting better than a straight case. The 9mm brass is thicker and stronger than the .38 Super. Another plus for the Major 9 is the plentiful and inexpensive brass.

If you are thinking of owning a Major 9, "Ask the man who owns one." If there are any questions regarding my experiences with the Major 9, please feel free to contact me.

Paul M. Miller  
Colorado Cast Bullets  
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Montrose, CO 81401  
phone: (303) 249-4227

### Dubious Ayoob Award

Thank god for Massad Ayoob and his Outstanding Achievement and Dubious Achievement Awards (July/August 1990). When I first heard that Lee Atwater was gone, I thought the Republican Party was dead in the water, but now Massad Ayoob can take over and no one will know any different!

In his Outstanding Achievement Awards, he honors Bill Ruger for announcing a gun four years before it was ready. Why didn't Bill simply wait until the gun was ready and *then* announce it? I seem to remember his XGI Mini-14 in .308, promised but never delivered, although we did get one in 7.62x39 which Bill will only sell with a five round clip to protect us from ourselves.

Dornaus & Dixon went out of business because of under-capitalization and never shipped the needed magazines with the Bren Ten pistols, but Ayoob lists them under Outstanding Achievements. Meanwhile, Randall Firearms which made the finest copy of the 1911-A1 ever and in left-hand too, gets slammed for going out of business for the same reason as D&D. At least Randall shipped magazines with their guns!

As long as we're talking about the 1911 pistol, it is not "the first time this classic pistol is drop-safe with a live round in the chamber" as listed under *Love Those Lawyers Award*. Colt fitted 1911-A1 pistols with firing pin blocks as far back as WW II, but the courts weren't so commie-lib in those days and no one wanted to spend the extra money for a design that was idiot proof because, after all, everytime they idiot-proof something, along come better idiots.

Other than that, keep up the good work. I agree entirely with J.D.'s hatchet job on the S&W. I've seen S&W guns in that kind of shape, straight from the factory, and once had a friend who bought a Model 29 that literally came apart after a "beating" of only three cylinder's full. This stuff should have never left the factory. It's about time the big boys get a lit-

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tle back like they like to give.

Speaking of the big boys getting back a little, why don't you run a story on the bloated Blount Inc. trying to stomp little Lee Inc. into the ground? The bloated Blount Inc. is claiming they own the color green and Lee is using green. Well, okay, let's add Remington and John Deere to the people using green. This is starting to sound fun, let's find out who else uses green and add them to the list too.

Well, that's about all for now.

Douglas P. Bell  
Iowa City, IA

### Make Mine A Smith

Massad Ayoob, I would have you know that I have the highest respect for you. Even after taking that antelope in Africa with a four-inch Model 629 at 100 yards, I still respect your integrity.

I appreciate the insight which you gave your readers in regard to Bill Ruger's side of the story ("Outstanding Achievement Awards," May/June, 1990). This is mine:

Bill Ruger does not speak for me or any other gun owner in this country. Maybe he should inform his political associates that the law abiding citizens have had enough punishment that should have been administered to the criminal element.

I am not kindly disposed to Colt

Industries or Colt Firearms or CMC or whatever they call themselves. It was a mistake to halt the manufacture of AR-15's and to sell 47% ownership to Connecticut. I hope the noose fits well.

I own a Ruger New Model Blackhawk in a .45 convertible. I own a stainless steel Delta Elite and a blue Detective Special. I have no intentions of buying anymore.

From here on out, if Smith & Wesson doesn't make it, I don't need it. Thanks, Mas, but make mine a Smith.

Glenn A. Siciliano  
Riverdale, Ga.

### Russian Roulette, Nyet!

In the climate of *glasnost* I offer my anecdote, laying to rest the base canard of Russian roulette that typifies those people as insane.

After WW II in 1946 it was possible in Korea to develop some social friendships with Russian officers. After an acquaintance of several months I was sharing a convivial supper with two Red Army majors when the conversation turned to Russian roulette.

I described this idiocy involving a six-shot revolver containing a single cartridge. Major Vladimiar Podgornov, whose colloquial English was fluent, laughed at the description. He chatted briefly in Russian with the other guests



and they too found the idea ridiculous. He assured me that they knew of no one who played such a game.

Then my host volunteered a description of "cuckoo," a game attributed to officers in remote garrisons. Dating back to Czarist days, it required a revolver alright, but fully loaded.

The Officers' dining room could be used late at night for "cuckoo" to settle a bet or a dare. A jolly detail from the bar would stack mess tables in the center of the room until there was just space for a men to be seated in chair close to the ceiling. Here the "gunner" precariously perched, armed with an old Model 1895 Nagant 7.62mm revolver with all seven

chambers loaded.

The lights were turned out, leaving the "cuckoo" somewhere in the darkened room. It was his duty to scuttle about the floor, calling out *cuckoo* loudly enough to be heard in the next room. The gunner fired at the sound intermittently until he had used all seven rounds trying to hit the invisible, moving target. He was not required to fire every time the cuckoo sounded off.

After those seven shots, the game was over. A spirited critique followed the relighting of the room. The cuckoo hopefully could brag about his skill as a ventriloquist as the bullet-riddled furniture was examined. The cuckoo could win,

even though wounded, if he conned the gunner into emptying the revolver.

It sounded to me like the kind of "initiation" that might also take place in our Wild West or perhaps in a Yukon mining camp. I had found a humorous legend that my Russian hosts didn't find offensive.

Major Podgornov was an orphan of the 1917 Revolution who grew up in a succession of boys military academies to enter the Red Army artillery as a teenager. He was proud of having help defend Stalingrad and having led his battery in the break-out. His guns were a mixture of 75mm (French 75's): some horse-drawn, some self-propelled Lend-Lease, some drawn by Russian trucks.

When he rolled into Vienna with all of them intact, they were about smooth bore! He was married to the daughter of one of the old Marshals who was, I suspect, of a much higher rank. He was well-read, relaxed, an officer and a gentleman for any army.

Robert T. Sweeney  
Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)  
San Francisco, Calif.

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W112	Shaw Mag. Well Funnel (Blue or S.S.)	30.00
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W143	Wilson Thumb Guard S.S.	14.95
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4136	MagPack 10rd .38spr Conversion Kit	9.95
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## Who Gives A Damn?

I am sure you had enough letters about your story on the S&W 625, but I feel I am personally involved because I can usually count on getting the lemon while the gun writers get the perfect examples.

I had a 625 on order when your story came out. I took delivery without much hope and left for the range to try it out. First five rounds of GI hardball hit point of aim. 2" group. Five rounds of 200 gr. handloads go into 1 1/8".

I then set up some empty .22 boxes and, from a sitting position, hit five straight. Figured this pistol, which works every time without half-moon clips, was blind luck, so I bought a second one. It's even more accurate.

The attitude of S&W, more than the quality of their product, is my major concern. No American firearms firm that I have had contact with gives a damn how their products meet the user's needs. The letter from S&W in answer to your story is a prime example of this attitude.

I appreciate your courage in publishing the story. You have my support and I hope writing of this type will help improve the quality of American firearms.

Bill L. Schurkens  
Tulsa, Okla.

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER WELCOMES letters to the editor of no more than 350 words. Letters must include the writer's full name and address. Letters must be signed by the writer. Typewritten letters are preferred, but legible handwriting is acceptable. Send your letters to Speak Out, American Handgunner, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108.



**THE NRA'S POLITICAL ACTION ARM FLEXES ITS MUSCLES ON CAPITAL HILL**

**T**he Institute for Legislative Action may sound like a mouthful. Yet if you're a gun owner and haven't heard the name, it's time to pay heed. The National Rifle Association of America's Institute for Legislative Action are the folks on the front line when it's time to defend your firearms freedoms.

ILA is the political action arm of the NRA. ILA goes to bat for you wherever politicians maneuver to undermine your right to keep and bear arms.

Those unfamiliar with the scope of ILA's activities are apt to consider us just another congressional lobbying group. While it's true that some of our most attention-riveting victories have occurred in the halls of Congress, let me assure you that the ILA is much, much more than just a presence on Capitol Hill.

In fact, ILA fights for your firearms in cities, counties, and states throughout the nation. No anti-gun plot is too small to escape our notice. ILA can be fighting grassroots brushfires one minute and a U.S. Senator the next.

It takes manpower, money and devotion to get this huge job done. Yet thanks to you, the American gun owner, we're still battling and still winning, even though the odds grow tougher with every passing day.

I can honestly say that if it wasn't for ILA, the growing firearms prohibitionist movement would have pushed a weighty parcel of bad laws down gun owner's throats in recent years.

We've continued to fight government-imposed delays on firearms purchases, total bans on all semi-automatic firearms, restrictions on the sale of common hunting and recreational ammunition, mandatory firearm licensing and registration, and nationwide bans on handguns, to name a few.

ILA is also responsible for legislation in 36 states that now makes it unlawful for animal rights activists to impede or harass lawful hunting activities—important legislation in light of the growing war on hunting now being waged in concert with attacks on your Second Amendment rights.

**Political Action**

Yet that's not all. ILA screens political candidates to determine their views on firearms ownership, then reports those findings directly to you, the voter. In this manner America's 70 million gun owners can keep this anti-gun political blight from spreading by guaranteeing the source.

We also monitor votes cast by previously elected officials. If a supposedly pro-gun lawmaker decides to pull an anti-gun shenanigan, you'll hear about it—and fast. You'll also know about all pending anti-gun legislation, within ample time to bring grass-roots heat on those who need to bear it.

Right now, more than ever before, America's firearms rights are in jeopardy. "Do-gooder" legislation is trendy, and gun laws are the current trend. In an effort to track anti-gun activity, ILA maintains an office in Washington, D.C. and also keeps a number of state liaisons busy coast to coast.

ILA's business is diversified; working to insure that your semi-auto shotguns remain legal in any number of states, and applying pro-gun pressure all the way up to the White House—all in a single day.

ILA also searches for solutions. We're responsible for anti-crime measures

designed to sweep lawbreakers off our streets. We want criminals in jail, rather than nonsensical laws that undermine your Second Amendment rights.

In this effort we have the support of America's police and the majority of America's common-sense judiciary. Still, the energetic and vocal anti-gun activists backed by the power of the press can ram through laws over the objections of thoughtful, rational leaders. That's why our greatest ally is still you, the average American gun owner.

ILA continues to maintain political clout because you still care. Your letters, telephone calls and contributions to our cause helped stem a recent tide of anti-gun activity that threatened to break over the American people like a tidal wave.

Unfortunately, we anticipate more of the same in the months and years ahead. That's why it's so important for every gun owner to join the NRA and throw all their available resources into the ILA effort.

Divided, we most certainly we will fall. United, we can stand as firm as a stone wall, ready to protect and preserve our cherished Second Amendment.

If you're ready to take a stand in behalf of the right to keep and bear arms, consider NRA membership and the advantage of these ILA services.

**Bill Status Updates:** You'll receive local, state and national legislative alerts

*Continued on page 102*

**pace-set-ter** | 'pās-,set-ər-l

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pace for another

**2:** one that takes  
the lead or sets an  
example

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## IHMSA NEEDS TO CHANGE THE RULES IF SILHOUETTING IS TO STAY ACTIVE

**E**ffective April 1, 1990: the Production Gun Price Limit is \$784.32. This amount is derived from multiplying the federal minimum wage \$3.80 by 8 hours per day, by 21.5 average working days per month, by 1.2 cost of living factor. Any IHMSA approved handgun which has a factory recommended retail price of \$784.32 or lower is now legal for IHMSA Production category." *IHMSA News*, April 1990.

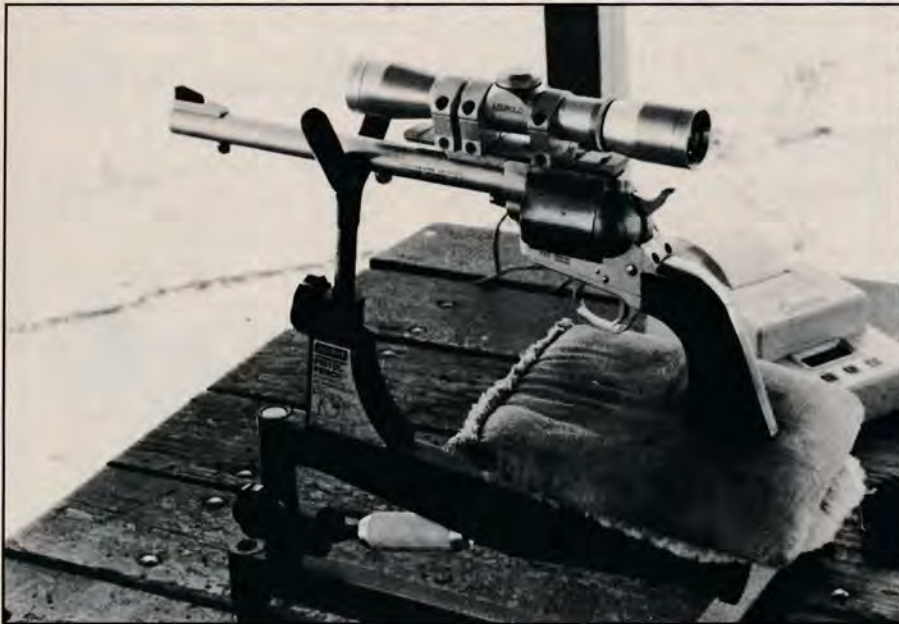
Isn't it about time an end was put to this nonsense?

What does the federal minimum wage

Whatever the reason for coming up with the Price Limit Rule in the first place—whether it was to keep silhouetting a family sport or if it was to block the Freedom Arms revolver from competition—really makes no difference now.

The rule is ridiculous and does nothing to protect the sport. Quite the contrary, it does much to inhibit the development of new guns.

By the time you read this, hopefully the members will have voted to abolish the price rule and guns will only have to be approved by the IHMSA committee to



**Here's a parcel of banned goods—the dreaded Expensive Gun fitted with an evil Telescopic Sight. If you buy the IHMSA baloney, these will instantly transform you into a crack shot. Actually it's just a Freedom Arms .454 Casull.**

have to do with shooting silhouettes?

How many members in your club earn only minimum wage?

What does eight hours per day and 21.5 days per month have to do with shooting silhouettes?

A gun that sells for \$784.32 is legal but one that sells for \$784.33 is not! This makes not one whit more sense than some magazine capacity proposals that have arisen on the heels of the "assault rifle" debate.

Even gun people have proposed that 15 rounds in a magazine is good; 16 rounds is bad.

Magazine capacities have nothing to do with crime and price limits *should* have nothing to do with silhouetting.

be allowed for competition. *IHMSA News* reports that early indications seem to be in favor of abolishing this restrictive and unnecessary rule. May it really be so.

What is difficult to figure is how this thing ever got passed in the first place.

There are still those who believe that this rule "protects the sport." Protects it from what?

The only thing it does protect is that foolish individual who really believes he can become an excellent shooter by buying more expensive guns.

Perfect scores have been shot with Ruger Super Blackhawks and every caliber of Dan Wesson: .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .357 Super-Mag, and by now probably the .445

SuperMag.

Forties have been shot over, and over, and over. What else needs to be done to prove that it is the shooter, not the gun?

### Corrupt Legacy

The rule was originally aimed at the Freedom Arms revolver. I know this for a fact.

I was privy to some of what was going on behind the scenes. It was I who worked with Freedom Arms on making a special silhouette revolver and it was I who approached the late president of IHMSA, Elgin Gates, with the idea of producing a Freedom Arms Silhouette Model with the IHMSA logo and special serial numbers.

It was also then that I found out about the friction between Freedom Arms and Gates. Elgin made very few miscues as leader of silhouetting. The price rule was a major one.

If the Freedom Arms revolver is better than any other gun for shooting silhouettes, as some would have us believe, then why hasn't it become the favorite of those who shoot silhouettes under NRA rules?

Just as in IHMSA, Dan Wesson revolvers rule in NRA long range silhouetting.

### Scope Rule Needed

The price rule is the first item that needs to be changed. The second is even more important as it affects so many shooters. It happened again this past week. I ran into another IHMSA long range silhouette shooter at the gun show who had put his guns up for sale.

"I can't see the sights anymore!" Scopes simply must be allowed for long range competition in IHMSA. Silhouetting has long been touted as a family sport. Now is the time to prove that this is really the case.

Silhouetting is one shooting sport that requires a minimum of energy and a shooter should be able to compete for decades. When one is no longer able to actively hunt, silhouettes could still be a viable option.

Unlike some of the action shooting sports that require a lot of movement, anyone who can still hold up a gun and still pull the trigger, can compete. They can, that is, *if* we change the rules to allow the use of scopes.

Silhouetting could easily be a sport with three family generations competing at the same time *if* the rules are changed to permit one to still compete after one can no longer see the iron sights well enough to shoot without embarrassing oneself.

One of the first reactions is that this would simply give the better shooters an opportunity to win more trophies. Absolutely not.

Scopes are a nuisance for silhouetting, but in many cases they are a necessary nuisance. The shooter with good eyesight gains nothing by going to a scope for long range silhouetting. He can already



shoot perfect 40's.

Scopes will not make up for mediocre or average shooting. All they will do is allow the older shooter to continue to compete on an equal basis.

The answer is so simple. Allow scopes—but a shooter may compete with scopes or iron-sights, not both.

The choice would have to be made at the beginning of the shooting season and the competitor's card so marked. Once the move is made to scopes, one cannot go back to iron sights until the following year. Then, if that choice is made, only iron sights can be used for the next year of competition.

Rules can be set up to allow the shooter who suddenly finds his eyesight has changed (yes, it does happen) to switch to scopes in the middle of the season.

Changes in targets would not have to be made. No extra expense here whatsoever.

Scopes could also be limited to 1X magnification or the Aimpoint or Pro-Point "red dot" type of scope. Magnification is not needed, only clarification of the sight picture.

There are many things to try to keep shooting iron sights, such as the King Tube Sight, the Merit Adjustable Aperture, and even different prescription lenses.

But the inevitable is definitely inevitable. There will come a time with nearly every shooter when the sights can no longer be seen well enough for competition and a scope will be the only answer.

The latest issue of *IHMSA News* reports that membership is up with 225 new members gained in the past month.

***Silhouetting was originally designated as a sport to practice for hunting.***

This is good news. Let's keep getting new members. But at the same time, let us not continue to block out old members simply because they have been at it a long time.

### **More Radical Thoughts**

Since we are thinking radically, maybe it is time to take a serious look at the IHMSA course of fire itself. It is now the same as it was in the beginning when the only guns we had were the Ruger Super Blackhawk and the Smith & Wesson Model 29.

We have new cartridges and new guns, but the course of fire is the same.

All the major sports have changed dramatically in the past 15 years. Silhouetting equipment has, but the course of fire has not.

Perhaps we should consider smaller targets, or longer ranges, or a change in

the sequence such as one of each target at each distance. Or, how about something as in the Long Range Event at The Masters—firing the targets vertically instead of horizontally. That is, firing at all four distances each time instead of five shots at one prescribed distance.

Silhouetting was originally designated as a sport to practice for hunting. What about returning to this idea and setting targets at unknown distances?

Or using partially covered targets?

NRA Hunter Pistol has very little to do with hunting as all targets are perfectly silhouetted and standing so willingly at prescribed distances. The sameness of the sport is long overdue for a change. The Masters course of fire changes every year.

### **Ban The Member**

There is one other rule (well, perhaps more) that needs to be removed from IHMSA. This is the rule that allows IHMSA to drop any member without cause.

A rule such as this has no place in the IHMSA organization. There should be no machinery in place to try to "get" someone.

Yes, write a rule which allows removal of members for cheating or unsportsmanlike conduct, but make very sure it is one that is not to be taken lightly and also one that states there must be definite reasons and witnesses before anyone can be dropped or banned from membership and competition.

IHMSA is hurting right now for a permanent shooting range for holding The International competition each year. The Western Range is up in the air and not entirely suitable anyway because of its location which could be unsafe. Or at least judged unsafe by the local powers-that-be and shut down.

I've never seen the Eastern Range and as Will Rogers said: "I only know what I read in the papers."

A permanent range needs to be acquired that can be counted upon to be ready to go every year. Such a range already exists and it is in a location that will never be encroached upon by civilization. That location is the NRA Range in Raton, New Mexico. Would it not be possible for IHMSA to come together with NRA and use the Raton facilities for The Internationals every year?

Silhouetting is a great sport. We have seen major progress in guns, ammunition, and long range shooting skills because of the sport. Those of us who proposed long range shooting with a revolver before silhouetting are no longer looked upon somewhat as one whose elevator does not go all the way to the top. Silhouetting vindicated us.

Yes, it is a great shooting sport. Let's keep it alive and viable. As the IHMSA slogan says: "Let's shoot silhouettes." But, perhaps it is time to shoot them differently.



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# The Darnedest GUN

*It's called the Piranha, and it's one of the most radical handgun designs of the century. Too bad no one can quite figure out what it's for.*

By Mark Moritz

**T**his is either a scam, or a great leap forward in the development of firearms engineering. The manufacturer's claims are so extravagant that you can't help but wonder if P. T. Barnum has decided to try the gun business.

"World's Most Accurate Handgun," says the brochure.

"Modern Day Miracle."

"Completely free of any malfunction."

"Lightweight Recoilless Pistol."

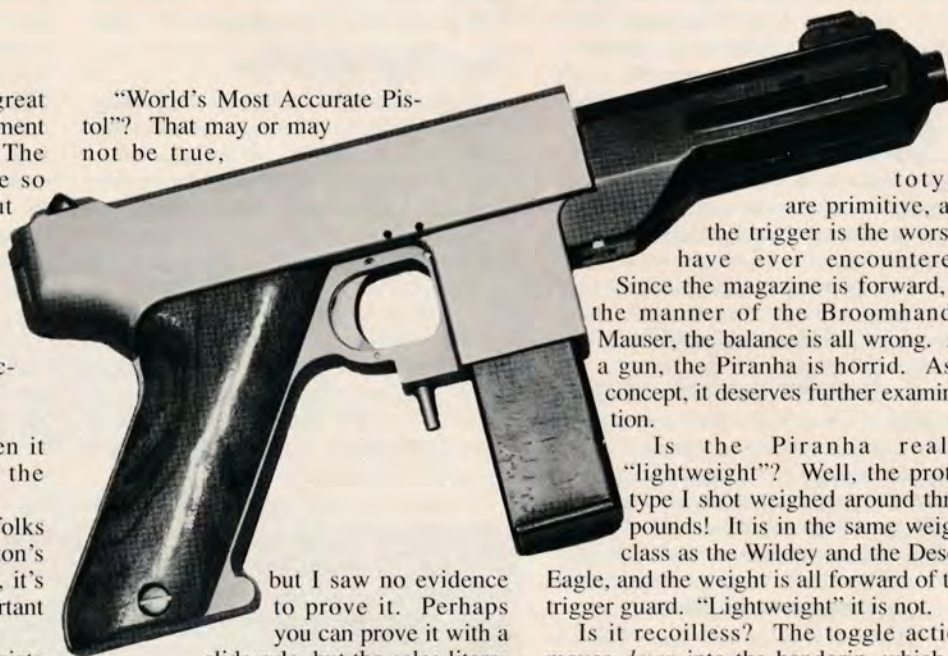
"The action of the weapon when it functions reduces the recoil in the weapon."

Well, nobody will accuse these folks of excessive modesty! Either Newton's Laws of Physics have been repealed, it's a con game, or something very important is going on.

The inventor, Walter Perrine, insists that all the claims are true. I met his associate, Joe Smith, at Phoenix's Ben Avery Shooting Range, to witness the miracle firsthand.

Let me say this: this is the darnedest gun I have ever seen. To my knowledge, there is and never has been anything quite like it. I am no engineer, but this looks to me like a brilliant piece of engineering. As for the extravagant claims, let's examine them one at a time.

"World's Most Accurate Pistol"? That may or may not be true,



but I saw no evidence to prove it. Perhaps you can prove it with a slide rule, but the sales literature offers no evidence of machine rest testing.

Also, *intrinsic* accuracy is only of marginal importance in a pistol. *Practical* accuracy is a function of intrinsic accuracy (what a gun will do from a machine rest), plus good sights, a good trigger, good balance, and a comfortable grip. The latter four are most important, by far.

The grip of the Piranha is comfortable; no argument there. The sights on the pro-

TOTYPE are primitive, and the trigger is the worst I have ever encountered. Since the magazine is forward, in the manner of the Broomhandle Mauser, the balance is all wrong. As a gun, the Piranha is horrid. As a concept, it deserves further examination.

Is the Piranha really "lightweight"? Well, the prototype I shot weighed around three pounds! It is in the same weight class as the Wildey and the Desert Eagle, and the weight is all forward of the trigger guard. "Lightweight" it is not.

Is it recoilless? The toggle action moves *down* into the handgrip, which in theory redirects the recoil downward and strengthens the grip. I confess, felt recoil was non-existent, but what would you expect? The pistol I fired was chambered in 9mm, hardly a "kicker." Perhaps the action really does eliminate recoil, but without a much lighter gun, or a much more powerful cartridge, who can tell?

Is the Piranha "completely free of malfunction"? Let's get real. No machine is failure-proof. I observed at least one stovepipe, and a failure to feed, using factory hardball ammo. All modern gun designs are so reliable as to be incredible. There is no evidence to suggest that the Piranha is any better or worse.

The Piranha boasts interchangeable barrels and calibers, in a matter of seconds. As preposterous as that sounds, it is true. The frame is hinged at the rear of the grip area, and opens like a clamshell. The barrel just lifts out, and can be replaced with one of a different length, or caliber.

In order to change calibers, a change of bolt face would be necessary too (except for calibers like 9mm, .38 Super, .380, and .41 Action Express). There is no reason I can see why the bolt could not also be quickly changeable.

It was Phoenix police officer Allen



**The frame is hinged at the rear, opening like a "clamshell." The toggle lock moves down into the grip. The barrel is instantly replaceable.**



Dyer who came up with the phrase that stops engineers in their tracks: "Very nice, but *what's it for?*"

What is its purpose, and why does it fill that purpose better than other guns on the market? It appears that the Piranha is not suited to holster carry, because of the forward-mounted magazine. It is therefore out of the question for police or military use. It is not suitable for concealment. Even if it were much smaller, the forward magazine would preclude that.

Hunting? Possibly. Size does not make much difference to hunters, and a .44 Magnum Piranha might find a market.

I asked Joe Smith what they perceived as the appropriate market. "Home defense," he said, "It's perfect for the ladies."

Home defense? A three pound gun for women?

"Yes, because it doesn't recoil. We have had women who hate to shoot other guns, because they can't stand the kick, and they love the Piranha, because it doesn't kick." It's a novel concept, but I can't buy it. I have never heard of a shooter objecting to the puny recoil of a 9mm. If recoil were a problem, then a one-pound weight glued to the frame of a Browning Hi-Power would do the trick.

I think the Piranha is a joke as a police, military, or home defense gun. However, I do not think it is useless. The clamshell design, and the interchangeable barrels and calibers are far too innovative to ignore. I believe that the Piranha action may be perfectly suited to a "Thumper." What is a "Thumper"?

Jeff Cooper conceived the idea of a "Thumper" for military use. Current military doctrine holds that a soldier does not need to worry about hitting beyond 200 yards. If that is true, then, instead of issuing a .223 carbine, let's give him a short, light shoulder weapon chambered for the .44 AutoMag.

Recoil would be about on a par with the .30 Russian round. The Piranha would make a terrific Thumper, in about a six pound carbine. If the recoil reduction feature actually works as advertised, so much the better.

The mechanism is extraordinarily simple, even more so than the Kalashnikov. Field maintenance and repair would be easy.

For that matter, there is not a decent submachine gun on the market. Don't tell me about the H&K MP5; it is a *nine pound* 9mm, for goodness' sake! The MP5 is way too big and heavy for its caliber. How about adapting the mechanism to a four pound submachine gun that converts in seconds from 9mm to 10mm to .41 AE to .45 ACP?

The Piranha mechanism has great promise. Here's hoping some savvy gun company will pick up the patents at a fair price to the inventor, and run with the idea.



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### Falcon Target Barrels

Falcon Machining offers two new barrels for High Standard .22 target pistols produced from original High Standard process operation sheets. The aluminum barrels are built around a button rifled chrome moly steel liner and are designed to compensate for the added weight of a scope and mount.

The steel barrels are made from Shilen chrome moly match grade blanks, and are button rifled and hand lapped. Both versions are hand chambered for .22 short or .22 LR, lengths range from 4 1/2" to 16" and prices start at \$110.

For more information, write to Falcon Machining Ltd., 148 Aspinwall St., Westbury, NY 11590 or call (516) 334-3074.



### New Hornady 9mm Bullet

Hornady now produces a heavier 147 gr. hollowpoint bullet for 9mm pistols. The new bullet has a reduced diameter base so that it will not interfere with the taper of the 9mm cartridge.

Though the bullet seats deeper than a HP or FMJ and therefore slightly restricts the powder that can be loaded, the 147 gr. performs in the 750 to 1200 fps velocity range using fast-burning powder. The heavier bullet weight should offer deeper penetration without over-expansion.

For more information, see your local Hornady dealer or send for the new 1990 Hornady catalog at Hornady Manufacturing Co., Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68803.



### GML Fashion Holster Bag

This new top-grain leather handbag with matching liner offers a Velcro® sealed compartment with holster to conceal a handgun with up to a 4" barrel.

The straps are reinforced with steel mesh to prevent theft by cutting. Handbag size is 12 1/2" by 11" and color choices are black, grey, taupe, tobacco, navy, light denim and bone white. One leather holster is included with each bag. Suggested retail is \$99.95.

For more information, write to GML Products, 1634A Montgomery Highway, Suite 196, Birmingham, AL 35216.

### Wilson DP-K Comp Kit

The new Wilson Accu-Comp "DP-K" barrel and compensator kit comes with a Wilson 5 5/8" stainless match barrel, bushing set, and double chamber compensator. The renowned twin-port comp of the Wilson Super Grade pistol is the most effective around, according to the maker.



The Accu-Comp drop-in kit features two restrictor plates and two exhaust ports as well as a compensator-mounted post front sight. Available in .45 ACP and ramped .38

Super, the new kit is easy to install, however, Wilson recommends it be installed by a competent pistolsmith.

For a complete color catalog, send \$3 to Wilson's at P.O. Box 578, Dept. AH, Berryville, AR 72616 or contact your local Wilson dealer.



### S&A Hi-Grip Safety

Smith & Alexander have added a new grip safety to their fine line of 1911 accessories. Available in blue (4140) or stainless (17-4 ph), the new grip safety allows as high a grip as possible, relative to the centerline of the bore, helping to minimize weapon rotation and muzzle rise.

The Hi-Grip will retrofit to guns already fitted with Wilson grip safeties without further frame or finish modifications and is available for \$34.95 from Smith & Alexander, P.O. Box 835790 Dept. AH, Richardson, TX, 75083, phone (214) 231-6084.



### Caspian Arms Match Barrel

Caspian Arms announces a new .38 Super match barrel. The new barrel is a .38 Super "supported chamber" ramped barrel that is heat treated and button broached.

For more information on Caspian Arms line, write Caspian Arms, 14 North Main St., Dept. AH, Hardwick, VT 05843.





### New Bull-X Match Bullet

Bull-X Inc. announces a new 147 gr. Flat Point in three different sizes; .356" for 9mm, .357" for .38 Super, and .358" for .38 Special and .357 Magnum.

The flat point is known for its accuracy and excellent feeding, working well in both autos and revolvers. Bull-X offers bullets in most handgun calibers. For more information write Bull-X, P.O. Box 182, Dept. AH, Farmer City, IL 61842 or for orders call 1-800-248-3845.

### Handgunner's Hunting Editor Inducted Into Hall of Fame

Introduction into the Handgun Hunters Hall of Fame is the single most prestigious honor that a handgun hunter can hope to attain. However, the purpose of the Hall's existence goes beyond honoring individual hunters. By calling attention to the achievements of selected men and women, the Hall of Fame promotes handgun hunting and demonstrates handguns are legitimate sporting arms.

J. D. Jones, Handgun Hunting Editor of *American Handgunner* is most famous for his development of the SSK Handcannons and the line of JDJ wild-cat calibers. J.D.'s custom Contenders and proprietary cartridges have made it possible for thousands of other handgun hunters to successfully hunt the largest game all over the world.

Past recipients of the Hall of Fame Award are Bob Good (1984); Lucky Nightingale (1985); Jim Hebert (1987); Greg Murtland (1988); and Dale A. Kelling (1989).

For information on becoming a member of the Handgun Hunters Museum and Hall of Fame, write to Membership Director, HHMHF, Dept. AH, 41302 Executive Drive, Mt. Clemons, MI 48045.



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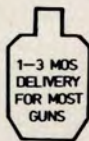


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## AH, GRASSHOPPER, MASTER TEACH YOU TO SHOOT, NOT TO BEAT HIM

I have witnessed the emergence of a new star. Only on a few occasions in a lifetime does one get the opportunity to see something so astounding.

Sounds like Billy Graham a bit, don't you think? Lest you start thinking I have suddenly seen the light and am busily packing my bags to go to Heaven, I had better explain.

To the best of my knowledge it was in 1988 at the Virginia State Indoor Championships that I first met one snotty-nosed

The date came for this class and I was actually more interested to see if he would put in the effort rather than if he was a good shot, as that was already obvious. I see lots of talent out there, but with little drive to improve. This kid would soon prove that he could rise above the rest.

He had something not often found in a student: the ability to listen and observe instruction, even if the lesson was not understood. I could go over his head and



PHOTO BY NYLLE LEATHAM

**The student became the teacher when 21-year-old Doug Koenig whipped his mentor, Rob Leatham, in the 1990 Bianchi Cup. Ironically, Doug shot the same gun that Rob used in '85 to win his Cup, a Frank Glenn custom S&W .38 Spl.**

19-year-old runt kid shooter named Doug Koenig (pronounced K-nig). Apparently this young man was destined to become a great shooter if you were to believe those who had seen him shoot.

He came from the familiar Hoser Mold, that being someone able to shoot extremely fast yet lacking somewhat in the accuracy department. As the match progressed it became readily apparent that this kid was indeed very fast. In fact, it appeared to many that he may actually have true potential if he was willing to assert himself.

I do not remember the results of that particular event other than somehow a lesson had been arranged for him to come out to Arizona to see what he was really capable of.

still keep his attention and interest. This is one of the marks of one who can learn.

He was willing to do what he was told, even if the benefit was not yet obvious. And he did listen and observe and learn. Above all else, he learned to teach himself.

Many times a student tries to put a ladder of progression ahead of himself, when what is needed is simply to be pointed in the right direction to travel. The trick is to avoid the same pitfalls of those who have preceded you, thus learning from the mistakes of others. The kid learned fast.

Soon the student was beyond the average level of instruction; he knew how to shoot, now he needed to *shoot*. This is the hardest part of any learning process as no

one can do it for you. You must experience the school of hard knocks, learn the lessons they teach you and go on.

There also must be a burning desire to excel, not only against the other competitors, but also against yourself. You are truly learning when you find your stiffest competition comes from within.

Many discussions were had between the student and instructor and to my great satisfaction the student began asking intelligent and pertinent questions, and in a very short time.

Soon the student was able to test the teacher; the final phase of learning and the most difficult for both in this educational relationship.

By the time the calendar had rolled over a couple of times, the student had broken into the top ranks of competition, becoming a true threat for a major victory. This of course came as no surprise to the instructor, as I have seen greatness present from the beginning, but I also knew it would take much more than that to get there.

So, now comes the 1990 National Rifle Association Action Pistol Championships, held every year in Columbia, Mo., at Ray Chapman's Academy. This is the melting pot of various shooting disciplines. You get the PPC shooters, the IPSC shooters, even a few bullseye and silhouette types all trying to get that prestigious cup—many have come and tried but few have succeeded.

Yet 1990 was to be a banner year for competition. Nearly all the greats were in attendance. Mickey Fowler, the incredible shooter who literally owned the match in earlier years, (we affectionately called this the Mickey Fowler Invitational) was back again as was my odds-on favorite to win, two-time champion John Pride.

Other headliners included the brothers Gilmore and company, always strong performers. My buddy Brian Enos, the inventor of the current scoped revolver fad that propelled him to a pair of Cups, was back along with other great shooters.

It was interesting to note how many good scores had been shot during the years. In the early Eighties, a score of 1900 or better (possible is 1920) was considered excellent and in fact was good enough to win a number of titles. Back then John Bianchi offered a flat \$5,000 to anyone breaking into the impossible dream of his 1900 Club. He quickly dissolved that prize when the scores rose to meet the challenge of the course of fire.

But the last few times out it was apparent that a score more than a few points off perfect would leave you out of the hunt. Last year, winner Lemoine Wright shot a good tally of 1914 in a year the heroes were predicting a clean 1920 to win. But it was not yet to be.

The target used at this match is interesting in that the scoring rings are as follows: four-inch X-ring used for breaking ties, eight-inch 10-ring, twelve-inch 8-ring and the rest of the target scores a 5.

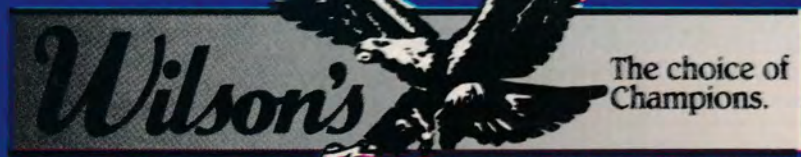


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Notice there is no 9, 7, or 6 ring; you cannot shoot a 1919. This means that last year's winning score of 1914 was only three shots out of the 10 ring!

Well, as the match progressed the incredible scores started pouring in. Everyone in the hunt was cleaning the Barricade Event and the top score was no less than one X-ring from perfect, 480-47X.

This is also considered the easiest event so of course this is where I shot two eights. The only points I would drop in the entire event.

On day two the heroes started dropping. Mickey Fowler let one get away on the practical event, erasing his chance for a clean.

But there were still a whole slew of shooters who could pull it off. Going into the last day, there were so many possibilities for a 1920 that I could not keep track. To add to that, there were even more with a chance for a 1918, in itself an incredible score.

But after the day was done and all the speculation over, we had a winner.

The 1914 that had won the previous year would get you no more than 11th this time around. A score of 1916, only two shots out of the 10-ring, would put you between 10th and 6th depending on your X-count. I was 10th as my horrible X-count from that fateful barricade was too much to overcome.

The score of 1918 had no less than four ties broken by X-count. This was incredible! But 1918, one lowly round out of the X-ring, was not enough to win; if you wanted the Cup, they all had to be in.

While the rest of the procession was going on at the Moving Target Event, a shooter who the year before had been ejected from the match because his ammo was a couple feet per second too slow was on the barricade as all the cameras and shooters waited to see it get done.

He calmly shot his 480, and in the process dropped only two hits out of the X-ring, finally accomplishing the impossible. The snot nosed runt kid had shot the first perfect score in the history of the Bianchi Cup.

Doug Koenig shot a 1920, winning the 1990 NRA Action Pistol Championship in stunning form, and proudly taking his place among the heroes before him. He finally made it through the last and most difficult test. He beat the demons within and the monsters outside, and completed the circle. The teacher became the student.

By the way, I want my gun back.



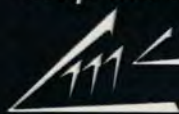
*Editor's Note: Doug Koenig's remarkable victory in the 1990 Bianchi Cup will be covered with our usual extravaganza of action photos and comprehensive reporting in the next issue. Watch for the Nov/Dec 1990 Handgunner on sale at your newsstand soon!*

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## POST-SHOOTING TRAUMA IS A VERY REAL PROBLEM FOR SOME OFFICERS

**T**he socio-psychological firestorm that follows a police action shooting is known to any who've been through it. A soldier who kills in the line of duty is rewarded; he has done what he's there to do and has fulfilled both his mission of the day and the greater good of his cause. He gets medals.

Every time a cop drops the hammer, though, it's My Lai. Someone comes out of the woodwork charging excessive force and wrongful death in even the most righteous shooting. The story is often twisted by the time the media renders it, and people believe the portrayal of Dirty Harry police brutality when in fact the event may have been a clean shooting. Charged, sued, and investigated by everyone including his own kind, the officer undergoes a brutal identity crisis.

Some people pack it in after an on-the-job shooting. A great many more adjust. A lot of them come out of it stronger. But no one ever comes out exactly the same.

### Post Shooting BS

The cops who have to face it have enough to deal with. They don't need BS about the matter dumped on them, but the fact is, the field is rife with BS about Post Shooting Trauma that comes from two directions.

From one side comes the sophomoric Psyche 101 belief that the killing of a human being under *any* circumstances will give you so many guilt trips you'll qualify for frequent flyer.

Never mind that the deceased was about to sink a knife into an innocent victim the moment you shot him, this theory goes, just expect to be plunged into black depression and prepare yourself for a long bout of marital troubles, alcoholism, and total personality change.

But don't worry, you'll probably be despondent enough to commit suicide before long anyway.

That is a crock. Guilt is almost never the operative dynamic in Post Shooting Trauma. I am absolutely convinced that the syndrome is less a reaction to having killed, than a reaction to *society's reaction* to your having killed.

The fact is that we live in a society that often treats a cop who had to fire his service gun as some sort of a killer rogue. When you are punished for doing some-

thing you had to do, it hurts. This is Post Shooting Trauma.

### Macho Man Syndrome

From the other side comes a refusal to understand the societal differences between police shootings and military battle, to insist that there's no such thing as PST and anyone who feels badly about the aftermath of a shooting is obviously a neurotic weakling.

Consider the following excerpt from a column in a recent gun magazine: "And now we discover that one of our east coast gunwriters is planning to introduce POT (Post Operational Trauma) to England on a lecture tour. It seems to us that the long-suffering English shooters have more than enough problems without being introduced to largely imaginary new ones."

The author of that column (a west coast gunwriter) had missed a couple of signifi-

cant points. I was the lecturer he spoke of. We didn't have time for anything imaginary so the training concentrated on the very real and documented dynamics and symptoms of post-gunfight stress.

Second, I didn't introduce them to the subject. They had *been* introduced to it by a series of gun battles. What I introduced them to were proven coping mechanisms.

Item: Armed British detectives converge on a pair of suspects, not realizing that one is a deliberately planted decoy who resembles the highly dangerous gunman they are seeking. When he makes a movement they reasonably interpret as going for a gun, they shoot him. They are brutally pilloried by the public for this "mistaken identify shooting."

Item: Three English thugs who haven't read American anti-gun propaganda and don't realize they aren't supposed to have guns, initiate an armed robbery using two autoloading shotguns and a .357 Magnum.

A single, heroic armed bobby guns down the three of them in a face to face shootout, killing two. It is probably the greatest feat of arms in the history of British policing. Is this constable showered with heroism awards? No, he is criminally charged in the killings and undergoes a gruelling trial before being acquitted. Despite multiple death threats after the gunfight, he is refused permission to carry

*Continued on page 71*

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## 99% RELIABILITY IS NOTHING TO CROW ABOUT WITH A COMBAT GUN

**P**robably the thing I like best about IPSC is the opportunity it's provided to meet and become friends with a lot of fine people. So the thing I like least is seeing shooters quit the sport after competing in a few matches and not improving their scores.

People have their own motives for competing, of course. Some are primarily concerned with improving gun-handling skills. Some enjoy the opportunity to socialize and really don't much care about match scores.

But most people take some notice of the score and it can be most discouraging to read match scores from the bottom up month after month.

There can be many reasons for lack of improvement: insufficient grounding in the basics of shooting, lack of proper

Even some gunwriters seem to share this belief. Recently I read an article on an autopistol that gave 99% reliability, which the author said was "something to crow about."

Something to crow about? An average of one malfunction every hundred rounds? If one of my guns was producing 99% reliability I'd fix it, trade it, or chuck it in the lake.

Ninety-nine percent (99%) is completely unacceptable.

What sort of reliability should you expect? Here are a couple of examples.

### Torture Test

One of my best friends is an armorer for a major police agency. Awhile back his department was testing various 9mm's for use by certain units, and Tony

Tony fired the last 1,000 rounds back at the armory, using a Ransom Rest and chronograph to check accuracy and velocities.

*In the entire 10,000 rounds there was not one single malfunction.*

A few years ago I fired 200 rounds a day, five days a week, through a Colt Gold Cup .45 ACP for five months, keeping records of each day's results. The gun was lubricated at the start of each day's shooting and the plan was to clean it once a week, though a couple of times it went 2,000 rounds without cleaning.

This is rather abusive treatment, but the gun nevertheless went through between 17-18,000 rounds without a malfunction. I didn't keep records on that gun before or after that time period, so the actual number of rounds without a failure is actually much more— 25 to 30,000 at a conservative estimate.

Another example: editor Cameron Hopkins reported recently in his *Industry Insider* column that Winchester rep Paul Nowak had run 37,000 rounds through a Glock 17 with perfect functioning. I see no reason to doubt Nowak's claim.

### New Standards

What's happened is that standards for reliability have increased in the last decade or so. Competition among shooters makes for better shooters, and competition among gunmakers makes for better guns.

Currently gunmakers are fighting for a share of the big U.S. police market as more and more agencies switch to the autopistol. In order to play in that league, the gun has to work.

To compete in today's market, companies have to stress things like ergonomics, ease of maintenance, safety, quality of sights and trigger pull. Reliability is taken for granted.

The point of all this is that autopistols *do* work, and if yours doesn't it's not because you did something bad in a previous life.

Making an IPSC gun reliable takes a bit of effort on your part, including (1) tuning the gun for the demands of competition (2) using quality magazines (3) using good ammunition (4) proper lubrication and (5) scheduled maintenance. Let's look at each area, using the popular 1911 style pistol as an example.

### Gunsmithing Kinks

It's irritating to hear that a factory-new gun needs gunsmithing right out of the box. Actually it may work just fine, and certainly you'll want to fire 500 rounds or so before spending any money.

But auto pistols are made to use jacketed factory ammo, and few will be fired 1,000 times in a year. Competitors usually shoot reloads with lead bullets (at least for practice); 1,000 rounds in a week isn't unusual.

For such severe usage the cost of a reliability tune-up is well worth it. The



**When Jerry Barnhart shoots, he demands nothing less than 100% functioning.**

practice, inability to handle match pressure. But I'm convinced that one of the most common problems is much more basic and mundane.

It's simply this: equipment that doesn't work.

### Jam-A-Matics

I know shooters who have been competing for years and still almost never get through a match without a gun malfunction. No one can shoot well with unreliable equipment. Even when the gun does work, the possibility that it *might* not is always on one's mind, distracting from the concentration needed to fire a good score.

There seems to be an attitude with many shooters that a certain level of malfunctions is normal and inevitable; that no matter what you do the autopistol is going to choke now and then so you may as well get used to it.

had the job of firing 10,000 rounds through a SIG-Sauer P-226 to check for frame or slide failure. (Tough job, right?)

After shooting 3,000 rounds Tony's thumb couldn't handle loading mags any more so he asked for some volunteers. Four of us showed up at the range, while Tony arrived with the gun, ten 15-shot mags, and 6,000 rounds of ammunition (115 gr. JHP's at 1,250 fps).

He also brought a couple of extra barrels, having found that waiting for the barrel to cool was taking too much time. Each shooter in turn fired 150 rounds while the rest loaded mags. We rotated barrels every 150 rounds.

After 750 rounds, Tony would clean the gun, carefully check for worn or broken parts, clean the barrels, and the cycle would start all over. Five and a half hours later all 6,000 rounds were gone. No malfunctions.



procedure most pistolsmiths follow with the 1911 pistol is something like this: throat barrel and lower ejection port (if not done at the factory); replace collet bushing with a fitted solid bushing; polish feedramp, barrel throat, and breechface; polish and adjust extractor; check fit and function of ejector, slide stop, firing pin stop, magazine catch, safety plunger tube, and all safety devices; and match all springs to the loads to be used.

Smiths who specialize in custom 1911 pistols usually have a "street package" or "basic combat package" that includes a reliability tune-up plus high visibility sights, a trigger job, sometimes an extended safety and bevelled mag well for around \$200-\$300. These packages are one of the best values in the custom gun field.

### Buy Quality Mags

When buying magazines for the 1911 pistol it's best to avoid the three-for-\$20 specials and spend a little more for quality products.

Some popular makes include Colt, Mag-Pack, Metalform, Pachmayr, Shooting Star, and Wilson. Every mag should provide flawless feeding, lock the slide back if the gun is empty, and eject freely from the gun under its own weight whether the slide is forward or back.

Most competitors set aside five or six mags strictly for match use, so they aren't always getting dropped and stepped on in practice. But practice mags should be tested and maintained as well, for if they don't work you won't have faith in your equipment, nor will you be able to isolate and correct errors that result from other factors.

If you have any mags that aren't reliable, you can always take them to a gunshow and sell them on special, three-for-\$20.

### Reloads Are Crucial

Guns and magazines often get blamed for problems that are actually the result of poor reloads. Novice shooters are often beginners at reloading as well, at least reloading for the autopistol.

Some of the most common errors include: using dirty or corroded brass; using worn out brass with burrs and dents on the casehead and extraction groove; high primers as a result of dirty primer pockets or incorrect setting of a progressive loading tool; insufficient case mouth bell, causing lead shavings while seating bullets; using inappropriate powders or bullet designs; bullets seated too deep, or not deep enough; and failing to use a moderate taper crimp.

Since there are so many variables involved, the best advice I can give is to consult with several experienced shooters in your club for recommendations on powder and bullet selection, and for help in adjusting the seating and crimp dies.

Proper lubrication starts with a high quality lubricant. The lube shouldn't freeze up at low temperatures nor burn

*Continued on page 116*

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## THE LUGER IS STEEPED IN NOSTALGIA YET THE FIRST 9MM STILL PERFORMS

**E**arly in 1904, *Deutsche-Waffen und-Munitions Fabriken*, makers of the Luger, chambered some pistols for a new cartridge, the 9mm Parabellum.

(*Parabellum* is Latin and means "for war." It comes from the Latin quotation, *Si vis pacem, parabellum* which means, "If you desire peace, prepare for war.")

Both ogival and flat pointed conical bullets seated in the tapered case, blown out from the original bottlenecked .30 cartridge case, feed well from the steep angled grip frame. The Imperial German Army and Navy were excited about the new 9mm round and both immediately adopted the Luger in that caliber as their official sidearm.

As years passed, the Luger became the most widely distributed military pistol and the 9mm Parabellum, or 9mm Luger, cartridge is still the most popular pistol and submachine gun caliber in the world.

### Luger Configurations

Immediately after the Luger's adoption, pistol and barrel length variations for different service branches began to appear. One 1904 Navy version had a 5.8" barrel with the fixed sight on the rear toggle link replaced by an adjustable sight graduated to 200 meters.

An Artillery version of 1908 with an 8" barrel had a ramp front and an adjustable rear sight, both mounted on the barrel for less shot-to-shot deviation of line of sight/line of bore.

The tangent sliding wedge locked into graduations from 100 to 800 meters. (874.4 yards!) This 800 meter graduation is wishful thinking for accurate aimed fire, but the Artillery model was issued with a 32 round snail drum to NCO's of machine gun units for the specific purpose of laying down zone-fire with standard pistol ammunition while a belt was being changed in the '08 Maxim gun.

This pistol is a spray and pray proposition with pistol velocity ammunition at 200 meters, and often sub-sonic rounds will not function the action.

But, firing off-hand with submachine gun rounds, it will consistently clink into an 8" plate. Using circa 1930 carbine cartridges and modern handloads to major level (at 40,000 p.s.i.) will keep hits in a 4" circle, if you don't flinch thinking about rifle pressures in a 70 year old pistol!

Bench resting the Artillery model

won't do much better than off-hand, because the acorn-shaped sights are exceedingly difficult to align uniformly.

The 1914-18 military and 1920 commercial Lugers are a logical choice for modification because they don't excite collectors for a variety of reasons. Many of this genre of pistol were assembled from spare parts or were battlefield pickups modified for commercial export by basement shops. Despite their humble beginnings and mismatched parts, these pistols can usually be modified to become accurate shooters and a basic platform for exotic modifications.

One of the first custom modifications

was the Vickery .22/30 wildcat, consisting of a premium .22 centerfire barrel blank turned and chambered to a necked down version of the .30 round. In the days before the .22 Jet or the .221 Fireball, this modification zapped countless varmints and put rabbit meat on many dinner tables. It was a varmint hunter's dream and a Luger fancier's delight.

Over the years, I've made up a number of "Super Navy" conversions with an adjustable rear sight and a 6" custom tube, but the incessant battering of the rear link against the frame transmits the blow to fragile adjustable sight parts.

The "Super Artillery" with an 8" tube and an adjustable rear sight on the barrel is a more accurate and mechanically feasible proposition. The longer bull barrel does require loading the ammunition right to the red line for consistent functioning. A shorter 6" barrel somewhat mitigates this problem and allows use of normal level pistol ammunition in most cases.

### Shooting A Luger

The Luger's recoil is different than that of other autoloading pistols. It feels like a gentle rearward push, without torque or side movement. The toggle's weight coming to a stop upward and to the rear effects unlocking and cycling without the mass and weight of a slide.

Chamber pressure has dropped to zero before the Luger's toggle climbs the ramp and begins to unlock the action.

You can easily verify this by removing the extractor and firing a round. The spent case will not blow back out of the chamber, though it can be easily removed with a fingernail. This feature made it an obvious choice for silenced pistols used for clandestine purposes.

Existing parts of a 1920 or WW I pistol can often be used as the basis of a modification, or the weapon can be kept in original condition by adding a modified "cannon," or complete top section.

Interchangeability of parts and finding suitable parts to use is becoming a problem. In a recent conversion, I bought three parts to find one useable piece. Some aftermarket parts are available that work properly, but every part added will have to be fitted for certainty of function.

The trigger mechanism is especially tricky. While it is possible to fit one up like a high-grade target pistol's letoff, the safety may not work properly, or an unlocked pistol may fire when dropped. Some have been known to fire full-auto with terrifying results. It's best to stay with the original design, though some improvement can be made in trigger release.

Magazines are another problem. I've had poor luck these past few years in finding modern magazines that function consistently, lock the action open and lock up into the frame at the proper position for reliable feed. I usually buy a pocketful and sort through them, discarding the unusable ones.

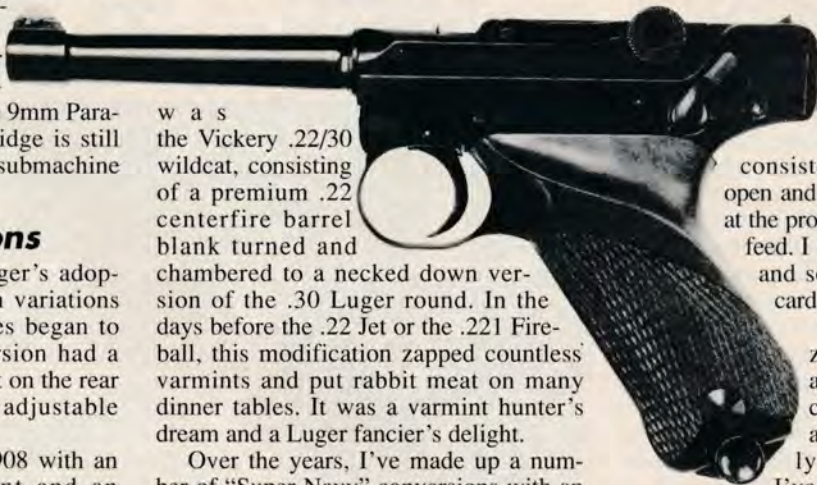
World War II magazines work reliably, but are only available at collector prices, so the aftermarket ones usually have to be utilized.

I've personally had better luck with the stainless variety than with the blued, but these are hard to find at gun shows. I would suggest buying a good supply when they are available.

If the blued magazines work properly, they will usually function without problems for a long time. But, any magazine must be considered expendable, as with any pistol.

When I went to Elementary School in the 1930's, most of the boys wanted a Luger. As one friend put it, the pistol looks like it's going 100 miles an hour when it's standing still.

During those long ago depression years, I often crawled into my bed under the eaves and fell asleep listening to the rain on the roof and dreaming of a barrel blank turning in a bench lathe, smoking blue chips curling away from the cutting tool as a custom Luger barrel took shape before my eyes. I still have that dream often, because the Luger is still one of my favorite pistols for modification.





# AS WE'LL DEMONSTRATE, THERE ARE TWO RELOADING PRESSES ON THIS PAGE.

You don't need glasses. They're both right in the middle of the page. First, there's the RCBS Rock



Chucker.™ (That's it on the bottom.) A powerful, single-stage tool that's the most

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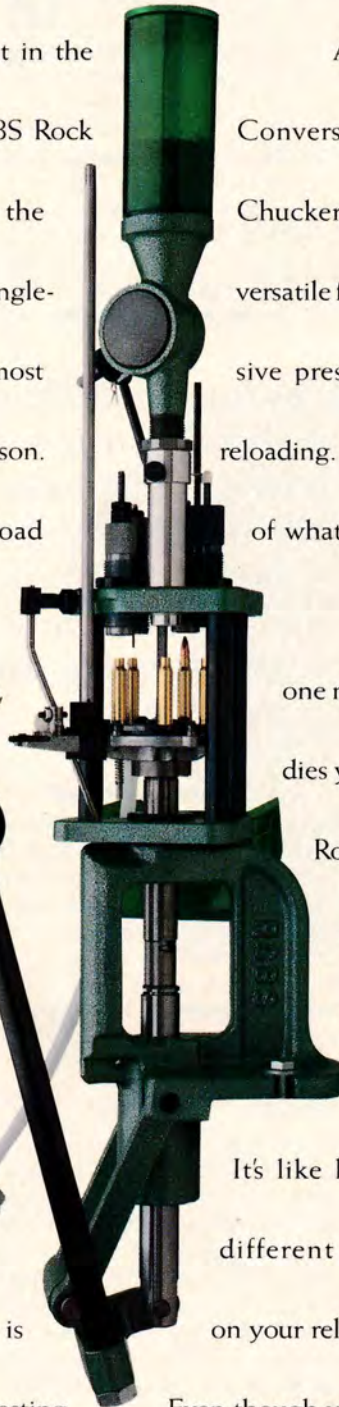


may not be a strong enough word, as evidenced by our heavy-duty cast iron design, hardened steel pins and

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## EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PRIMERS AND MORE

**A**ccording to the Unabridged Edition of the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, the word brisance, a noun, is defined as "the shattering power of high explosives." Brisance is the essential characteristic of the primers in your ammunition.

If primers are not sufficiently sensitive to explode when struck with a physical blow, you aren't going to be doing much shooting. If, however, these same primers are too sensitive, then the plant that loads your ammunition isn't going to be...

Well, you get the idea.

Primers have been described as the sparkplugs of the self-contained cartridge. That is a good analogy because the controlled explosion from the primer produces the fire that flows through the flash-hole to ignite the powder, and the burning powder thereby produces the expanding gas inside the case that propels the bullet out the muzzle.

### Primer History

Now, all of this so far is pretty elementary stuff to most of you. Many of you are probably familiar with the term "fulminate of mercury" and a guy named Alexander John Forsyth. If you aren't, Forsyth was an Englishman who invented the practical application of fulminate of mercury.

Fulminate of mercury was the first compound commonly used in the priming of percussion caps for muzzle loading weapons. Mercuric priming attacks brass and when used in metallic cartridges it all but makes it impossible to reload an empty cartridge case. This fact alone spurred the development of non-corrosive, non-mercuric primers that are used throughout the world today.

Lead styphnate is the primary ingredient that has replaced fulminate of mercury in modern primers, but there is a new development on the horizon that will probably do to lead styphnate what lead styphnate did to mercuric priming—Lead-Free Primers.

### 21st Century Primers

Sounds almost like a gasoline commercial, doesn't it? You can just about visualize Bob Hope stepping out from behind the pump at a picture-perfect service station on a TV commercial to announce the advantages of lead-free primers.

Lead-free primers are going to become a fact of life for everyone who uses ammunition within the next decade, regardless of how far-fetched the idea may seem. Lead-free primers are going to be thrust upon the shooting population for the same reasons that unleaded gasoline is used by every motorist in the industrialized world today.

Lead is considered a poison and airborne lead particles can be hazardous to your health. The interest in lead-free

*Lead styphnate must remain wet or it will sensitize and make life very exciting for the production workers and those neighbors living five miles away.*

primers is especially high in Europe at this time because most of the handgun shooting over there is done on indoor ranges. Despite the type of projectile used, lead styphnate primers put lead particles into the air each shooter will breathe.

But before we go into the eccentricity of lead-free primers, let's do a quick background study on lead styphnate priming.

### A "Basic" Primer

All the primers used for reloading in this country, and a good part of the world, are "boxer" primers. You probably already knew that, I know, but I had to say it for the benefit of the beginners in the group. A boxer primer is composed of a primer cup, a priming compound, and a self contained anvil which fits into a case that normally has a single flash-hole in the primer pocket.

Now then, that is all pretty basic, but did you ever wonder how the ammunition companies got that priming compound into that little bitty cup and then pressed an anvil over it? How'd they do that millions and millions of times without blowing themselves to the dark side of the moon?

For safety reasons, the factories work with lead styphnate when it is wet because it is de-sensitized. They mean "wet" as in water wet. Some of them, like CCI, mist the rooms where primers are assembled with water spray to guarantee a high humidity atmosphere. It is that important.

American ammunition companies work with two kinds of lead styphnate, "normal" and "basic." Only one firm uses basic lead styphnate, while everyone else uses normal lead styphnate.

Federal Cartridge Company uses only basic lead styphnate and special projects manager Mike Bussard of Federal listed a number of reasons why.

When the crystals of each compound are examined under magnification, the crystals of normal lead styphnate are large and irregular in shape, and they resemble in many ways the concrete chunks called "rip rap" that is used to make break-waters at harbors and marinas around the country.

Basic lead styphnate, on the other hand, has a crystal structure much like sugar in that it is long, square-cut in cross section and very regular. The advantage to this regular crystalline structure of basic lead styphnate is a more consistent mix.

Basic is also benign when wet—it will not attack copper and create corrosion—while normal lead styphnate is acidic and will corrode copper. Basic lead styphnate burns with a clean, very hot flame, but it doesn't have as much brisance (remember that word?) as normal lead styphnate at very low temperatures. This is easily compensated for by adding a little more compound to the primer.

(This is one of the reasons why Federal primers are a little hotter than other brands and why Federal has only recently offered a "magnum" pistol primer.)

Federal feels that basic lead styphnate is better at ambient air temperatures because the hotter flame will do a better job of burning the coatings off difficult-to-ignite powders and thereby achieve better ignition.

### A "Normal" Primer

Blount Sporting Goods division of CCI is one of those that use "normal" lead styphnate and Allan Jones explained what CCI feels are the advantages of normal lead styphnate.

Because of the crystalline structures of the two lead styphnates, basic is heavier than normal. All lead styphnates must be worked with wet (usually 9% moisture) for safety reasons and the compound itself has a Silly Putty or modeling clay consistency when ready for application to the plates it is pressed through.

Now, production in any modern facility sometimes requires halts and stoppages, but lead styphnate must remain wet or it will sensitize and make life very exciting for the production workers and



those neighbors living five miles away.

Because basic lead styphnate is heavier it will also dry out quicker and the people at CCI don't like that. They have the perception that it is safer for them to work with "normal" versus "basic." When their production compound isn't needed, this normal lead styphnate is refrigerated and it stays uniform in storage.

But Mike Bussard at Federal pointed out one of the difficulties of normal lead styphnate is that it is weak on ignition and lacks a hot ignition temperature at ambient air temperatures, but he acknowledged that normal lead styphnate is better at very low temperatures, such as -20° F.

For this reason, a metallic fuel such as powdered aluminum or magnesium may be added to increase ignition temperatures at ambient air temperatures. Metallic fuels are also the source of the bright flash when a primed empty case is fired in a handgun without powder or projectile. The flash is the burning aluminum or magnesium particles, not the priming compound per se.

Normal lead styphnate also attacks copper, which is why most of the primers using normal lead styphnate are nickel plated. Once plated it doesn't degrade the copper cup.

One of the major disadvantages of basic lead styphnate is it doesn't make good rimfire ammunition and Federal has had to add slightly more priming compound than their competitors. Yet, neither type of lead styphnate works all that well for rimfire ammunition and ground glass must be added to work as a frictioning agent.

### Primer Sensitivity

None of this has anything to do with primer sensitivity or the difference between magnum and regular primers. Federal has long been recognized as having the most sensitive primers available for reloaders, and Mike Bussard said this perception of their sensitivity level is both accurate and intentional on the part of Federal.

Back in 1977, Federal received a lot of complaints that their primers were "too hard" from different competition shooters who were using revolvers with modified main springs. They went back and compared their products against others, and sure enough, the shooters were right.

On the scale of desired sensitivity, Federal primers were approximately in the middle of the range while everyone else was more toward the lower end. Federal changed their design and now they produce the most sensitive pistol primers available to the private reloader. Federal goes on to suggest that their competitors have moved more toward the middle of the range.

There are a vast number of things an ammunition company can do to change the sensitivity of their primers, but one of the easiest things to do is to change the shape

*Continued on page 104*

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**Ever heard of Galco International? No, it's not the maker of some slice 'n dice gadget on TV, it's the new name of famed holster maker Jackass Leather. And it's still the same**

# QUALITY BEYOND THE NAME

By Al Pickles

**M**any of you, I suspect, will have difficulty placing the name Galco International, Ltd. I know I did — and I write a lot of gunleather articles. Maybe the name lacks association with a specific product. On the other hand, however, I doubt there are many of you who have been packing a handgun for a decade or more who will not recognize the name Jackass Leather Company. They are one in the same and to tell the truth I sort of liked the original name.

The company has been around for about 20 years and has always been run by the same fellow, Richard N. Gallagher, no matter which name tickles your memory or fancy. Under the Galco logo they have changed geographic location (from Chicago to Phoenix), occupied a huge 40,000 square foot building, and gone international in the scope of their operation.

If you are too young to remember the truly great concealed carry rigs Jackass Leather made for the working street cops, you may just recognize the neat looking shoulder holster "Galco" made for the popular TV show *Miami Vice*. You know, the rig with the harness crisscrossing the back.

While on the several occasions I have watched the show — and admired the appearance of the rig — I have always been wary of prop guns and equipment worn by actors on the movie screen or TV, especially holsters. The wearability of a holster, or the practicality of a gun, is hardly reflected by script fiction and what "seems to be" is often not so.

With this in mind, and with warm memories of a Jackass Leather real-life-cop working rig I once owned, I ordered out a copy of the Galco Miami (Vice) Classic Model for my customized Colt Officers ACP. While at it I ordered a Galco Model Silhouette holster for my Charter Arms .44 Bulldog. These two guns being my street carry pieces since retirement from police work.

Unlike full-time working policemen, I now only carry concealed about four or five hours of the average day whereas cops often carry as much as 16 hours straight, and certainly at least 50 hours a week. Contrast this with an actor's actual on-set carry-time measured in minutes. You can be sure that if the "scene" dictates that the gun not be visible, it isn't carried at all.

Now let's get one very important evaluation factor out of the way right up front. After several month's wear I have found the Galco Miami Classic every bit



**Sonny Crockett's favorite rig, Galco's Miami Classic shoulder rig shown with a Colt .45 ACP pistol.**

as comfortable as any shoulder holster and harness I have ever worn before.

The weather being cool and bulky jackets the style, I have had no problem concealing my Colt Officers ACP .45 without utilizing the optional belt tie downs for holster and off-side double magazine pouch. As a matter of fact I

don't even own the tie downs. It may, however, be time to order out a pair as I am certain they will hold the gun and magazines closer to the body thereby aiding concealment under a light jacket.

Real cops conceal their pistols as well as possible. Only actors and rookies let you get a peek at what they are carrying. Nonetheless it is damn tough to keep from "printing" in the summer and street criminals hardly miss a trick.

A shoulder rig will print under light clothing and, TV shows notwithstanding, I advise you to consider a small-of-the-back holster for hot climes like Miami.

In judging workmanship and material I found some definite surprises. As a control I matched the Galco Miami Classic against the quality rig I had been using for the past three years which was designed by a gun scribe and produced by a leather master.

Putting aside appearance — well worn versus relatively new — the material, construction, and workmanship of the Galco were outstanding. I don't know how much hand craftsmanship goes on it that 40,000 square feet, but the end result is comparable to a one-man operation of love.

Looking at the Silhouette Model high-ride belt holster for my Charter .44 Bulldog, I'm impressed that quality is consistent and, therefore, can assume it holds true for the entire Galco leather line — a line that is quite extensive.

Thumbing through their large format 48-page color catalog I see they make everything from full police uniform wear to military rigs, gal's thigh holsters (if she's comfortable in stockings and garter belt, she can handle a thigh rig), every manner of concealed carry, money belts, slings, rappelling gear and tactical vests.

I'd say that as an experienced policeman with 32 years strapped into his duty holster belt, I would unhesitatingly put my faith and trust in my new Galco leather gear — and am indeed doing so at this minute.



**Galco's Silhouette Model high ride for a Charter .44 Spl.**



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## TEST REPORT

# RCBS PIGGYBACK CONVERSION UNIT

*Turn your Rock Chucker into a progressive!*

By Charles E. Petty

**P**rogressive reloading presses have been around for a long time, but it is only in the last 10 years or so that they have become affordable to the average reloader. Going back through my old copies of *Handloader's Digest*, I found that in 1964 only one progressive was pictured and that was the Star Progressive Reloader at \$175. That was a great deal of money in 1964. Smith & Wesson Model 29's were priced at \$140 and Ruger Super Blackhawks retailed for \$116 at the time.

By 1968, the only change was that the Star was now over \$200. By 1978, the Star was up to \$500, or one could have a Camdex, with advertised capability of 4,400 rounds per hour, for a little over \$5,000. Most of us stayed with our single-stage presses.

Since that time, we have seen notable progress. Excellent progressives have been made available from Dillon, Hornady, Lee and RCBS.

Now, RCBS has taken a real forward step, and is offering the *PiggyBack*; not a press, but a conversion unit that mounts on a RCBS Rock Chucker or Reloader Special-3 press. Owners of either of these presses will find the *PiggyBack* quite attractive with its retail price of \$119, and I found them on sale at a local gunstore for \$89. For a progressive press, that is a very low price. If it works.

The *PiggyBack* comes unassembled with a catalog-sized set of easy to read instructions.

I was able to set up the *PiggyBack* and have it working properly in about an hour. The only alteration necessary to the Rock Chucker is the removal of the bushing that accepts 7/8 x 14 dies. This requires a good wrench and three hands are definitely needed.

The *PiggyBack* is a five station unit with one station being used for the RCBS Uniflow powder measure which is set to dump the powder automatically. That leaves four stations to be used for resizing and decapping, priming and expanding, and either seating and crimping in one

operation or the more desirable separating of these last two into two operations.

The critical part of any progressive is the priming operation. Once the priming system was adjusted properly and the priming arm worked enough to get any rough spots out of it, it worked flawlessly.

I have been using the *PiggyBack* to load .44 Magnums and without trying to rush things—which is a perfect way to get into trouble with a progressive of any make—I am averaging 18 minutes per 100 rounds, not counting filling the primer tube. This is plenty fast for my tastes.

The only malfunctions that occurred with the *PiggyBack* set-up on the Rock Chucker have all been due to operator error. With each downstroke, it is necessary to insert a bullet in the expanded case and place a new case at station one. I neglected to do this a few times which caused things to get out of synch. If a case is not available for the automatic powder dumping, the result is powder all over the shell plate. This happened a couple of times, again all due to operator, not machine, error.

Once the *PiggyBack* is set up and adjusted, it can be easily removed from the Rock Chucker and stored until needed again.

The *PiggyBack* is a well thought-out and well-constructed heavy duty unit. At a price tag of \$119, and apparently available for even less in some outlets, it is going to be a welcome addition to many reloading benches. For more information, call the Good Ol' Boys at RCBS toll-free at 800-533-5000.





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The new ESCORT's DSP circuitry samples incoming radar signals 50,000 times a second, slicing them into discrete bits of information. This information is digitized and continuously analyzed by a built-in signal recognition computer. The end result is remarkable.

### Breakthrough performance

ESCORT's advanced signal processing provides an incredible increase in sensitivity. Quite simply, this means that the new ESCORT picks up radar signals further away than was ever before possible, even distant instant-on radar.



The heart of ESCORT's DSP circuitry is a custom version of the Motorola DSP 56000. This 20 MHz 24 bit parallel HCMOS processor is capable of 10.25 million instructions per second, and is also used in Steve Jobs' new \$10,000 NeXT computer.

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BMW Roundel, December 1989

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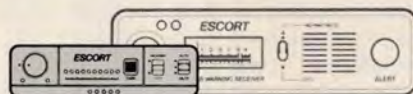
As you get closer, the bar graph lengthens and the audio pulse quickens. You'll understand ESCORT the first time you use it.

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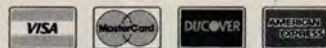
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## HORNADY'S NEW XTP BULLETS ARE ABSOLUTELY THE BEST FOR HUNTING

First, I'd like to thank all of you who wrote regarding the S&W column. The response was tremendous. I tried to answer each one for awhile but soon gave up. On the heaviest day I received nine phone calls and 14 letters at SSK regarding this subject. Of the total—which is by far the greatest number of letters ever generated by a *Handgunner* article—only three were anti-JD.

Nuff on that subject. Let's talk a bit about low velocity handgun hunting bullets (which also have defensive capabilities) and a new development in mass manufactured bullets that I predict will soon become the standard to which others will be compared.

Sometimes we need a bullet that will penetrate well, sometimes exceptionally well and sometimes we want one that will not penetrate well at all.

There is something for everyone on the market today—the big question is, "Which bullet do I use for what purpose?" Cast bullets are usually not "expanders" and should be considered non-expanding bullets capable of great penetration.

### Baloney Flavored Jello

A great deal seems to be written about ballistic gelatin tests as applied to jacketed bullets for personal defense and little or nothing written about what you can really expect in the real world when the lead hits the meat.

Ballistic gelatin tests are quite complicated for anyone without a lab and unlimited time and facilities. Backyard gelatin "studies" are open to some critical questioning. I've personally used bullets in revolvers and auto pistols which produced beautiful results in gelatin yet failed to expand on a pig at 10 yards.

Other media, such as duct seal, wet newspapers, water tanks, sawdust and silt can be valuable tools to an individual experimenter if he knows a little bit about how to achieve consistent results with whatever media he is using.

Most of these methods, if administered consistently, will give excellent comparative results. They allow you to compare one bullet's performance to another's, but unless the person has personal experience in translating the results from the media to actual shooting tests in animals, he really is only learning that bullet "A" does this and

bullet "B" does that.

### J.D.'s Quickie Test

One "quickie" test I've developed over the years is to fill oblong plastic anti-freeze jugs with water and shoot them in the center of the jug placed broadside to you. Back it up with a section of heavy corrugated board and shoot it at whatever distance you wish.

The bullet first passes through the water, then it strikes the paper leaving an undisputable record if it expanded, failed to expand, or blew up.

Last summer a friend gave me some 180 grain .44's to try. Fired from 40 yards into the water jug, they tattooed the paper with fragments from the size of a grain of pepper to half inch long slit made by a jacket fragment. Obviously a bullet suited only for groundhog size animals.

Temperature does not affect this quick test at all. As long as you hit within about three inches of the center of the jug results will be pretty uniform.

What's it good for? If a bullet expands in the four to five inch water column it can be depended on to expand passing through a deer's lungs on a broadside shot at the same distance. That's about all it's good for and some bullets that don't expand in the water column sometimes still expand on a deer.

Forget milk jugs; they give inconsistent results.

### Hornady XTP Bullet

Hornady uses two tests. One—water, which in large quantities is very hard on bullets. Two—a grease-paraffin mixture, which under the conditions Hornady uses it is not as hard on a bullet as water.

Literally tens of thousands of experiments compared to bullets returned by their customers gives them a pretty good idea of what is going on when the lead hits the meat. Other companies use their own in-house testing media with similar results.

Hornady's recent handgun bullet development, the XTP (for Extreme Terminal Performance) looks pretty much like any other good bullet on the outside, but has undergone some rigid testing in various calibers prior to being marketed. Steve Hornady seemed pretty happy with them—in fact, almost smug—while reserving the right to make minor changes as field reports came in.

Each box has an instructional slip packed

in it which lists optimum impact velocities for optimum performance. You will notice these velocities are quite wide, wider than any I've encountered before.

The 158 gr. FP shows 1175-1800 fps and the 158 gr. HP 700-1400 fps. The .44 240 gr. shows 900-1800 fps. Initially I was dubious, but it looks like the numbers given are fair.

### J.D. Tests The XTP

Since I was hosting a Handgun Hunters International open house at SSK and a hunt at White Oak Hunting Preserve (Eddie Potts, owner, Box 267A, Senecaville, OH 43780, (614) 685-6063; write or call for brochure) in a couple weeks, Steve sent several boxes of XTPs in various calibers to try out.

First tries were quite informal. Load 'em to max and shoot into mud at point blank to see if they blow up. They didn't.

They expanded without losing much weight unless they hit a rock. The control bullets shot into the same mud disintegrated into lead and jacket fragments. Accuracy was more than acceptable without any particular load development.

Day one at White Oak started out with a *Blast!* Went through about half-dozen thousands of my ammo. The XTPs were shot into everything around. A full-house 10" .454 Casull failed to blow up the 300 grain XTP fired a point blank into a clay field road. In fact, the .357's and .44's held together too.

There was no trouble getting volunteers to try the XTPs on game the next day; however, I was probably the only one who brought a .357 Magnum.

None of the .44s were recovered. They went whistling all the way through everything as all shots were broadside.

As a matter of interest, the first thing taken with an XTP from a revolver was a turkey taken by Dennis Lawrence with a .454-300 XTP; no bullet and damn little turkey recovered.

Then he popped a good sized boar with the .454-300 XTP combo through both shoulders at 30 feet. The bullet hit all the hard stuff. Gristle pads, shoulders, ribs and stopped on the second gristle pad—still weighing about 250 grains and what I would call perfectly expanded.

Blackie Sleeva used one of my .45 Colt Beauty conversions on the Super Redhawk and shot a couple lengthwise as he knew I was trying to collect bullets.

Two were recovered—both 250 grain 45's. Both perfectly expanded, both from heavy loads, one at about 40 yards and the other about 60. I think the lightest one still weighed 236 grains.

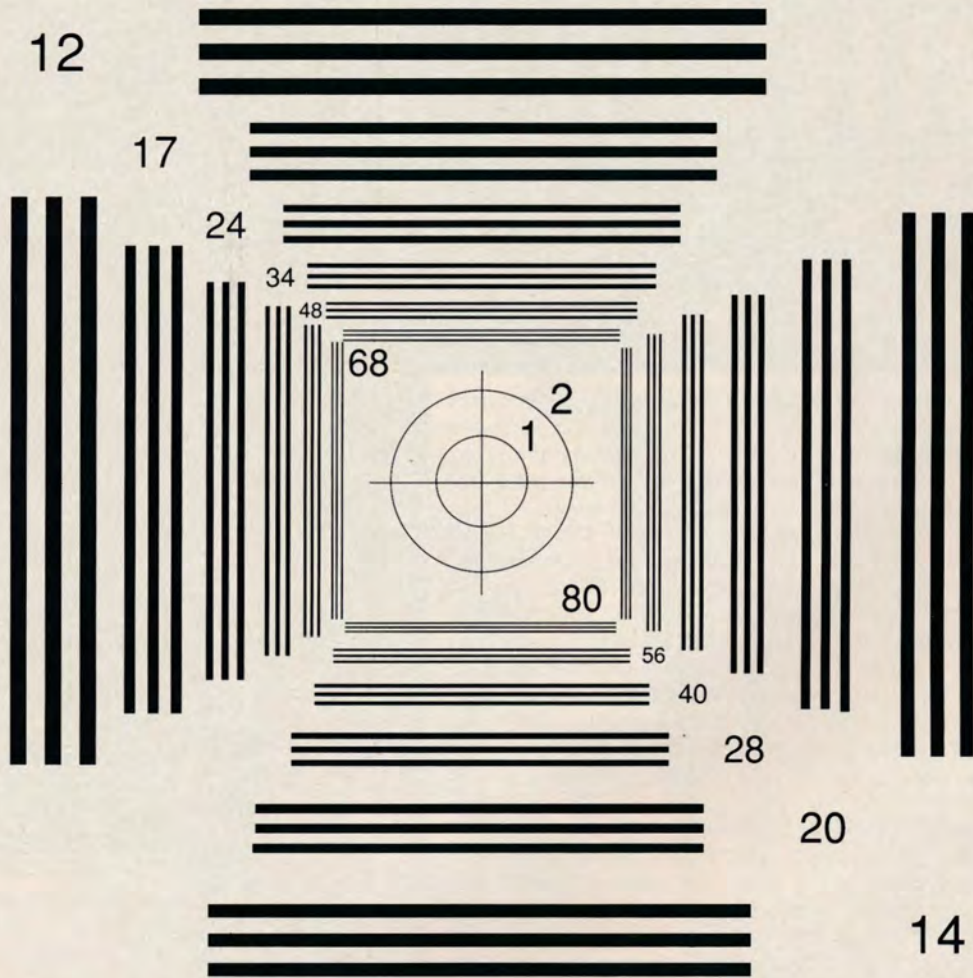
I've been using a Korth .357 Magnum for six months or so finding it to be an absolutely superb revolver and opted for the 158 grain .357 flat point XTP over a maximum dose of WW 296.

My shot was late in the day. A ram at about 70 yards. I dropped to a sitting

*Continued on page 72*



# High Definition Optics, defined.



No, this isn't a TV test pattern. But it will help you get a clear picture of Oakley's incredible new optic technology, called High Definition Optics, or HDO for short.

Wearing our new Mumbos (pictured here), HDO will let you resolve up to 40 lines on this test pattern, from a distance of 36 feet. That's more than double most of our competitors.

HDO is the result of our innovative and patented



polaric ellipsoid lens geometry that creates minimum distortion at every angle of vision. That coupled with the optical clarity of our pure Plutonite lens material gives Mumbos their extraordinary powers of resolution.

Plutonite also exceeds ANSI standard Z87.1 for optical clarity and high-velocity impact. And blocks 100% of all harmful UV and blue light.

If you're still not sure how High Definition Optics works, try on a pair of Mumbos. That will clear things up quickly.

**OAKLEY®**



# YOU CAN WIN A COLT CUSTOM CARRY GUN



**D**esigned to provide a balanced blend of reliability and accuracy for the serious shooter, my *Kim Ahrends Combat Conversion* is a complete package with relatively few options available.

Fully inclusive of all the proven features of a self-defense pistol, my Combat Conversion package includes all of the following:

**SIGHTS**— Your choice of Wichita, S&W 459 or Heinie fixed with silver soldered front ramp. All sights are milled into the slide. I suggest the Heinie for severe duty, the S&W for snag-free carry and the Wichita where adjustability and quality sight picture are necessary. The rear of the slide is serrated 40 LPI.

**TRIGGER**— Set to your specifications between 3.5 and 4.5 pounds. Included are a long NM trigger and Commander hammer.

**ACCURACY**— The slide and frame are fitted and hand lapped. The barrel is welded up at the lugs and hood and re-cut. The muzzle has a 45° chamfer cut. A solid NM barrel bushing is fit to the slide and barrel.

**PRACTICAL MODIFICATIONS**— The mag well is beveled to assist in rapid reloading. The ejection port is lowered and flared. A beavertail grip safety is fitted. The existing thumb safety is extended. A detent is cut in the slide release. The mainspring housing and front strap are checkered 20 LPI. The hammer is checkered to allow an improved purchase. The magazine release is also checkered. A set of my handcrafted Exotic Wood Combat Stocks are installed.

**RELIABILITY WORK**— The feed ramp is polished, the barrel is throated and the extractor is polished and adjusted. This work includes the addition of an 18.5 lb. recoil spring, heavy-duty firing pin spring and extended ejector.

**FINISH**— Your weapon is then reblued with a matte-blue Combat Finish. It is then range tested. Finally "AHREND'S" will be hand-engraved on the frame along with the year completed. The gun shown here comes with the optional Metaloy hard chrome finish on the receiver. I recommend the superior finish of Metaloy Industries which comes with a Special Law Enforcement Discount for full-time sworn officers. For information, contact Metaloy at (501) 423-4225 or write to them at Rt. 5, Box 595, Berryville, AR 72616.

For more information about my Kim Ahrends Combat Conversion, the other custom packages I offer for the Colt 1911 pistol, or my line of Ahrends Exotic Wood Combat Grips, please feel free to contact me at (515) 532-3449 or write to me at P.O. Box 203, Clarion, IA 50525.



**TO ENTER CONTEST:** Use a postcard (no envelopes) and follow sample. Send to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, Dept. H9, POB 880409, San Diego, CA 92108-0009. Mail before October 1, 1990.  
**Limit 1 entry per household.**

**HOM SEP/OCT 1990:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

If I win, please ship my gun through:

Dealer \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Store Hours \_\_am \_\_pm

Contest void where taxed or prohibited by law. Winners must comply with all federal and local laws. Contest open to U. S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. not eligible. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by REGISTERED MAIL on official letterhead.







# WYOMING COMBINATION HOLSTER

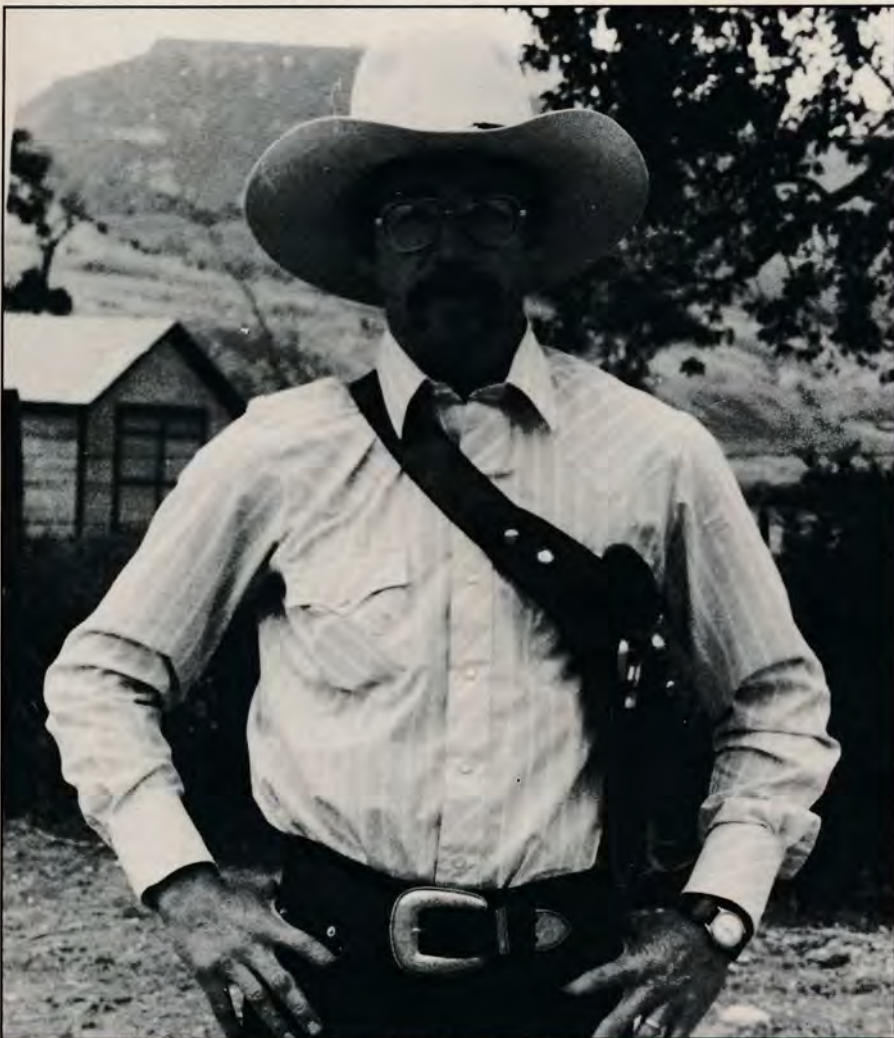
By John Taffin

**H**olsters are like three legged stools. All three legs are necessary to make something as simple as a stool work, and all three ingredients must be present in every holster or the outfit is worthless. Those three elements are design, workmanship, and leather quality. Remove anyone of these and the holster becomes a liability rather than an asset.

There are many holsters on the market that are made of excellent material, the workmanship is also very good, but the

design makes it obvious that the creator never uses the holster.

My brother-in-law, being a nice guy and thinking he would do a good deed for me, brought back a belt and holster from Mexico a number of years ago. It was a thing of beauty with intricate carving, but it was fit only as a piece of art. The design was atrocious and the leather was the cheapest available. It was a shame that such excellent workmanship was wasted on poor design and shoddy leather. I threw it away.



Von Ringler models his Wyoming Combination Holster in the shoulder carry mode. It can also be worn on the strong-side hip (top right) or crossdraw.



When I noticed the Wyoming Combination Holster advertised in the pages of *American Handgunner's 1989 Annual*, my immediate thought was that it looks good but surely it cannot work. But since I was to be in Cody, Wyo. for a week, arrangements were made to meet with Von Ringler of Ringler Custom Leather.

When Von showed up with samples of his work, I knew this would be the ultimate test: Von is tall and very slim and I am, well, just the opposite. How were these outfits that he could wear going to fit me?

No problem. Each Wyoming Combination Holster, which consists of holster and belt, has built in adjustments and the belt itself is provided with plenty of leeway to fit any size and the excess can be trimmed away, where it will not show.

The holster itself is basically a large "U" or "V" shape of two pieces back-to-back of high quality, but lightweight leather and the belt part is attached at each wing of the "V."

The whole outfit is designed so it can be worn on the strong side, cross-draw, or as a shoulder outfit. I could easily see how the rig would work as a double duty hip holster, but shoulder holster requirements are quite different. It is not just a matter of slipping a belt over the shoulder and calling it a shoulder rig.

Not to worry. The Wyoming Combination really does work all three ways and is comfortable in any position and can be shifted during the day from any position to the other as one desires. The sixgun fits into a specially formed pocket that is as if it is molded from the leather and cartridges are carried in a special pouch in front of the holster pocket.

Von Ringler runs a small leather shop full-time and he has successfully incorporated all three elements into his creation. Workmanship is excellent, as is the quality of the leather. The design shows careful thought and planning—and it works.

Ringler has managed to come up with a lightweight, easy packin' rig for heavy duty sixguns. A call or letter will bring a free brochure at P.O. Box 206, Dept. AH, Cody, WY 82414, phone: 307-645-3255.





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**RIFLE BRASS**

UN-PRIMED (REMINGTON)	100	250	500	1000
17 REM. 25 GR. PLHP	6.75	16.25	29.50	51.75
22 HOR. 45 GR. SPT	6.75	16.25	28.50	53.00
22 HOR. 45 GR. HPT	6.75	16.25	28.50	53.00
22 CAL. 50 GR. PLHP	7.00	16.50	29.25	54.75
22 CAL. 55 GR. PLHP	7.25	17.00	31.00	57.75
22 CAL. 55 GR. PSP-WC	5.50	13.00	25.25	46.00
6MM-243 80 GR. PSP	7.75	17.75	32.75	61.00
6MM-243 80 GR. PSP-CL	9.50	21.75	39.75	74.25
6MM-243 100 GR. PSP-CL	8.75	20.50	37.00	69.50
25 CAL. 87 GR. PSP-CL	8.75	20.50	37.00	69.50
25 CAL. 100 GR. PSP-CL	8.75	20.50	37.25	69.50
25 CAL. 120 GR. PSP-CL	9.50	22.00	40.25	75.50
270 130 GR. PSP-CL	9.50	22.00	41.00	76.25
7MM 150 GR. PSP-CL	10.25	23.50	44.50	82.25
7MM 165 GR. SP-CL	10.50	24.50	45.00	84.00
7MM 175 GR. PSP-CL	11.00	25.25	47.00	88.00
30-30 170 GR. RNSP	9.75	22.50	42.25	79.25
30-30 170 GR. RNSP (7.82x39)	10.50	24.25	44.75	83.50
30 CAL. 125 GR. PSP-CL	9.50	22.00	40.50	76.00
30 CAL. 150 GR. PSP-CL	10.00	23.50	44.00	82.00
30 CAL. 165 GR. PSP-CL	10.50	24.75	45.50	85.00
30 CAL. 180 GR. PSP-CL	11.25	25.50	47.75	89.50
30 CAL. 150 GR. BRONZE POINT	15.25	35.50	65.25	122.00
30 CARB. 110 GR. SFT	7.50	17.00	32.75	61.50
30 CARB. 110 GR. SPT	7.50	17.00	32.75	61.50
32-20 100 GR. SOFT POINT	10.00	19.75	35.50	66.50
45-70 405 GR. SPT	13.50	32.75	61.50	115.00
45-70 405 GR. SPT	15.00	34.75	65.75	123.00
303 CAL. 180 GR. SPCL	11.00	25.00	48.00	89.75
8MM 170 GR. SP-CL	11.00	25.00	47.00	88.00
8MM 220 GR. PSP-CL	12.75	30.00	54.75	102.50
CASE QUANTITIES AVAILABLE—PLEASE INQUIRE — PLHP: Power Lokt Hollow Pt., PSP-CL: Pointed Soft Pt. CORE LOKT				



**RIFLE BULLETS**

UN-PRIMED (REMINGTON)	100	250	500	1000
38 SPECIAL	9.00	20.50	38.75	72.00
357 MAGNUM	12.25	28.25	53.50	99.50
44 MAGNUM	11.75	27.00	50.25	93.50
45 WIN. MAG.	17.50	41.00	75.00	139.00
FACTORY PRIMED (WINCHESTER) (LAQUER SEALED PRIMER)				
380 AUTO	10.00	23.75	44.50	81.50
9MM	9.50	22.75	42.50	78.00
357 MAGNUM	14.25	33.50	63.00	118.00
44 MAGNUM	14.00	33.25	60.50	113.00
44 SPECIAL	13.50	32.50	59.00	111.00
45 ACP	12.75	29.75	55.50	101.00
45 LONG COLT	14.00	33.00	60.75	112.00
10MM	13.25	32.50	60.00	116.00
HARD CAST LEAD BULLETS				
CALIBER AND TYPE	100	250	500	1000
9MM 125 GR. RN	4.25	9.50	16.50	30.00
9MM 147 GR. SWC	4.50	9.75	17.00	31.00
38 CAL. 148 GR. DEWC	4.50	9.75	17.00	31.00
38 CAL. 158 GR. SWC	4.50	10.00	17.50	32.00
38 CAL. 158 GR. RN	4.50	10.00	17.50	32.00
10MM 170 GR. SWC	5.00	11.50	20.50	38.00
41 CAL. 215 GR. SWC	6.00	12.25	22.00	41.00
41 CAL. 240 GR. SWC	6.50	13.25	23.75	44.50
45 ACP 200 GR. RN	5.75	12.75	23.00	43.00
45 L.C. 255 GR. SWC	6.50	13.50	24.50	46.00
PROCESSED ONCE FIRED BRASS				
DECAPPED, PRIMER POCKET REAMER, BRIGHT POLISH (NOT RESIZED) PER 100-6.00 PER 500-29.00 PER 1000-49.00				
COMMERCIAL 38 SPL MIXED BRASS AND NICKEL PER 500-18.50, PER 1000-32.00, PER 2000-60.00, PER 5000-140.00				
308 ONCE FIRED UNPROCESSED BRASS CALL FOR AVAILABILITY & PRICE				

**RIFLE/HANDGUN BULLETS**

CALIBER AND TYPE (WINCHESTER)	100	250	500	1000
224 DIA. 55 GR. FMJ	4.25	10.00	18.00	33.00
224 DIA. 55 GR. PSP	5.50	13.00	25.25	46.00
30 CAL. 147 GR. FMJ	9.50	22.00	41.25	76.00
X 30 CAL. 150 GR. POWER POINT	10.00	23.50	44.00	82.00
380 AUTO 95 GR. FMJ	5.25	12.50	23.00	43.00
9MM 115 GR. FMJ	6.00	13.50	25.50	48.00
9MM 124 GR. FMJ	6.25	14.25	27.50	51.50
38-357 110 GR. JHP	6.00	13.50	25.50	48.00
38-357 125 GR. JHP	6.25	14.00	27.00	50.00
38-357 158 GR. JHP	7.50	17.00	32.50	61.00
X 30 CAL. 150 GR. POWER POINT IS A POINTED SOFT POINT. NOT FOR USE WITH 30-30				



**SPECIAL PRICES BULLETS IN CASE QTY'S.**

CALIBER AND TYPE (WINCHESTER)	CASE QTY	PRICE (PRICE/M)
224 DIA. 55 GR. FMJ	7640	230.00 (30.10)
224 DIA. 55 GR. PSP	7640	298.00 (39.01)
30 CAL. 147 GR. FMJ	2860	198.00 (69.23)
30 CAL. 150 GR. PSP POWER POINT	2800	195.00 (69.64)
380 AUTO 95 GR. FMJ	4430	172.00 (38.83)
9MM 115 GR. FMJ	3660	161.00 (45.99)
9MM 124 GR. FMJ	3390	158.00 (46.61)
38-357 110 GR. JHP	3820	165.00 (43.19)
38-357 125 GR. JHP	3360	154.00 (45.83)
38-357 158 GR. JHP	2660	147.00 (55.26)
45 ACP 230 GR. FMJ	1830	133.00 (72.68)

**ALSO AVAILABLE:** WINCHESTER PRIMERS, HORNADY BULLETS, AND VARIOUS BRANDS OF POWDER. PLEASE CALL FOR SPECIAL PRICES AND QUANTITIES.

CHECK SALE PRICES: WIN 9MM & 45ACP BULLETS-BRASS



**RIFLE BRASS**

UN-PRIMED (WINCHESTER)	100	250	500	1000
218B	17.00	40.00	73.00	135.00
22 HORNET	12.25	25.50	46.00	86.00
222 REMINGTON	14.75	34.50	60.50	109.00
223 REMINGTON	16.25	37.00	65.50	122.00
223-250 REMINGTON	18.00	41.75	76.75	142.00
220 SWIFT	22.25	51.00	95.00	178.00
243 WINCHESTER	18.75	43.50	80.00	148.00
274 WINCHESTER	19.75	47.00	84.00	155.00
284 WINCHESTER	26.25	60.50	113.00	216.00
30-06 SPRINGFIELD	20.25	48.50	86.50	159.00
300 WIN. MAG.	29.25	62.00	125.00	237.00
FACTORY PRIMED (WINCHESTER)				
30 CARBINE FACTORY PRIMED	12.25	28.00	47.50	85.00
308 WIN. FACTORY PRIMED	23.75	54.00	99.00	184.00



**HANDGUN BULLETS**

CALIBER AND TYPE (REMINGTON)	100	250	500	1000
25 ACP 50 GR. FMJ	5.00	11.00	21.00	39.00
32 AUTO 71 GR. FMJ	5.25	12.50	24.00	43.50
380 AUTO/9MM 88 GR. JHP	6.00	13.50	26.00	48.50
380 AUTO/9MM 95 GR. FMJ	5.25	12.50	23.00	43.00
9MM 115 GR. FMJ	6.25	14.00	26.50	50.00
9MM 124 GR. JHP	6.50	15.50	28.50	53.50
9MM 124 GR. FMJ	6.25	14.25	27.50	51.50
38 CAL. 148 GR. HBWC LEAD	4.75	11.25	21.00	36.50
38-357 158 GR. SWC LEAD	5.00	11.75	21.50	37.00
38-357 125 GR. JHP	6.25	14.00	27.00	50.00
38-357 140 GR. JHP	6.75	16.00	29.00	54.50
38-357 158 GR. JHP	7.50	17.00	32.50	61.00
38-357 158 GR. SOFT POINT	7.75	17.50	33.00	62.00
38 SUPER 130 GR. FMJ	6.50	14.25	27.50	51.50
41 CAL. 210 GR. JHP	9.50	22.50	41.00	77.00
41 CAL. 210 GR. SOFT POINT	9.75	23.00	42.25	79.00
44 CAL. 180 GR. JHP	9.25	21.50	40.50	75.00
44 CAL. 240 GR. JHP	11.00	25.00	46.00	85.50
44 CAL. 240 GR. SOFT POINT	11.50	26.00	47.00	87.00
44-40 200 GR. SOFT POINT	10.25	23.50	44.50	83.00
45 ACP 185 GR. SWC (JACKETED)	10.00	23.00	44.00	82.00
45 ACP 185 GR. JHP	10.00	23.00	44.00	82.00
45 ACP 230 GR. FMJ	10.25	24.00	45.00	84.00
CASE QUANTITIES AVAILABLE — PLEASE INQUIRE				



**HANDGUN BRASS**

UN-PRIMED (REMINGTON)	100	250	500	1000
25 AUTO	8.25	18.50	35.00	65.50
32 AUTO	8.50	19.50	36.25	67.50
32 SAW LONG	8.50	19.50	36.25	67.50
380 AUTO	9.00	20.25	38.00	70.75
38 SPECIAL	9.00	20.00	37.50	70.00
38 SUPER + P (BRASS)	9.25	21.00	38.50	72.00
38 SUPER + P (NICKEL)	9.75	23.00	42.00	77.50
357 MAXIMUM	11.00	26.00	50.00	88.00
41 MAGNUM	13.00	29.25	55.75	103.25
44 SPECIAL	13.00	29.25	55.75	103.25
44-40 WIN	13.25	31.25	61.25	111.50
45 ACP	11.75	27.00	52.50	93.50
45 AUTO RIM (Aveill. Oct)	12.25	28.00	52.25	97.50
45 LONG COLT	12.50	28.25	54.25	101.00
30 CARBINE	10.75	25.00	41.25	74.00
10MM	12.75	30.00	54.75	105.00
FACTORY PRIMED (REMINGTON)				
380 AUTO	10.00	23.75	44.50	81.50
9MM	9.50	22.75	42.50	78.50
38 SPECIAL	10.00	23.75	44.50	79.50
38 SPL + P (NICKEL)	11.00	26.00	50.00	88.00
357 MAGNUM	10.25	24.00	45.00	83.00
357 MAGNUM NICKEL	11.00	26.25	50.50	90.00
44 MAGNUM	13.50	32.25	59.00	110.00
45 ACP	13.25	30.75	57.50	105.00
30 CARBINE	12.25	28.00	47.50	85.00
10 MM	13.25	32.50	60.00	116.00
CASE QUANTITIES AVAILABLE — PLEASE INQUIRE				



**HANDGUN BRASS**

UN-PRIMED (WINCHESTER)	100	250	500	1000
38 SPECIAL	9.00	20.50	38.75	72.00
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45 LONG COLT	14.00	33.00	60.75	112.00
10MM	13.25	32.50	60.00	116.00
HARD CAST LEAD BULLETS				
CALIBER AND TYPE	100	250	500	1000
9MM 125 GR. RN	4.25	9.50	16.50	30.00
9MM 147 GR. SWC	4.50	9.75	17.00	31.00
38 CAL. 148 GR. DEWC	4.50	9.75	17.00	31.00
38 CAL. 158 GR. SWC	4.50	10.00	17.50	32.00
38 CAL. 158 GR. RN	4.50	10.00	17.50	32.00
10MM 170 GR. SWC	5.00	11.50	20.50	38.00
41 CAL. 215 GR. SWC	6.00	12.25	22.00	41.00
41 CAL. 240 GR. SWC	6.50	13.25	23.75	44.50
45 ACP 200 GR. RN	5.75	12.75	23.00	43.00
45 L.C. 255 GR. SWC	6.50	13.50	24.50	46.00
PROCESSED ONCE FIRED BRASS				
DECAPPED, PRIMER POCKET REAMER, BRIGHT POLISH (NOT RESIZED) PER 100-6.00 PER 500-29.00 PER 1000-49.00				
COMMERCIAL 38 SPL MIXED BRASS AND NICKEL PER 500-18.50, PER 1000-32.00, PER 2000-60.00, PER 5000-140.00				
308 ONCE FIRED UNPROCESSED BRASS CALL FOR AVAILABILITY & PRICE				



**HANDGUN BRASS**

UN-PRIMED (WINCHESTER)	100	250	500	1000
224 DIA. 55 GR. FMJ</				



# TEST REPORT

Since the Aimpoint red-dot sight first appeared on these shores in 1982, electronic sights have absolutely revolutionized pistol shooting. Over half the competitors at the Bianchi Cup last year used one and the firing line of any bullseye match is sure to be liberally populated by the battery powered sights.

The reason for their almost instant acceptance is that electronic sights eliminate one of the biggest curses of pistol shooting, sight alignment.

Through a clever, high-tech optical coating, the light from a small red diode in the tube is reflected to the shooter's eye as a suspended red dot that appears, according to my eye doctor, to be at optical infinity.

The result is that shooters whose eyes can no longer focus sharply on close objects, don't have to worry about special glasses. Even youngsters whose eyes can see through steel benefit just as much.

The two major problems for pistol shooters are sight alignment and trigger control, so with one of those reduced the shooter is free to work on the really hard part, trigger control.

Although we're accustomed to the evolution of products over time, it seems



## AIMPOINT 3000

By Charles E. Petty

to me as if the Aimpoints have gone through three or four generations in less than 10 years.

The first Aimpoint, the Mk. I, was a

heavy creature that required external adjusting mounts. The next generation of the Mk. II and Mk. III were just as heavy.

*Continued on page 121*



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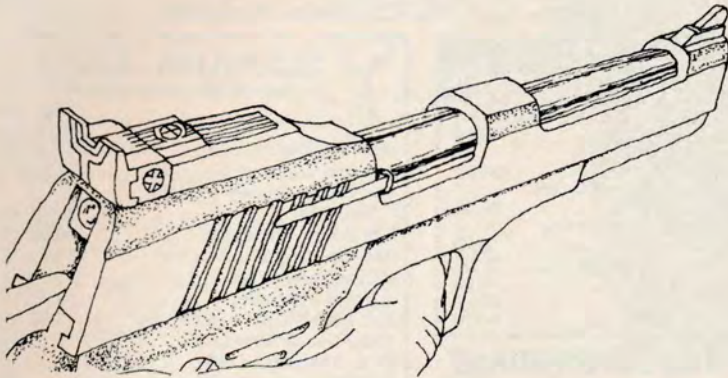
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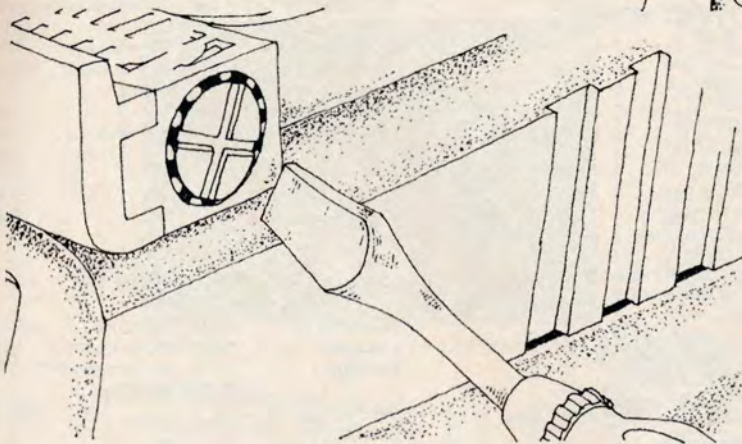
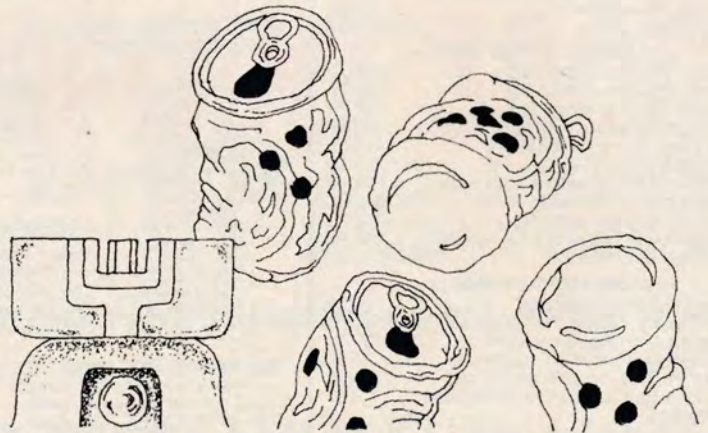
Bennett Viken & Robin Sutton

## Setting Your Sights



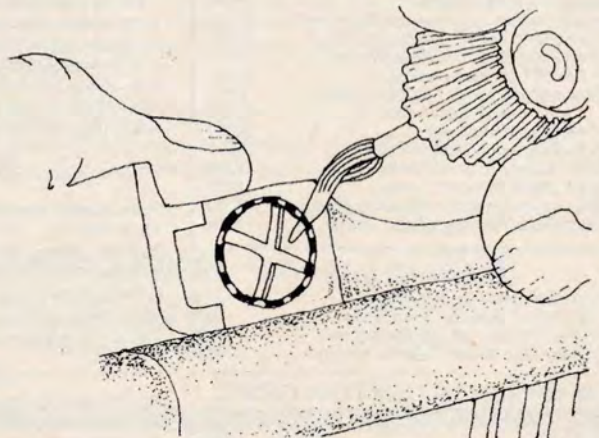
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3. Don't be afraid to move those sights.

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# WORLD'S FIRST

*Korth solved the extraction problem of rimless 10mm cartridges with an ingenious spring-tensioned, off-center ejection star.*



# 10mm REVOLVER

**T**he 10mm Auto round is to become the official service cartridge of the FBI, and now every manufacturer of note is investigating the possibilities of employing this round in a gun of their design. Glock has a 10, Smith has a 10, Colt has a 10 and, rumor has it, SIG has a 10.

All of these guns are semi-autos. But wait— would a 10mm revolver have potential?

Korth GmbH & Co. KG in Ratzeburg, West Germany was founded by Willi Korth. This gunmaker has been building revolvers in West Germany since the early Sixties and they are marketed today as a premium grade handgun. The production level is admittedly low, but they concentrate on building a very fine revolver.

Korth is known for another feature besides quality. Originally they built only five-shot wheelguns, not of the small-frame snubnose style, but what we would call a medium-frame revolver. Over the years, though, they have fallen in step with conventional wisdom and now they build six shot revolvers like everyone else.

With one major exception.

## Five Shot 10mm

I first saw and handled the 10mm five-shot Korth revolver in Nuremberg, West Germany in March of 1989. I was attending the IWA show and upon reaching the Korth booth discovered not one, but two 10mm revolvers.

The first was the gun seen here. They call it the Combat Model and the other gun was also a five-shot gun, but with a six inch barrel and target sights, called appropriately, The Target Model.

But there are many reasons why a 10mm revolver could be both practical and popular. A revolver would not experience the problems associated with high slide velocities or functioning with both low and high velocity ammo in the same magazine.

Those who reload their own brass would appreciate the ease with which empty cases can be saved after shooting a revolver and it is easier to shape the grips of most any revolver for a perfect fit.

For those who argue the revolver is obsolete and out of fashion, look at the number of .45 ACP wheelguns being bought and sold with enthusiasm and you will realize that the concept of a marriage between the wheel gun design and the 10mm Auto cartridge is something that could possibly survive the seven year itch.

The two Korth 10mm revolvers are not production guns, but what they call "Works Prototype" guns. They were built specifically to find out if the 10mm cartridge would work in a revolver. In that perspective they offered the Combat Model to the FBI for trial testing. At this point it is unknown what the FBI reaction was to this 10mm revolver, but I doubt if it set their hearts aflutter with the limited

five round capacity.

The Korth 10mm revolvers have a number of features that set them apart from garden variety revolvers. The cylinder release is in a unique position. It sits beside the right side of the hammer. For those of us used to the cylinder latch located on the left side of the frame behind the cylinder as found on the S&W, Ruger and Colt this takes some getting used to.

Korth points out that while firing heavy loads with a thumb-high position, other cylinder releases will create injuries and my experience would wholeheartedly agree with that. The recoil of the Korth 10mm is vigorous, but not unbearable and completely injury-free.

The Korth 10mm Combat Model revolver with a three-inch barrel weighs 2.17 pounds or approximately 35 ounces. The four inch L-frame Smith & Wesson Model 686 with round-butt and Pachmayr grips weighs approximately six ounces more at 2.58 pounds. The combination of the increased weight and the recoil absorbing synthetic grips on the .357 Magnum left one with the impression the Korth 10mm demonstrated more power, at least to the shooter's hand.

A quick trip to the chronograph revealed the power hidden in this medium sized revolver. Three different 10mm loads were tested through the Korth: Hornady's 170 gr. JHP, PMC's 200 gr. truncated cone load and PMC's 170 gr. JHP.

The Hornady load demonstrated the highest velocity with an average of 1193.1

fps from the three inch barrel. The PMC 170 grainer averaged 1164.5 fps while the 200 grain load averaged 1055.4 fps.

The biggest problem with shooting the 10mm cartridge is the absence of a flanged rim for use by the extractor star at the back of the cylinder.

Korth solved this problem through use of a star that is spring loaded to "sit" off center. Loading the chambers with cartridges will push the star back to center, but when the rounds are seated the star returns to its off center position by means of the spring.

The system works amazingly well as extraction was always positive and complete. The ejector rod comes back far enough to have the empty cases completely clear the cylinder.

Korth has designed the ejector rod to be a non-rotating unit and uses the conventional two point lock-up for the cylinder. The only spring used for locking the cylinder is under the front of the barrel in the plunger assembly in the barrel shroud and it worked well even with the firm recoil of the 10mm round.

Unlike other designs the Korth has a completely flat recoil shield. It features no grooves or recesses, but one flat surface. Korth seems to feel that a flat plane recoil shield is more attractive.

Korth also builds in a push-button release of the cylinder assembly. A button on the right side of the frame forward of the trigger guard can be depressed allowing an opened cylinder to be removed by





a gentle thrust forward. It is extremely quick and simple and makes cleaning the chambers on this revolver an easy task.

Korth says it takes over 25 man-hours to build a normal revolver and seven of these are required for the surface finish, while four hours more are required for the fitting and final adjustment of the lockwork.

The Korth guns are beautiful in both detail and finish. Korth claims the finish is almost scratch-resistant because it is so hard, and I will agree the finish is hard. But the test gun demonstrated some scratches.

The Germans like to keep their guns light because of the limits set by international competition. It may be a good policy for international competition, but this cartridge and gun combination could use a little more weight.

The trigger pull on the test gun was extremely smooth. Granted, it was different than anything tried before, but it was good. Korth uses a sear roller and has five different sizes available for adjustment of the double-action characteristic.

The 10mm gun came with roller #1, while most guns come equipped with roller #5 and two other different sized rollers. The single-action trigger pull is set at the factory at three pounds.

The double-action pull is rather long in comparison to different American made revolvers, but it is so positive the shooter is able to lock the cylinder and squeeze off the final portion of hammer travel as if cocked single-action.

In other words, shooting the Korth 10mm five shot revolver was a fun experience and one that convinced me of the practicality of the marriage of the 10mm Auto cartridge and a wheelgun design.

It was only natural to grab a set of machinist's calipers and take some off-hand measurements just to see how difficult it is to build a 10mm cylinder for a common American sixgun.

The 10mm Korth was measured and compared to a Smith & Wesson 686. Before we get into the actual dimensions, one point should be brought out. The Korth five-shot cylinder has the bolt-stop locking notches cut between the chambers of the cylinder and the 686 has them cut in the center of the chamber.

The 686 .357 Magnum cylinder had an overall length of 1.6210" while the Korth 10mm cylinder was 1.6465". The outside diameter of the two cylinders was 1.5630" for the S&W 686 and 1.5095" for the 10mm Korth. The wall thickness between each chamber on the .357 Magnum 686 cylinder was 0.1180" while the Korth had a beefier 0.1260" between each of its five chambers.

However, the outside wall thickness was considerably thinner on the Korth, but remember there are no bolt-stop locking notches present. The Korth 10mm outside wall thickness was 0.0660" inch and the 686 outside wall thickness (including enough material for cutting the bolt-stop notch) was 0.0880".

All of which leads me to suspect it is

within the realm of possibility for American manufacturers, at least Smith & Wesson, to build a 10mm revolver on a medium frame revolver.

Forget doing it on the large frame guns like the big frame Dan Wesson, the Ruger Redhawk, or the N-frame Smith & Wesson because that is outside the sphere of practicality.

The combination of a medium-framed revolver and the 10mm Auto round has the potential to fulfill the promise left empty by the large .41 Magnum guns.

Korth has built a great little revolver, but it has little application in today's world of American law enforcement because if a six round capacity is proving unpopular, then a five round cylinder is absolutely repugnant.

Add to this equation the higher cost of Korth products (the test sample was insured for \$7,000 during shipping) and you can see why the Korth revolver has little future in American police circles.

If, however, you are a shooter interested in a revolver that's virtually handmade by a small company (less than 25 people are employed) and with a small annual output (seldom more than 800 units per year and a maximum production since 1965 of only 18,000 handguns), then you should examine a Korth.



*Korth revolvers are imported by Gun-town U.S.A., 992 S. State Road 7, Margate, FL 33068 or phone (305) 974-7412.*



# The AYOOB FILES

## ARMED CITIZEN IN RUNNING GUNFIGHT: THE MARC HALCON INCIDENT

**Situation:** The victim of a drive-by shooting returns fire and gives chase in his Corvette Stingray.

**Lesson:** Jackals flee prey that bites back, especially prey with a Swenson custom .45 auto.

As January turns to February, 1981, in the San Diego suburb of Spring Valley, the community is troubled. Gang violence has plagued the neighborhood where Marc Halcon, 27, has come to visit his uncle. It is dark as the young construction entrepreneur leaves his uncle's house and heads for his beige Corvette at the sidewalk. He leans heavily on the cane that has been his constant companion since he was crippled by polio at three.

A lowrider full of people pulls alongside and someone asks Halcon the time. He starts to look at his watch when he catches the movement in the right rear seat. A man is holding a pistol in his hand. He extends it toward Halcon and Marc hears a sound like a loud handclap. He has been shot at from close range.

Instinct takes over. Marc has been shooting since he was four years old, and, at the time nine years ago, had already been competing in IPSC for more than three years.

His practiced right hand knives between his sweater and his Banana Republic vest, closing on the Armand Swensen custom lightweight Colt Commander in the Milt Sparks Yaqui Slide holster at his right hip. His left hand has dropped the cane and come up to support the firing hand in a Weaver stance before the second rapid-fire shot is unleashed from the car.

Halcon can feel the bullet go past his head. It makes him think of a summer bug. In the slow motion tachypsychic moment of the threat, his eyes have already told his brain that there are five individuals in the low-slung car, two in front and three in back. And there is time for him to feel anger at the strangers who would take his life for no reason.

And then payback time has arrived. Levelling the Commander at center-mass of the man who had fired, Halcon triggers three fast shots. Glass flies and sheet metal clangs as the .45 ACP Winchester Silvertips hammer against the vehicle.

The car peels out, the driver gunning it down the street as Halcon holds his sights level on the vehicle. He sees a flash from the car and fires a fourth shot that smashes through the rear window of the sedan, and sees the people inside ducking down. Then the customized car is out of range. The last shot has been fired at 25 yards.

The gunfire has brought Halcon's uncle to the door of his home. Marc yells, "Call the police! Tell them there's been a gunfight, and be sure to describe me. Tell them I'm the good guy!"

Then he jumps into the 'Vette, ejecting the partly depleted magazine onto the right front seat and shoving in the spare carry mag snatched from its resting place behind his left hip. He knows there are two more .45 magazines in a pouch in the glove box. Instead of holstering the .45, he shoves it under his left thigh, hoping it will give him quicker access, and fearing that the bucket seat of his Stingray will

*Continued on page 98*



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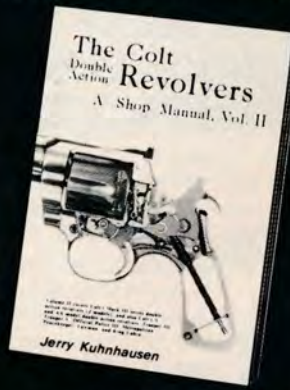
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BY JOHN TAFFIN

# TAFFIN TESTS

**T**he fabulous .401 PowerMag caliber has the power of the .44 PowerMag with less recoil. This is the ideal large caliber revolver cartridge. Will kill any animal on the face of the earth or shoot through the cylinder block of any automobile. It will flatten a human no matter where you hit him."

Thus read the hype on the Herter's

mail from the famous Waseca, Minn., firm.

And, sometimes, the products actually lived up to their Minnesota hype, hype that would make a New York ad-writer blush. According to Herter's, both Evan Marshall and Massad Ayoob have been wasting a lot of time gathering statistics on handgun stops as Herter's unashamedly announces that the .401 would "flatten

and African game".

The .401 was chambered in the "Herter's Famous Custom Grade Super .401 PowerMag Revolver" and boasted such amenities as "advanced design hammer spur, man-sized grips for more accurate shooting, built-in rear sight protectors, frame strengtheners, holster slippers, heavy-duty trigger guard, and custom

## the .401 PowerMag

.401 PowerMag cartridge as found in Herter's catalog from the 1960's.

From 1893 until sometime after the enactment of the infamous Gun Control Act of 1968, Herter's Model Perfect reloading supplies, outdoor equipment, guns, et cetera—all touted as being better than anything else offered—were sold by

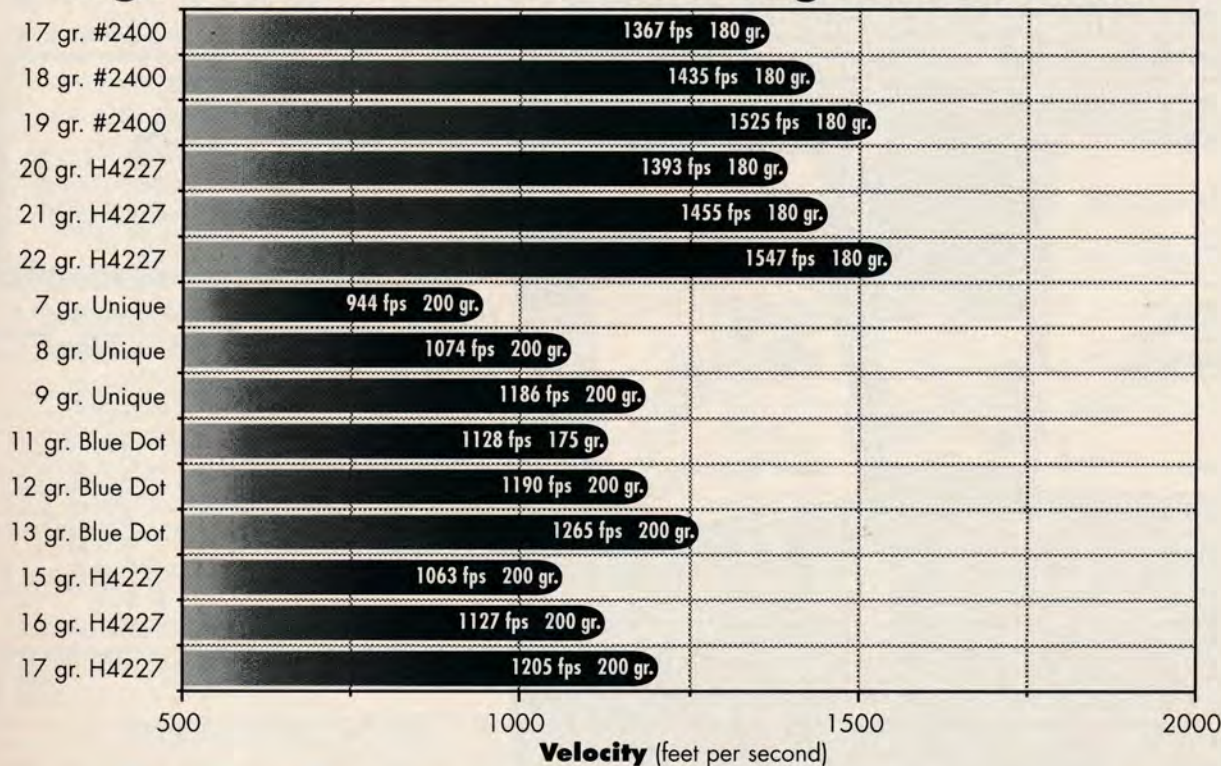
a human no matter where you hit him."

Of course they said the exact same thing about the .44 PowerMag. And the .357 PowerMag, though not claimed to have this magical power over humans, also joined the .401 and .44 as all three were described thusly: "With this revolver you can hunt all North American

hand finished and polished, individually custom blued... the finest quality all-steel single-action revolvers in all respects humanly possible to make."

While unable to live up to the Herter's expectation, the .401 can do quite nicely as a medium bore magnum cartridge. It was simply destined to be killed off by the com-

### High Performance .401 PowerMag Favorite Loads



**WARNING:** Approach all handloading carefully by reducing charges listed by a least 10% and working up cautiously. 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.



bination of the introduction of the .41 Magnum in 1964 and the Gun Control Act of 1968, which stopped mail-order sales to all except federal firearms licensees.

The .401 PowerMag actually pre-dates Herter's introduction by at least two decades. In the late 1930's, a New York gunsmith named Gordon Boser, who designed Lyman's #429360 .44 Magnum bullet as well as #401452 for the .38-40 and his pet wildcat, was working with the .401 Special.

Using a Colt Single Action .38-40 with a new cylinder reamed to accept .401 Winchester brass trimmed to 1.225", Boser's .401 used 180 grain 38-40 bullets over 18.5 grains of #2400.

Ray Thompson, who designed four excellent gas check bullets for Lyman

heavy-framed .38-40 by simply reaming the cylinder to accept the bottle-necked Winchester case. The excellent performance of the .401 coupled with the announcement that Buckeye Sports will be offering a Ruger .38-40/10mm Convertible put that thought on indefinite hold.

Suppose one does find oneself as the proud owner of a .401 with no brass and no reloading dies? Not to worry. I made brass for the .401 by simply lubing .41 Magnum brass and running it into the .401 sizing die.

Occasionally, a slight belt of brass would be raised at the base that would have to be milled or filed off, but in most instances, .41 Magnum brass was instantly transformed to .401 brass by one pass through the .401 sizer.



(#429215, #429244, #452490, and #358156) also worked extensively with the .401. And even before this time, in the late 1920's, gunsmith Pop Eimer had a ".40 Magnum" made up using .30-40 Krag brass. Thompson's .401 may have been based on Eimer's case.

Until recently I had seen only one .401 PowerMag in my entire shooting life and that was one that I got for a friend from Herter's in 1966 for the magnificent sum of \$47.

At the time, Ruger Super Blackhawks were \$116 and Smith & Wesson .44 Magnums were retailing for \$140.

In the past year, I hit upon an even greater bargain picking up two .401 PowerMag revolvers, 125 rounds of .401 brass, and Herter's .401 reloading dies for a total cost of only \$250. One of the revolvers, except for a little holster wear, is virtually brand new.

The original Herter's .401 PowerMag ammunition was absolutely awful. Apparently, nothing had been learned since the introduction of the .357 Magnum with soft lead bullets in 1935 as factory ammunition for the .401 was made up of soft swaged bullets that leaded terribly.

This did little or nothing to enhance the .401's reputation.

Is the .401 viable today? After extensive use over the past six months, my advice to any sixgunner who finds a .401 at a good price is: *Buy it!*

My original thought on purchasing the first .401 was to have it converted to a

The foregoing assumes one has .401 dies. If not, I would not be a bit surprised to find .401 dies available from RCBS (605 Oro Dam Blvd., Dept AH, Oroville, CA 95965). And if one has 10mm dies on hand, brass can be made using the 10mm sizer, preferably non-carbide, and the .401 can also be reloaded using the 10mm dies.

My dies only provide a taper crimp, which has served adequately, but if I need a heavy crimp, I run .401 ammunition, made from .41 Magnum brass and assembled with 10mm dies, into a .38-40 crimping die.

Once one has the brass, dies, etc., reloading the .401 is as simple as loading any other straight-walled pistol case. I've been cheating lately and have been using a 10mm carbide sizing die to re-size my .401 fired brass.

And that brass, stamped "HERTER'S 401 MAG." is tough! It was used when I got it, who knows how much, and I have reloaded it with heavy loads a minimum of five times, and have lost exactly one case with a split neck.

My .401 good fortune continued last month. My good friend Joe Penner, who always takes pictures of me when I need them to illustrate articles, was rummaging around under the shelves of the local gunshop and behind the fancy new bullets found two 100-round boxes of ".38-40 180 grain cast bullets" for \$4 each.

They turned out to be cast from Boser's #401452 and I felt like I had struck a mini-gold mine. Doing a little

back tracking, we were able to locate the mold, purchase it, and the same friend is now in my shop casting #401452's even as I write this.

Actually, my best results with the .401 have been obtained using not .401 bullets, nor even .38-40 bullets, but 10mm bullets. RCBS's #10mm-200 is a real barn burner in the .401 PowerMag. I shoot these right from the mold, un-sized and lubed with Lee's Tumble Lube.

Results? Using 17.0 grains of H4227, this load clocks out at 1205 fps according to the Oehler Model 35P and puts five shots in seven-eighths of an inch at 25 yards.

The same bullet sized to .400 and crimped over the front shoulder, and loaded over 20.0 grains of H4227, does 1424 fps and shoots into five-eighths of an inch at 25 yards. It just doesn't get any better than this. And this from a six and one-half inch Herter's .401 PowerMag revolver that originally sold for \$47!

Patriot Manufacturing (P.O. Box 2014, Dept. AH, Sebring, FL 33871) offers both 180 grain JHP bullets for the .410 as well as cast bullets from Lyman's #401043 mold. Both of these are excellent bullets for the .401 and I had my best results with 18.0 to 20.0 grains of #2400 for 1,400 to 1,500 fps and 19.0 grains of H4227 for 1,400 fps.

When I started work with the .401, Veral Smith of LBT (P.O. Box 357, Dept AH, Cornville, AZ 86325) designed two flat-nosed .401 bullet molds of 205 and 250 grain weights both of which utilize maximum case capacity. Smith is noted for being able to design bullets that get the most velocity possible.

After I checked the prototype bullets for length, LBT sent the molds to Dailey Specialty (6980 E. Camino Encinatas, Dept AH, Tucson, AZ 85715) and I soon had a batch of test bullets of both weights. I ran both the 205 and 250 grain LBT bullets to 1,300+ fps and brass extracted easily in both instances. Both #2400 and H4227 were the best performers with these bullets.

Boser's old .401 Special bullet, proved to be not quite as accurate as some of the above mentioned bullets, but did perform well with both #2400 and WW296 with 20.0 grains of WW296 for 1,350 fps being the most accurate.

In its short life, the .401 PowerMag was chambered in only one revolver, the uglier-than-sin, but super-strong Herter's PowerMag sixgun made by Germany's Sauer and Sohn. I intend to keep one of my PowerMags strictly as-issued and cut the other to a handier 4 3/4" barrel length, remove the ugly ears on both sides of the rear sight, flat-top the frame and also remove some of the excess metal from both the grip frame and the hammer spur.

Thus modified, the PowerMag sixgun and the .401 PowerMag cartridge should serve me well into the next century.





**A**s one who tests numerous handguns and shoots many thousands of rounds per year, I find it necessary to employ a rest for both sighting-in and accuracy testing. Rests come in all shapes, sizes and materials, and I have employed many different types, from large rocks with a folded up vest for padding to the swing-away tire carrier on the back of my Bronco. The latter is especially handy in bad weather.

One creation, dubbed by my friends as the Taffin Machine Rest, consists of a piece of carpet about three feet wide and six feet long, that is rolled up tightly and taped with duct tape. The whole affair is covered with a piece of leather, as revolvers blow holes in carpeting very quickly due to all the blast and crud that escapes from the cylinder/barrel gap. It really serves quite nicely as a portable rest.

Sandbags are the best for a rest but they also require protection from revolver blast and they can be a nuisance to carry around. And it takes a lot of sandbags to make an adequate rest for handgun and hands; anywhere from eight to ten bags are usually needed for my shooting.

Thanks to Outer's, I no longer need carpet remnants and my requirement for sandbags has been cut to one small bag. My resting needs are now met by Outer's Pistol Perch, a portable and fully adjustable rest for sighting-

in and accuracy testing of handguns.

The Outer's Pistol Perch is made of tubular steel, and consists of a rigid three-legged base, a U-shaped cradle covered with soft plastic that both accepts and protects the gun barrel, and a platform covered with sheepskin that serves as rest for hands and gun butt.

The whole outfit is adjustable three ways: 1) the cradle can be raised and lowered by loosening and tightening of a large knob 2) the platform can be raised and lowered in the same manner and 3) the platform can be moved from side-to-side.

The advantages over sandbags are numerous. It certainly is much more portable and can be easily carried in the field or to the shooting range, and weighs much less than my required number of sandbags. Now I simply place one small bag on the platform so I can "dig-in" when I'm shooting.

There are trade-offs, however, as I do not believe the Pistol Perch is quite as solid as shooting from sandbags, which allows the gun to be virtually "bedded" into the bags. For the great convenience afforded, I am willing to accept that.

The Outer's Pistol Perch retails for \$79.95 and is available from Omark Industries, Sporting Equipment Division, Outers/Weaver, P.O. Box 39, Dept AH, Onalaska, WI 54650.

# OUTERS PISTOL PERCH

By John Taffin



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**A**s I leafed through the gun trade paper, a small one-inch by two-inch add in the top corner immediately caught my eye. It simply read: .44 SPECIAL CONVERSIONS.

Now I am a pushover for a good .44 Special and had two Bisley Colt SA's and one Ruger Three Screw Blackhawk at the time, all of which had started life in a less desirable chambering than the grand old .44 Special.

What's so special about the Special? Yes, it has been heavily overshadowed by the .44 Magnum, .41 Magnum, and the .454 Casull, and even full house .45 Colts, but for easy packin' combined with real portable power, the .44 Special is still a great package whether it be in a Smith & Wesson Model 24/624 or Colt Single Action/New Frontier.

At 900 feet per second, a 250 grain Keith bullet in a .44 Special is hard to beat

as a defensive sixgun, and loaded up to 1200 feet per second, the .44 Special becomes a hunting handgun for close range deer and black bear.

I did not own my first .44 Special until three years after the first .44 Magnum was introduced to the sixgunning public. My wife presented me with the ideal present our first Christmas together, a Smith & Wesson .44 Special six and one-half inch barreled 1950 Target.

Since that first .44 Special there have been many other sixguns

of both single action and double action persuasion: Smiths, Colt SA's, and New Frontiers, Great Westerns, five-shot Charter Bulldogs, and the above mentioned Bisley and Ruger conversions.

I immediately clipped the ".44 SPECIAL CONVERSIONS" ad and contacted Diagonal Rd. Gun Shop (14131 Diagonal Rd., Dept AH, LaGrange, Ohio 44050).

# Lil' Rugers

*Shrinking down a Ruger single-action is mighty fine, but rechambering it to a big bore .44 Special, well, that's just too good to be true!*

*By John Taffin*





Andy Horvath knew of me through my writings and I found a kindred spirit who also had enjoyed the sixgun articles of Elmer Keith and Skeeter Skelton. Andy told me that he had been working on guns since the age of thirteen at which time he restocked his .22 rifle with a discarded piece of walnut floorboard. His specialty now is custom sixguns and I can now attest to the fact that he does excellent work and his re-bluing is especially beautiful.

"Andy, I'd like a real special .44 Special, a round-butted, four-inch barreled .44 built on a Ruger .357 Three Screw Blackhawk. A real .44 Special packin' pistol."

Andy also had a soft spot in his heart, soul, and spirit for a good .44 Special and related that he had converted both Smith & Wesson and Ruger sixguns to .44 Special and also an old Winchester '92 that he had bought for parts that turned out to be so good internally that he relined the barrel to .44 Special.

Andy said he could round the butt of the .357 Blackhawk and cut the barrel and ejector rod housing to four inches with no problem. So off went a like new six and one-half inch .357 Three Screw Blackhawk. Along with the .357 Blackhawk, I sent a picture of a .45 ACP Ruger that leathermaker Thad Rybka had made up with a round butt and four-inch barrel.

The older Three Screw Rugers are smaller than New Model



**Andy Horvath tastefully marks his conversions with handcut lettering.**

Rugers and would certainly make a dandy little Sheriff's Model Ruger. Along with the Ruger .357, I also sent a seven and one-half inch Super Blackhawk barrel, and some special items I had been saving for just such a project. From my parts box, I pulled my last Ruger blued steel ejector rod housing, and my last 1960's wide Super Blackhawk hammer. I also sent a pair of Rosewood Ruger grips that I had picked up somewhere. I believe when Ruger had an over-run of .22 Single-Six Colorado Centennial stocks a number of years ago.

It seemed like a very short time before I received a package marked Diagonal Rd. Gun Shop. Eagerly unwrapping the little package, I found all I had asked for and more. It is not too often I get really excited over a sixgun anymore, but this was a case of love at first sight.

I found a beauty of a Special sixgun. The bluing was deep and perfect, the round butted grip felt even better than I had hoped for. Horvath had polished the standard aluminum grip frame and round-butted it so it slipped into my hand perfectly. The grips were also rounded and tapered just right. Most single action grips are tapered the reverse of what they should be, namely big at the bottom and small at the top. Horvath did it right.

*Continued on page 112*





*The secret guns of*  
**CLAUDIO SALASSA**

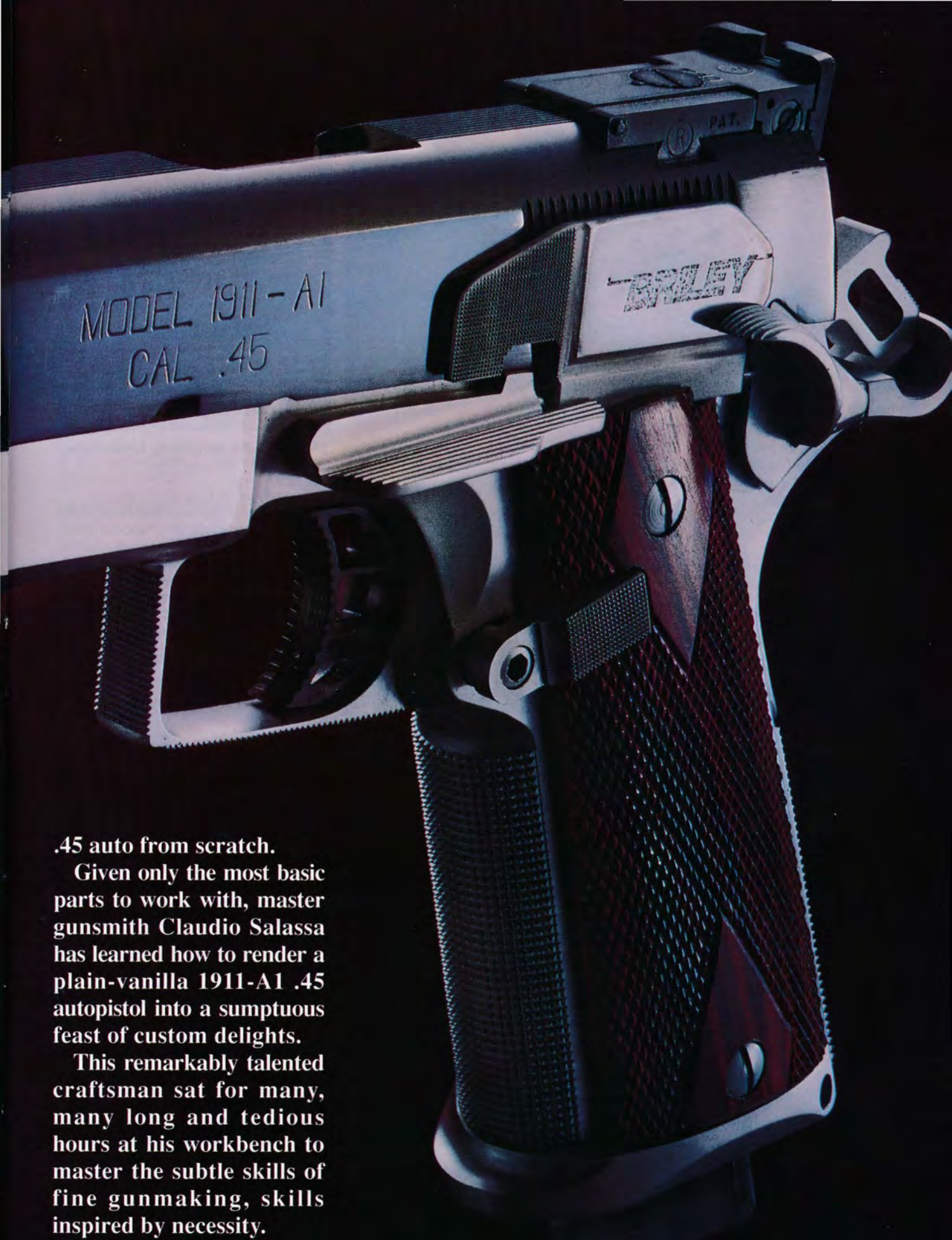
*Unveiled for the first time in America, the exquisite craftsmanship of Africa's premiere pistolsmith.*

*By Cameron Hopkins  
Photos by Ichiro Nagata*

**N**ecessity has a way of inspiring people to overcome all manner of adversity. Sometimes a pressing need can be met relatively simply, like substituting a paper clip for a blown fuse when your truck's headlights go out on a remote country road.

Other times the mother of invention demands a bit more ingenuity, like handcrafting a fully customized, compensated





**.45 auto from scratch.**

Given only the most basic parts to work with, master gunsmith Claudio Salassa has learned how to render a plain-vanilla 1911-A1 .45 autopistol into a sumptuous feast of custom delights.

This remarkably talented craftsman sat for many, many long and tedious hours at his workbench to master the subtle skills of fine gunmaking, skills inspired by necessity.





**A custom holster is necessary for the frame extension and Ernie Hill Speed Leather is already on line with a new model that fits the Briley custom pistol.**

Claudio is from Johannesburg, South Africa, where he was hailed as the premiere combat pistolsmith in a country that is second only to the United States in its active participation in IPSC. It was here in the land of the Zulu and the Boer that Claudio was forced to perfect his gunmaking abilities in spite of an international arms embargo against his country.

Despite the scarcity of guns and the exorbitant blackmarket cost of those few rare parts that squirmed their way into the

country, the South African gunsmith nonetheless managed to weld and braze his way to dynamic new designs. Claudio's distinctively profiled beavertail grip safety, for example, is made by welding-up a stock part and hand-filing it to shape.

The story of a talented gunsmith making-do with hardly anything but scrap metal is inspiring. It is both an astonishing technical achievement and, moreover, a triumph of man's fierce will to succeed. Best of all, this is a heartwarming story



**Mag funnel is completely handmade.**

that ends happily for Claudio Salassa.

After wrestling with the most enormous decision of his life, Claudio finally made up his mind to immigrate to the United States with his wife Shelagh, daughter Natalie, 6, and son Paolo, 4. He sold his house and car, crated up his possessions and sailed from Africa for the distant shores of America.

### **The Briley Connection**

Needing to find a job before he could complete his immigration application, Claudio found a home with Briley Manufacturing of Houston, Texas. Jess Briley, owner and president of the company, pioneered the screw-in choke tube for shotguns and the name of Briley is to competitive trap and skeet shooting what the name of Wilson is to combat pistol shooting. In short, Claudio was fortunate enough to hook up with one of the best firms in the business.

The only catch was that Briley excels in shotguns, not pistols, and the talents of this amazing African pistolsmith would not be fully utilized by reaming shotgun barrels for the ultra-precise Briley choke tube installations. When Claudio first went to work at Briley, he was assigned to polishing shotgun receivers, which would be something like having Joe Montana serve as waterboy for the 49ers.

However, Jess Briley quickly recognized the abilities of his new employee and moved to maximize those talents by organizing a new wing in his industrial facility, the Briley Pistol Division, under the exclusive control of Claudio Salassa.

But even before the new Briley Pistol Division had time to open, Claudio just couldn't leave well enough alone. Intrigued with the Briley choke tubes, the inveterate inventor designed the "Briley Comp Choke" which quickly



received rave reviews by leading competitive shotgunners.

By applying the concept of his pistol compensator to shotguns, Claudio turned Briley's choke tube into an effective expansion chamber design that cuts muzzle rise by over 40%! Already the Briley Comp Choke is sweeping the trap and sporting clays world like nothing since, well, screw-in Briley choke tubes.

Claudio and I have been friends for a number of years dating back to when I was a foreign exchange student at Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa. Long have I known of Claudio's outstanding pistolsmithing ability and long have I kept it a secret. You see, there's no point in writing an article about this great gunsmith on the Dark Continent whom no American handgunner could ever patronize unless, of course, he popped in to buy a gun while on safari.

For years I cherished the secret of this unknown gunsmith confident that one day, somehow, someday I would have the pleasure of introducing him to you. That time is now.

### **Sensational Pistols**

The incredible custom pistols of Claudio Salassa are not just good, they're sensational. The workmanship is absolutely Best Quality and I use that term as the British originally applied it to only the very finest of weapons. Truly deserving to rank in the highest echelons of his profession, Claudio Salassa shares a talent in the same league with such consummate masters of the combat pistol craft as Steve Nastoff, Jim Boland and Paul Liebenberg.

Paul Liebenberg? Isn't he also a South African? Now that's a coincidence.

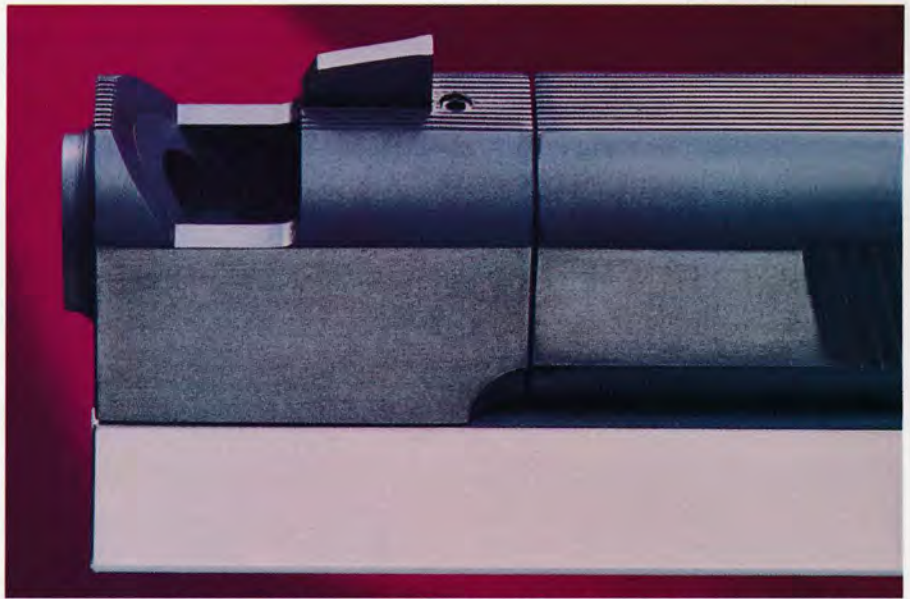
Newly hired by Smith & Wesson to head their Performance Center of custom handguns, Paul Liebenberg is indeed an expatriate South African who emigrated to the United States to work for Pachmayr Gun Works back in the early Eighties just as Claudio came to the Promised Land in 1989.

A serious student of custom handguns would have noticed the striking similarity between the work of Claudio Salassa and Paul Liebenberg and wondered if it's not more than just coincidence. It is—the two master pistolsmiths used to work together in South Africa!

Sharing their techniques together, learning their trade together, Paul and Claudio both worked for the same gunshop in Johannesburg where they collaborated on such distinctive designs as the gracefully sweeping beavertail grip safety and the ergonomically contoured Swenson thumb safeties.

When I shot the gun you see here in the 1990 Steel Challenge, people would comment about the "Paulie pistol" I was shooting, so similar are the two men's work.

There are, however, two major differences between the custom combat



*The single port compensator, with deflection shield, is used for this .45 ACP.*



*Notice the detailed perfection of these handmade Salassa combat accessories.*



*We tested the Salassa pistol in the heat of competition at the Steel Challenge.*

PHOTO BY NYLE LEATHAM



pistols of Claudio and Paul. First, Paul no longer customizes Colt's or Springfield Armory's 1911 now that he works for S&W.

Secondly, even if Paul did still offer his superb Government Model pistols, he would be backlogged to the tune of a three year waiting list; Claudio is now accepting current orders with no backlog.

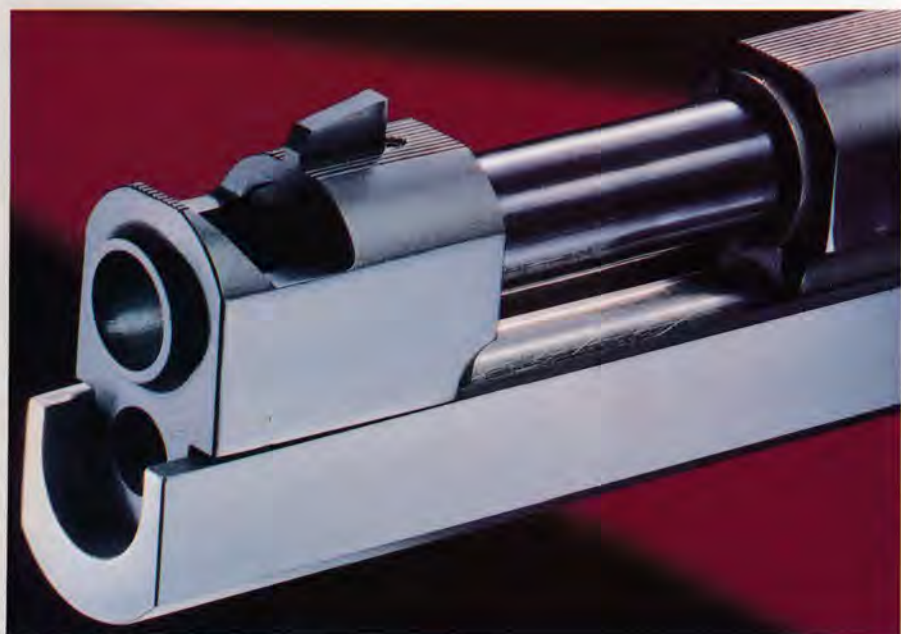
Yes, you read that right. *No backlog!* Claudio has been in America less than a year now and the Briley Pistol Division just opened a few months ago. For the first time ever, you can order one of the exquisite custom pistols of *American Handgunner* without waiting forever to get it!

This is the first time a national readership has ever heard of Claudio Salassa, but it certainly won't be the last. Two other major magazines are already preparing stories on Claudio. Remember you heard it here first, and if you want to beat the crowd, call him at the Briley Pis-

beautifully handmade parts is a dead giveaway. When you see work like this, you *know* you're viewing the very best.

Claudio calls this gun his Bianchi Cup Model because it was originally designed for the unique demands of NRA action shooting. The singular characteristic that sets Claudio's Bianchi gun apart from his IPSC combat pistol is the use of a heavy-weight frame extension that serves to stabilize the pistol for the Barricade Event and also to provide a suitable platform for mounting an Aimpoint sight.

The gun weighs a recoil-absorbing 50 ozs., almost twice as heavy as the new breed of ultra-light pistols from Jim Boland and others. The featherweight guns, like the .38 Super pistol used by 1990 Steel Challenge winner Jethro Dionisio, are trimmed and slimmed to shed every ounce possible. The theory is that a lighter gun will be more snappy and responsive for the special require-



ment Division at 1-800-331-5718 or 713-932-6995 (in Texas).

## Hallmarks Of Quality

The full-house competition pistol shown in these gorgeous photographs is based on a Springfield Armory Model 1911-A1 in caliber .45 ACP. That it has the basic components of a Government Model is all that indicates the extensively modified pistol ever started life as the same GI auto that dear old dad took to war. Amazing!

Claudio rendered the basic service gun into a unique combat pistol designed as an all-around competition pistol for IPSC matches, Bianchi Cup tournaments and Steel Challenge speed shooting contests.

There are two hallmarks of a Salassa custom pistol— an exacting attention to detail and an unremitting dedication to quality. It's really not a subtle thing to pick out a Salassa pistol's excellence because the wonderful abundance of

ments of speed shooting— ultra-light, ultra-fast.

But these Ethiopian guns are too light to comfortably handle the sharp recoil of full-power IPSC loads or even the punch of match hardball for Bianchi shooting. That's precisely why Claudio prefers to pack on the pounds for his heavyweight underlug that, naturally, he built entirely from scratch.

An optional extra on this pistol is a handmade custom sight base that attaches to the underlug for an Aimpoint sight.

Furthermore, I'm not so sure that Light Makes Right. There's nothing like good old Newtonian weight to soak up recoil. For many years shooters have actually tried to make their guns heavier— witness the Breskovich Advantage steel grip panels and the Nastoff tungsten guide rods.

Shucks, look at the original "comp gun" itself, the Clark Bowling Pin Model which was nothing more than a Govern-



ment Model with a weight attached to the end of the barrel.

And it's not necessary to have a fly-weight pistol just for some weird sensation of "swing," the feeling of smoothly tracking a pistol from target to target. I shot the gun shown here, which weighs 50 ozs., in the Steel Challenge and it did just fine, thanks.

For IPSC shooting with a stout load of WW 231 and a 200 grain semi-wadcutter clipping along at 950 fps, the Salassa combat pistol really comes into its own. Shooting these hot .45 loads in the heavy underlugged pistol feels about like shooting light bullseye loads in a standard Government Model.

I *really* like the muzzle-heavy feel of Claudio's pistol, but then again I've always found the ultra-lights are *too* snappy and *too* quick. The extra weight seems to be balanced precisely in the right place to give the shooter a smooth, naturally-pointing feel.





**The Briley match-grade barrel seemed to prefer Federal's 185 gr. Match, shooting inside 2" at 50 yards.**

## Thumbs Up

Like so much of the Salassa custom pistol, many of the accessories are modified from existing parts. Look at the handmade ambidextrous safeties, for example. Claudio started with a plain Wilson ambi safety, cut off the little thumb levers and welded on two new pieces. He contoured these new pieces to ergonomically match the human thumb with a curved shaped reminiscent of an Arabian scimitar.

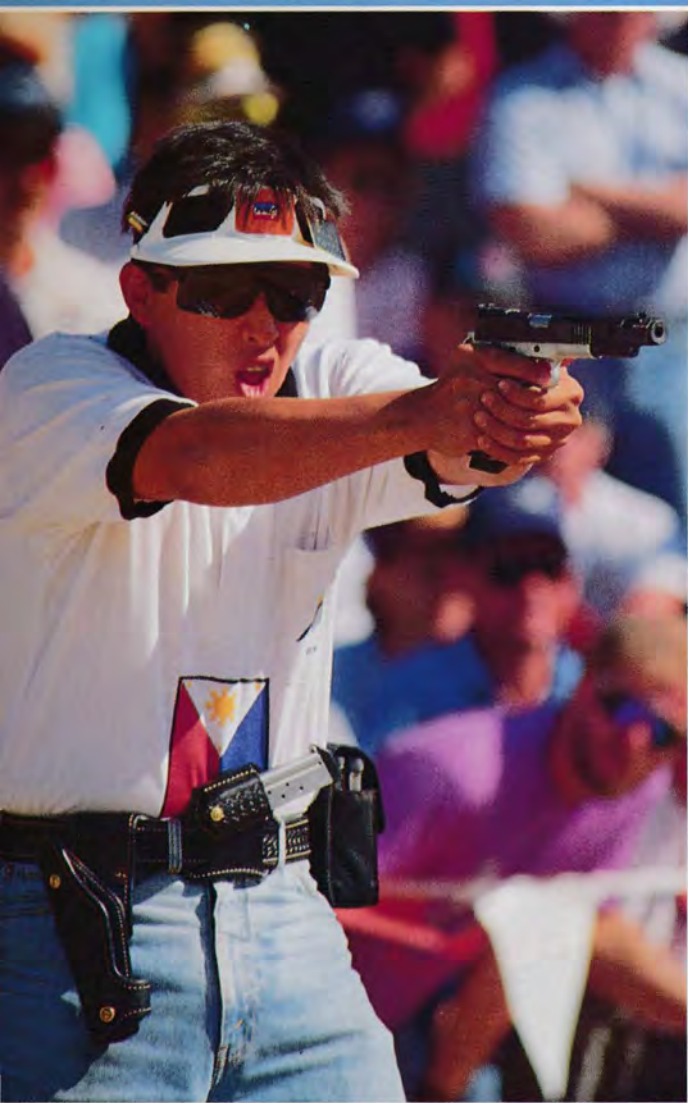
A human thumb bends to more of a crescent shape than a square-corner and the handmade Salassa safety duplicates this curvature exactly. It is as comfortable to operate as it is tasteful to look at.

Another ergonomic touch that Claudio incorporates on a Briley Pistol Division full-blown race-gun is a handmade slide stop. Designed to maximize the strength of a shooter's grip, the slide stop features

*Continued on page 106*







# 10th

*An 18-year-old Wunderkind trounces the best shooters at the World Speed Shooting Championship!*

*By Cameron Hopkins*

*Photos by Nyle Leatham*





# ANNUAL STEEL CHALLENGE



Winner's presentation pistol, a Steve Nastoff full-house .38 Super



**B**efore any big match I like to ask the Big Guns where the smart money is riding. Chatting with the top competitors often draws some vital hints on who's hot and who's not. This can be most informative for a reporter looking to weed a field of several hundred shooters down to a manageable handful that can be watched during the match.

My pre-game show is considerably easier than Frank Gifford's. Unlike the volatile world of pro football, here you don't have to worry about any given shooter winning on any given Sunday. It's more like covering Wimbledon where you already know

that only a dozen or so of the top seeds have any real chance of winning.

After all, a reporter can only be in one place at a time and it's very awkward to deal with a situation like the 1989 Bianchi Cup when a total darkhorse pops out of the field and beats all the Big Guns. No one had ever heard of Lemoine Wright before his surprising win; no one has heard from him since.

So I ask around a bit, I check the track before the race.

But in all my years of covering competitive handgunning, I've never heard pre-game prognostications like I heard at

the 10th Annual Steel Challenge held recently in California. Never before have I heard such despondency among the best shooters in the world. Never before have these past and current champions seemed so dejected, so resigned to losing.

"Let's face it," moped six-time IPSC national champion Rob Leatham, "We're all shooting for second place."

"Looks like it's the kid's year," predicted Chip McCormick, the only man to ever win two Steel Challenges, back-to-back no less.

"If he shoots his game, he can't be beat," ventured '82 Challenge champion Mike Plaxco, formerly of Team Springfield but now flying the colors of Team Smith & Wesson.

Who is this marvel of shooting that has these world-class shooters trembling in fear? Who is this kid?

### **They Call Him "Jet"**

He was a mere youngster of eight, hardly more than a toddler, when John Shaw won the first Steel Challenge in 1981. Ten years later and now a veteran of three Steel Challenge matches, "the kid" is an 18-year-old college student who is fast. Make that *very fast!*

Jethro Dionisio from the Philippines is not only the youngest shooter to ever win a major pistol match, but also he is the first foreigner to ever win the Steel Challenge. And—my oh my!—he does put on a show of blinding speed when he slaps leather!

How fast is he?

So fast that in the warm-up match held two weeks before the Steel Challenge as a dry-run for range personnel and practice for the competitors, Jethro beat Rob Leatham like a step-child. Like a red-headed step-child.

The kid his friends so appropriately call "Jet" for his after-burner speed absolutely wiped the range with Leatham and Jerry Barnhart and Brian Enos and anyone else who dared to step to the line against him. Jet blew past them all like they were standing still. He won the warm-up match by an astonishing mar-



**Jethro Dionisio wowed all the folks with his uncanny speed shooting. The friendly kid from the Philippines had a lot of friends from back home who competed in the Steel Challenge. Among the most enthusiastic shooters in the world, Filipinos are always competitive in world competition, but this was the first international championship go to this pearl of the Pacific.**



gin, over two full seconds!

It was a phenomenal performance and it shook up America's top pro shooters. Coming just two short weeks before the Steel Challenge, Jethro's astonishing victory cast a spell of gloom and defeat over his erstwhile rivals.

But at the same time, people couldn't forget Jethro's previous performance at the '89 Challenge when he totally dominated the match, won three stages and then completely blew-out on the Speed Option stage. He may be hotter than a two dollar pistol, but can he hold his mental game together? That would be the

question when the match began.

## Ten Years Of Steel

Fresh white paint glistened on the steel plates of the Tenth Annual World Speed Shooting Championships, a.k.a. the Steel Challenge. It was a poignant moment to see the dawning of the second decade of the Steel Challenge and to contrast the shooting of today with that of 1981 when it all began.

Things have changed dramatically in 10 years. The guns are more sophisticated, the calibers are smaller, the holsters are faster, the money is richer. Even the



*The two founders of the Steel Challenge, Mike Dalton (above left) and Mike Fichman (above) returned to compete in the 10th anniversary of their creation. Ten years ago it was considered risqué to shoot steel plates (ohmygod, what about the ricochets?) but the two Mikes knew better and gave a whole new sport to handgunners. Arnt Magne-Myhre (below) even got the word in Norway and came to America to shoot a dazzling second place score.*







name is different. It is almost as though the term "combat shooting" has somehow become tainted over the years for today we politely refer to this sort of thing as "action shooting."

In 1981, a state-of-the-art gun was a Jim Clark "Bowling Model" which was a basic everyday 1911 with a block of steel attached to the end of a six-inch barrel. No ports, no holes, no compensators. There was only one caliber, of course, the .45 ACP.

Back then the hot set-up was a Rogers speed holster from a small, fledgling leathershop in Florida newly opened by an ex-FBI agent. Since then, Bill Rogers has parlayed his patented thermo-laminate holster construction into a multi-million dollar deal sold to Safariland. The staying power of his remarkable genius at designing competition holster seems to have stood the test of time—nearly half of the 1990 field wear a Rogers-designed Safariland speed holster.

Taking a stroll down memory lane was enhanced by the presence of many of the same shooters who competed in the first

Steel Challenge. Some of the great Combat Masters were there, but others like Jim Zubiena, Bill Wilson, Ross Seyfried and Lee Cole have stopped competing for a variety of reasons.

Foremost among the ghosts of Steel Challenge Past were the two men who conceived and developed the match, Mike Dalton and Mike Fichman. The two Mikes competed in the 10th Annual match and it was almost like glimpsing into a time machine to see Mike Dalton snatch his Jim Clark customized Colt from a *crossdraw* Ted Blocker holster. Mike Fichman proved that he's still got the fast reflexes of a master shooter as he popped his Detonics custom combat pistol from his crossdraw rig of yesteryear.

Most past champions are still actively competing, but some are not. John Shaw, the first winner, has retired from competitive shooting entirely, as has Nick Pruitt. Mickey Fowler no longer competes at speed shooting, but he is still a threat at the Bianchi Cup. The rest of the decade's past champions are all still active and were competing at the 1990 match.



**Clockwise from left:** Team Smith & Wesson debuted at the Steel Challenge with (L-R) team manager and S&W historian Roy Jinks, revolver maestro Jerry Miculek, Tom Campbell, Mike Plaxco and Brian Enos.

Doug Koenig, 21, is another youngster like Jethro with a tremendous potential. He placed 6th, but he's capable of better as Leatham's Column describes on p. 24. Judy Woolley of Montana "shot like a man," according to one observer, with her non-compensated Colt .45. She ran away with the Top Lady title and is the first female to ever rank in the top 50 overall.

Jerry Barnhart, shooting for Team Colt and Wilson's Gun Shop, gave us all a true lesson in sportsmanship during the Shoot-Off when he graciously gave his opponent another chance when his adversary's gun jammed.





Let's take a moment to recognize the achievements of these great shooters:

### Ten Years Of Winning

1981	John Shaw
1982	Mike Plaxco
1983	Mickey Fowler
1984	Nick Pruitt
1985	Rob Leatham
1986	Chip McCormick
1987	Jerry Barnhart
1988	Chip McCormick
1989	Angelo Spagnoli
1990	Jethro Dionisio

### The New Challenge

For the first time in its 10 year history, the Steel Challenge is no longer an open tournament. The new director of the Steel Challenge, Kerby Smith, enacted a populist change that switches the match to a pro-am format, like The Masters.

No longer does a duffer from Eggstain, Ark., have to compete against the likes of Rob Leatham and Angelo Spagnoli. Now a shooter can use his classification from IPSC combat shooting to

enter in either A, B, C or D classes. Those shooters with a Master Class rating or who have finished in the top 50 of previous Steel Challenges are promoted to the upper division of Pro Class. The rest of us compete in Amateur Class.

Each class has as its top prize a spectacular custom pistol from some of the finest combat specialists in the country. Richard Heinie, for instance, built the A Class winner's pistol. Each stage in the match also puts up a valuable firearm, like a S&W Model 1006, for the Amateur Class winner.

This new format for the Steel Challenge was loudly applauded by top-flight competitors as well as rank and file shooters. Now everyone has a chance to distinguish himself and win a really nice prize by competing against others of similar skill level.

The only complaint I heard about Director Smith's new program was from shooters who didn't learn of the popular change until it was too late to enter the match. Next year, I predict, the Steel Challenge will enjoy a record-setting

attendance as grassroots shooters from across the country will flock to participate in what everyone agrees is the most "shooter friendly" match on the circuit.

### A True Sportsman

A highlight of the Steel Challenge occurred after the match during the Shoot-Off of the top eight finishers and the top eight "category winners" like Top Cop, High Lady, B Class Winner, etc. Predictably, the man-on-man elimination slowly weeded out the weaker shooters until only the strongest and fastest survived.

A classic confrontation was in the making from the outset between the blistering speed shooter whom they call The Burner and the new Steel Challenge champion, Jethro Dionisio. The Burner is Jerry Barnhart, winner of the 1988 Steel Challenge and one of the fastest leather-slappers on the pro tour. Of course Jethro had just beaten third place finisher Barnhart in the match, but the Shoot-Off was a whole new ballgame.

In the first of their two-out-of-three  
*Continued on page 92*

## GUNS AND GEAR OF THE TOP TEN

Time	Name	Pistol	Caliber	Model	Pistolsmith	Holster	Reloader
67.66	Jethro Dionisio	Caspian/Colt	.38 Super	1911	First Option	Ernie Hill	Dillon 550-B
71.49	Arnt-Magne Myhre	Caspian Arms	.38 Super	1911	Leon Leffel	Safariland	Dillon
72.92	Jerry Barnhart	Colt Firearms	.38 Super	1911	Bill Wilson	Safariland	Dillon 1050
73.08	Michael Voigt	Springfield	.38 Super	1911	Kodiak Prec.	Safariland	Dillon 1050
73.72	Rob Leatham	Springfield	.38 Super	1911	Springfield Custom	Safariland	Dillon 1000
75.72	Doug Koenig	Springfield	.38 Super	1911	Springfield Custom	Safariland	Dillon
75.91	Brian Enos	S&W	9mm	5906	Allan Zitta	Safariland	Dillon
76.95	Chip McCormick	Springfield	.38 Super	1911	Steve Nastoff	Ernie Hill	C-H
78.91	Angelo Spagnoli	Springfield	.38 Super	1911	Jim Boland	Ernie Hill	Dillon
80.74	Chris Horii	Springfield	.38 Super	1911	Springfield Custom	Ernie Hill	Dillon



Don Hamilton's triple chamber .38 Super comp gun



A series of ports in the top of the slide, into the barrel, makes for an unusual compensator



Our cover gun took a workout at the match



The Jet's winning gun, a skeletonized .38 Super from First Option gunsmiths



Brian Enos' racy S&W 5906 tricked out by Allan Zitta

## Guns

Colt	105
Springfield	96
S&W	20
Caspian Arms	19
Glock	4
Federal Ord.	3
AMT	1
Browning	1
Detonics	1
Essex	1
Llama	1
Randall	1
Taurus	1
Thompson	1

## Calibers

.38 Super	156
.45 ACP	48
9mm	27
.38 Spl.	19
.357 Mag.	4
10mm Auto	2
.40 S&W	1

## Leather

Ernie Hill	129
Safariland	99
Ted Blocker	10
Gordon Davis	9
Bianchi Intl.	3
Kein	3
Bill Rogers	3

## Reloaders

Dillon	174
Lee	9
RCBS	4
Hornady	3
Star	2
C-H	1

# GUNS AND GEAR OF THE STEEL CHALLENGE



## COP TALK

Continued from page 27

a gun off-duty for personal protection.

Item: An armed embassy guard from the London Metropolitan Police is returning to his assignment from lunch when he interrupts an armed robbery in progress. The thugs open up on him; though hit, he kills one with his .38 and neutralizes the other with a severe wound.

Does his society thank him for risking his life on their behalf? No, a major London newspaper editorializes that if embassy guards were stripped of their guns, or at least required to check them in before going to lunch, such embarrassingly nasty bloodbaths wouldn't stain the city's streets and the nation's image.

Item: A squad of SAS troopies in plainclothes on an anti-terrorist mission are following a trio of known terrorists believed to be involved in planting bombs in public areas of Gibraltar. As the suspects see them and appear to reach into their pockets as if for weapons or remote-control explosive triggers, the SAS men cut them down in a hail of Browning fire.

They *and* the SAS go on trial in the media as well as the courts. The official verdict from that hearing, finally, was Justifiable Homicide.

### Death Of A Citizen

It is in this kind of aftermath that Post Shooting Trauma flourishes. Would anyone *not* be bitter about putting their life on the line to protect society, only to be told that the act had shown them to be a brutal subhuman with no right to wear a badge or gun?

That trauma is imaginary only to those who have never used, or faced having to use, deadly force within our society. To the cop who has had to face the inevitable societal judgment that follows when the echoes of the shots have died away, the trauma is all too real.

He has learned at that moment the true difference between a policeman's gun and a soldier's. The soldier kills a designated enemy, and his society rewards him. The policeman kills a criminal who is nonetheless seen by the system as a member of society, and that cop now faces investigation and judgment in *The Death of a Citizen*.

The more military the mindset, the less the trauma. In some countries where the cops are literally at armed war with the bad guys, they are indeed heroes for slaying same, and they suffer little if any PST.

An American SWAT cop, part of a drilled domestic version of an infantry squad and deployed only against the very worst and most vicious, may be made to suffer less than the road patrolman who kills a berserker who pulled a gun during a routine traffic stop.

In England, where even most cops



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Champion

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don't want to carry guns and the constable who actually uses one can become an outcast even among his own, the trauma is predictably deeper.

Enough on the subject for now, but more soon on the nature of armed policing within the supposedly unarmed British constabulary. The differences and the parallels are surprising, and since American policing takes its model from Sir Robert Peel's bobbies, they are strikingly relevant to The Job as we do it here.



## HUNTING

Continued from page 38

position and placed the dot of the Ultra Dot over his heart and squeezed it off. He went from a fast walk to a flat-out-heart-shot-run and piled up in about 30 yards with the 158 gr. XTP under the hide on the off side.

I think it was great performance for a .357. The hollowpoint would have expanded more, but penetrated less. The recovered bullets looked like the ones in the Hornady advertising.

### XTP Accuracy

XTP accuracy has been excellent in the .357 Korth, the SSK .45 Colt "Beauty" Super Redhawk conversion and a couple

.454's. My best 100 yard group with them was three inches from the .45 Colt scoped with a 2X and about four inches with the red dot sighted Korth.

HHI member Ray Price sent two max load groups with the 250 XTP from a .454 that measured about 3/4" for one and about 1/4" for the other at 25 yards. Just this morning Brian Alberts told me he was really impressed with their accuracy in his .454.

Admittedly, the numbers of animals killed and bullets recovered aren't great, but I'll say that after 35 years of autopsying animals and recovering bullets, these XTPs are going to become the bullets all mass produced low velocity expanding hunting bullets are going to be compared to.

They remind me a great deal of Pete Pi's Cor-Bon bonded core hunting bullets in performance. I'm not saying Speer, Sierra or Nosler don't make good bullets—they do—but for over-all expanding revolver or auto pistol bullet performance, I think Hornady has just set a new standard.

While speaking of bullets, Pete Pi of Cor-Bon (P. O. Box 10126, Dept. AH, Detroit, MI 48210, phone: (313) 894-2373) has acquired the right to market all JDJ cast bullet designs including marketing bullet molds, bullets and loaded ammunition. Pete is the sole individual to have these rights. Contact Pete for anything regarding them. His line of loaded

ammunition is extensive; police ammo is also included.

Rhino (P. O. Box 669, Dept. AH, Seneca, SC 29679, phone: (803) 882-0779) is a large supplier of parts of various kinds. Rhino Shock .223/5.56 Hyper Velocity ammo is an aluminum tip hollow core telurium solid copper base round that leaves the muzzle at around 5000 fps.

In the test gun it delivered over 4800 fps. Designed for close range usage by hostage rescue teams etc., it is not supposed to exit its target. It takes the fast-twist .22 barrels to stabilize it, and it sure makes a neat flash on striking steel. It may have some application for you as a varmint or animal control round.

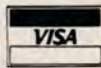
Blammo is an exploding projectile ammo that gives a nice flash and puff of smoke at impact. It's available in most popular handgun calibers. Not cheap at \$14.50 a pack of five, you might find it just the thing you wanted. If you are interested in unusual ordnance I strongly recommend this humorous, informative \$3 catalog at the address shown above for Rhino. Tell 'em you read about in the *Handgunner*.



### Correction

In the July/August 1990 issue, we inadvertently omitted the byline for the "Duelling" article. It was written by Wilfrid Ward. We apologize to Mr. Ward.

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	1000	\$50.00		1000	\$34.50		1000	\$42.00		1000	\$50.00
	500	\$26.00		500	\$18.00		500	\$23.00		500	\$26.00
	1000	\$50.00		1000	\$34.50		1000	\$44.50		1000	\$50.00
	500	\$17.50		500	\$18.50		500	\$26.00		500	\$26.00
	1000	\$33.50		1000	\$35.50		1000	\$50.00		1000	\$50.00
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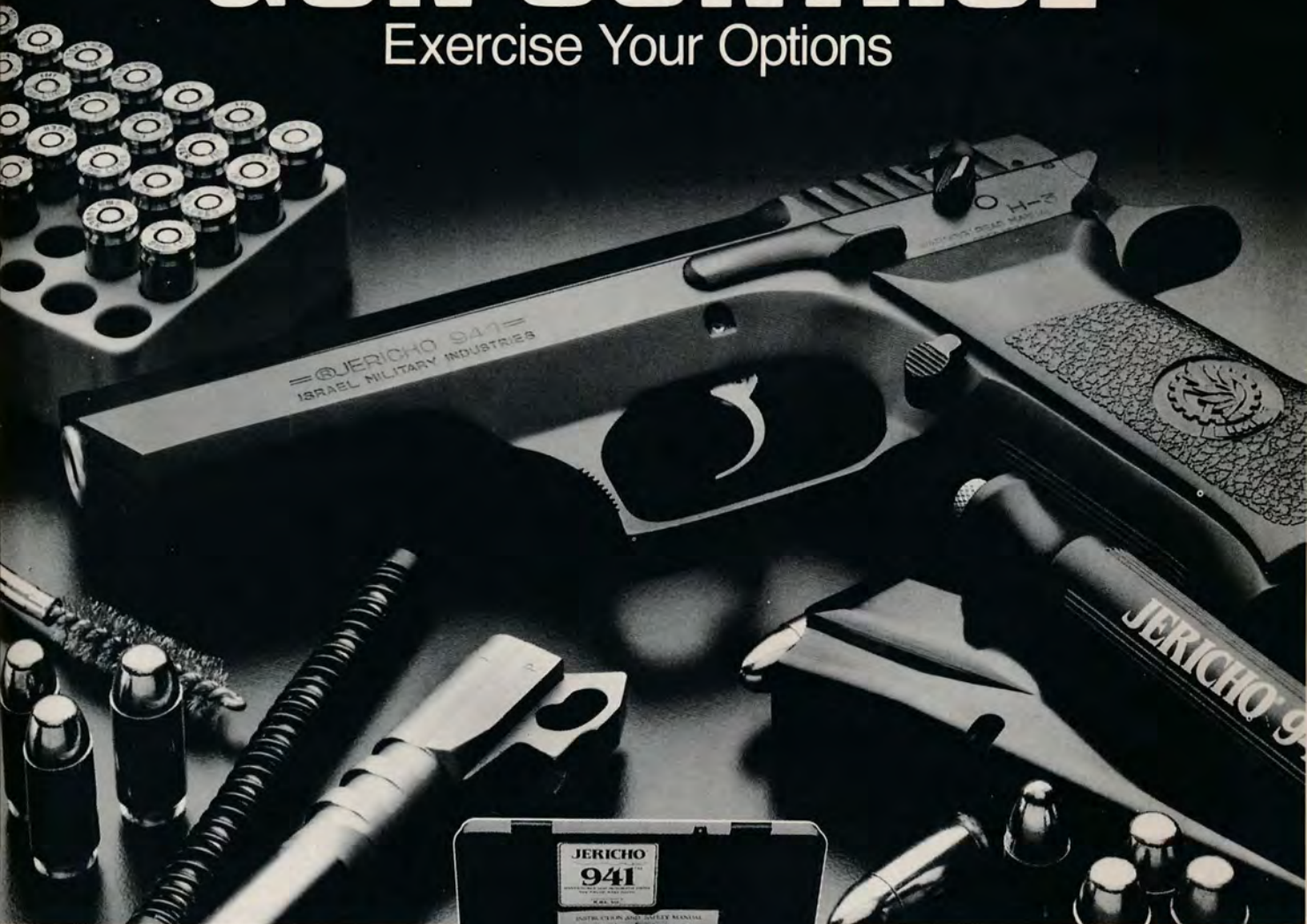
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# .40 S&W

By Cameron Hopkins  
Photos by Ichiro Nagata

All the rage these days are The Forties which include (L-R) the new .40 S&W, the .41 AE, the Centimeter wildcat and the 10mm.

If I attended Shooting University, I would sign up for Cartridge Evolution 101 because to me the development of a new cartridge is fascinating.

Often a new cartridge is simply the product of expediency, like when Georg Luger simply cut the neck off .30 Mauser cartridges to create the 9mm Luger.

Sometimes a new cartridge is the logical extension of an existing round, like the growth of the .44 Special into the .44 Magnum.

Occasionally a new cartridge just drops out of the sky, seemingly from nowhere, like the .41 Action Express.

Just the names can be a study unto themselves, especially the exotic ones with their colorful designations like the 8x71 Peterlongo, .40-70 "What Cheer" and .240 Page Pooper.

I'm fascinated with *how* a new cartridge comes into being. Since Smith & Wesson doesn't exactly do this sort of thing everyday—the last time they





worked on a new cartridge was 1964 with the .41 Magnum—I thought it might be interesting to see how the .40 S&W evolved.

## Birth Of A Cartridge

In 1978 two inquisitive Smith & Wesson engineers dabbled with a .40 caliber round that never went anywhere. Snubbed by a management that was solely intent on the Bottom Line, the first S&W .40 caliber round landed in the dumpster.

The two engineers working on the project, Dick Baker and Norm Spencer, called their little baby the .40 B&S with the *double entendre* of the initials being lost on no one.

The attitude of management then—those grab-a-buck Bangor Punta bean-counters who contributed so significantly to Smith's appalling decline in quality control—was that a 10mm auto pistol cartridge wouldn't sell.



cartridge wouldn't sell.

Baker and Spencer worked with both .41 and .40 caliber bullets in their quest for a medium-bore auto pistol cartridge. They played with homemade cases turned from brass rod on a lathe in the S&W

Model Shop.

They tried a rebated-rim case, like the .41 AE uses, and found that making the case rim smaller than the case body offered nothing but problems. They toyed with .38-40 bullets and .41 Magnum bullets in their experimental brass.

But the time was not right for a .40 caliber. The veritable avalanche of "new and improved" Forties Of The Nineties were still over a decade away.

For better or worse, the .40 B&S became an arcane footnote in the annals of obscure Smith & Wesson trivia.

The years passed. The misbegotten 10mm Bren Ten pistol surfaced, and then promptly sunk, while Smith & Wesson changed hands like a washed-up relief pitcher in the minor leagues—three owners later, the old gun company eventually passed to British hands where it resides today.

To find the source of the .40 S&W we

## .40 S&W Handloads

Bullet	Powder Charge	Bar-Sto Velocity	Pressure Barrel Velocity	% Factory Pressure
*Hornady 155 gr.	10.5 grs. ??????	1249.2 fps		100%
*Winchester 180 gr.	8.3 grs. ??????	1027.4 fps		100%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	5.1 grs. Super Target	954.2 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	5.5 grs. Super Target	979.1 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	5.7 grs. Super Target	1021.6 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	6.4 grs. WW 231	1147.5 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	6.7 grs. WW 231	1189.0 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	6.9 grs. WW 231	1215.3 fps	1142 fps	102%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	7.5 grs. Super Field	1235.4 fps	1124 fps	70%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	8.0 grs. Super Field	1296.3 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	8.5 grs. Super Field	1346.9 fps		
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	9.0 grs. Super Field	1383.2 fps	1293 fps	109%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	8.5 grs. AA #5	1153 fps		94%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	9.0 grs. AA #5	1220 fps		116%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	5.0 grs. AA #2	1004 fps		78%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	5.3 grs. AA #2	1027 fps		83%
Sierra 150 gr. JHP	5.5 grs. AA #2	1091 fps		115%
Hornady 170 gr.	9.5 grs. AA #7		1059 fps	82%
Hornady 170 gr.	10.0 grs. AA #7		1080 fps	82%
Hornady 170 gr.	7.0 grs. AA #5		903 fps	62%
Hornady 170 gr.	7.5 grs. AA #5		985 fps	72%
Hornady 170 gr.	8.0 grs. AA #5		1049 fps	98%
Lee 175 gr. lead	4.0 grs. AA #2		838 fps	62%
Lee 175 gr. lead	4.5 grs. AA #2		911 fps	78%
Lee 175 gr. lead	5.0 grs. AA #2		1035 fps	113%
CP 175 gr. lead	6.5 grs. AA #5		990 fps	98%
CP 175 gr. lead	7.0 grs. AA #5		1035 fps	108%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	5.3 grs. Unique	907.8 fps		
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	5.8 grs. Unique	998.6 fps	971 fps	109%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	6.1 grs. Unique	1004.9 fps		
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	6.3 grs. Unique	1063.5 fps	1038 fps	132%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	6.6 grs. Super Field	1094.3 fps		
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	6.9 grs. Super Field	1118.3 fps	1028 fps	102%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	7.0 grs. Super Field	1151.4 fps		
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	7.2 grs. Super Field	1181.6 fps		
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	7.5 grs. Super Field	1202.0 fps	1122 fps	136%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	8.0 grs. AA #7	871 fps		68%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	9.0 grs. AA #7	998 fps		100%
Sierra 180 gr. JHP	10.0 grs. AA #7	1079 fps		119%
Colo. 185 gr. lead	6.5 grs. AA #5		987 fps	107%
Colo. 185 gr. lead	4.0 grs. AA #2		868 fps	94%
Colo. 185 gr. lead	4.5 grs. AA #2		957 fps	109%
Sierra 190 gr. FP	5.0 grs. Unique	859.3 fps		
Sierra 190 gr. FP	5.3 grs. Unique	908.3 fps		
Sierra 190 gr. FP	5.6 grs. Unique	945.8 fps		

\*FACTORY LOADS WITH UNKNOWN NON-CANISTER WINCHESTER POWDER.

# HANDLOADING the .40 S&W

By Marty Liggins

The .40 S&W is Smith & Wesson's reply to the FBI's controversial definition of what a police cartridge should be. The FBI wanted a .40 caliber bullet, 180 grains, at 950 fps. The Winchester .40 S&W ammo does just that—and does so in a cartridge that is short enough to fit into a 9mm frame, such as those made by S&W. (Kind of convenient, wouldn't you say?)

The cartridge is essentially a .41 Action Express with a 10mm Auto case head. Evan Whildin, inventor of the .41 AE had the right idea, it appears. His thoughts were to make a cartridge that would prove easily adaptable from the glut of 9mm guns on the market. With the .41's rebated head, the change required only a barrel and a magazine. But things got bogged down. The differences between the .40 S&W and the



must roll back the curtain of time to see the various steps that led up to today's "new" cartridge.

## The .40 G&A

The year was 1972 and an associate editor at *Guns & Ammo* by the name of Whit Collins was piddling around with the idea of stuffing .38-40 bullets into .30 Remington rifle cases. Whit had been inspired to create a .40 caliber pistol cartridge by reading about another wildcat .41 caliber auto pistol cartridge developed in 1965 by George Nonte.

Nonte had taken a .41 Magnum revolver case, turned down the case head into a rebated rim, shortened the case length and ended up with what basically is the .41 AE of today.

(Nonte immediately realized what Baker and Spence later grasped and what is only now beginning to dawn on people today with the .41 AE—rebated rims just

**The one common denominator in the development of .40 caliber cartridges is Bar-Sto. Bar-Sto barrels were used in the original .40 G&A, .40 PGW, and Centimeter. Even Bren Ten first used a Bar-Sto experimental barrel to develop the 10mm auto. Irv Stone of Bar-Sto made us one too.**



don't work in semi-auto pistols!)

Nonte abandoned his .41 in the early goings, but not before a young Whit Collins had read and digested the information. It would take seven years for Nonte's inspiration to germinate in

Whit's mind.

Now working for *Guns & Ammo*, Whit explained his crude concept of a .40 caliber auto pistol round to master gunsmith John French of Duarte, Calif., who ironically would end up working for

.41 AE are slight. Ballistically, they are twins. Case capacities are equal, overall length is also close. The primary difference is that S&W promised to deliver guns, and talked Winchester into loading ammo.

Winchester carries more weight in the US market than IMI, the Israeli gun company that loaded the .41 AE. Deliveries of .41 AE guns have been promised by several off-shore manufacturers for a while; few have arrived. S&W production of their .40's is imminent, ditto Glock and FIE.

The .40 S&W has a suggested maximum overall length of 1.135", compared to 1.170" for the .41 AE. In power it is 65-75% of the 10mm Auto. Velocity will be lower than the 10mm, operating pressure levels will be similar to the .41 AE and 10mm Auto—about 35,000 PSI.

As with the 10mm, there will probably not be any copper crusher values listed for this round. When the 10mm Auto came about, it took forever for loading data to become available. Components were practically non-existent. And availability of guns wasn't too good.

S&W's cartridge is a good response to the FBI request, and an IPSC shooter's dream come true. A gun with high magazine capacity that can safely make "major." The accompanying chart demonstrates that all bullet weights from 150 to 185 grains can make major at reasonable pressure levels.

The 10mm will make major also, but it has much more case capacity than is needed to do the job. In other words, it is not as efficient as the .40 S&W. Nor are there any 10mm Auto handguns with the magazine capacity of a 9mm.

It is interesting to note that this seems to be the first time a handgun round has had the "big" version out first. The .38

Special preceded the .357 Magnum, and several .44's came before the .44 Magnum. But with the 10mm's, the trend is reversed. With revolver rounds, the shorter, less powerful version can be fired in the chamber of the big brother. That will not be the case for the autos unless you have a factory gun that actually chambers on the extractor, rather than the case mouth.

(My Delta Elite shucks it through like it was built for .40 S&W, but velocities are a bit low. Such performance is only as good as the extractor's ability to hold the short case in place.)

## Ballistics Information

In the ballistics area, case capacity is the first order of business. The relationship between the 10mm Auto, the .41 AE, and the .40 S&W are shown in the chart below.

Cartridge	Bullet	Capacity* Empty	Capacity* Loaded	Overall Length
10mm Auto	170 gr.	24.1	13.88	1.260"
.41 AE	170 gr.	20.4	10.54	1.170"
.40 S&W	170 gr.	20.0	10.49	1.135"
.40 S&W	180 gr.	20.0	9.38	1.135"

\*grains of water

The chart shows water capacity of the empty case as well as the loaded round. The calculations were made with Wayne Blackwell's "Load from a Disk" software (WWB Software, Dept. AH, 9826 Sagedale, Houston, TX 77089). Using a computer for calculations is so much easier and quicker than the old method of seating the bullet and letting the water run out the flash hole.

It should be immediately obvious that the 10mm Auto has 35% more case capacity than the other two cartridges. Also note that the difference

between the .41 AE and the .40 S&W is minimal. This should get the message across that the latter two can't be loaded to the same velocities as the 10mm Auto, please don't try.

One item that is not immediately obvious is the difference in the expansion ratios between the 10mm and the other two. According to Blackwell's program, expansion ratio in a 5" barrel is 10.7 for the 10mm and 14.8 for the .40 S&W and .41 AE. This means that using the same powder in each of the cartridges will result in a compensator on a 10mm being slightly more effective. This is because the gas generated by the powder will have expanded more when used in the smaller cartridge. How measurable this will be remains to be seen and felt.

A note of caution about seating depth for the .40 S&W. Try to seat the

bullet out towards the maximum recommended length of 1.135", otherwise the pressure will go up.

## Load Development

Load development for the .40 S&W followed two tracks, *American Handgunner* editor Cameron Hopkins went the seat-of-the-pants route. I took the pressure barrel route.

The data for WW 231, Unique, and WW Super Field and Super Target was developed by Cameron simply by load-

*Continued on page 86*





Taken in February 1989, this photo shows Whit Collins (L) conferring with Paul Liebenberg on a custom S&W 5906 chambered in Centimeter.

Smith & Wesson in 1990 as the chief engineer in charge of revolvers in the S&W Performance Center.

"Whit's original drawing called for a case .406" outside diameter. Well, that leaves you .006", or only .003" of brass thickness. That's not quite enough!

"I made a few suggestions to Whit about this and other parts of the design and then I built the prototype .40 G&A," John said as he reflected on the project of 18 years ago.

Whit's rough proposal was to load 180 grain cast lead .38-40 bullets into modified .30 Remington cases that had been trimmed down, lathe turned and reamed to shape. John ground the chamber reamer, made the reloading dies and assembled a test gun by attaching a Bar-Sto barrel to a Martini rifle action.

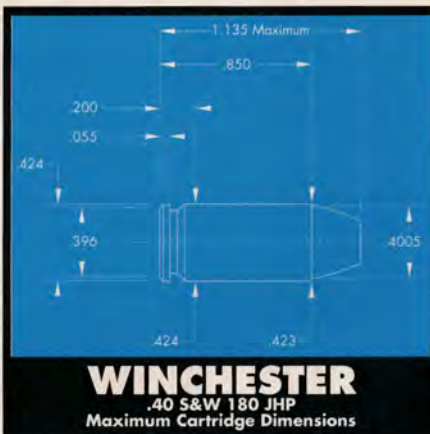
The wildcat that John French perfected and Whit Collins conceived was dubbed the .40 G&A in deference to Whit's employer. John then built a customized Browning Hi-Power to fire the round after initial testing in the Martini action. Six grains of Unique propelled the 180 gr. lead .400" slug at 1,110 fps.

The project never really went anywhere after the two-part article appeared under Whit's byline in 1972 issues of *Guns & Ammo*. The world will never again see the progenitor of today's .40 S&W.

"I don't even have that original Hi-Power," Whit lamented in a recent interview with *American Handgunner*. "I found out after I quit working at G&A that they pirated the gun for parts for another project."

## The 10mm Super

One person who read of Whit's work was Col. Jeff Cooper, the retired Marine Corps officer who would go on to found the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC). The colonel was destined to pioneer a new concept, a school for shooting, at the Gunsite Ranch where he would teach "the new pistolcraft."



Jeff would also go on to inspire a new gun—the Bren Ten.

At the time that Whit was developing the .40 G&A, Jeff Cooper was working on another wildcat pistol cartridge, the 9mm Super. The "Super Nine" was made by cutting down .223 rifle brass, loading it to the brim with powder and seating a 9mm bullet.

Jeff thus magnumized the 9mm into a considerably hotter proposition than even today's "pocket rocket" .38 Supers that are loaded for IPSC competition.

Captivated by the idea of a powerful .40 caliber cartridge chambered in a dream-gun of his own design, Col. Cooper saw in the .40 G&A the genesis of a potent new round. Jeff envisioned a companion for his 9mm Super, a big brother to be called the 10mm Super.

The .40 G&A with its 180 grain bullet at 1,050 fps was too anemic for the hard-bitten Marine. "We shall require more power for our pistol."

The colonel contacted Whit Collins and decreed that a larger case would provide sufficient room for more powder to drive a 200 grain ball up to 1,200 fps. From there things happened.

Dornaus & Dixon came along to offer the Bren Ten in the gun of Jeff's dreams, a modified CZ-75 9mm enlarged to handle the long case of the 10mm Super,

which by this time was called the 10mm Auto. Norma of Sweden entered the picture and loaded up some sizzling 10mm rounds. The year was 1984.

However, the cartridge that Jeff Cooper pronounced as the ultimate culmination of auto pistol ballistics proved a bit stout. The original Norma load of a 200 gr. JHP at 1,250 fps might have pleased the opinionated popularizer of the Weaver stance (there is no recoil in the Shangri-la of Gunsite Ranch, once you learn "the proper Weaver") but everyone else said it kicked like hell and was uncontrollable for self-defense or police applications.

Today Norma—and Winchester, Hornady, PMC, Federal, Remington and everyone else for that matter—loads the 10mm to much more sensible levels.

## The 10mm PGW

Once the 10mm Auto was a factory-loaded round thanks to Norma and the now-failed Bren Ten company, Whit Collins immediately returned to the .40 G&A. Here was the real answer to the .40 caliber question—sufficient power with modest recoil. The 10mm Auto was really too much. Besides, it wouldn't work in a 9mm cycle-length gun.

The 10mm Auto, after Bren Ten closed its doors, was a cartridge in search of a gun for several years. Colt finally announced the Delta Elite version of the Government Model in 1986, and of course the long 10mm Auto cartridge functioned well in this .45 cycle-length gun.

However, a shortened version of the 10mm would function the SIG P-226, the Glock and the S&W 59/39 series just as it had in the prototype Browning Hi-Power of the .40 G&A.

By now Whit Collins was an independent film producer and advertising consultant no longer employed by *Guns & Ammo*. No point in giving credit to those visionaries who stripped his Browning for parts, so Collins simply changed the name of the .40 G&A to *Centimeter*.

He then brought the round to the attention of Bruce Baker, president of Pachmayr Gun Works, and suggested that Pachmayr look into offering the Centimeter as a proprietary cartridge.

Bruce handed the project over to his manager of the Pachmayr Custom Shop, South African expatriate Paul Liebenberg, who, with John French, would also end up working for Smith & Wesson years later.

Paul studied the cartridge and did some testing. Sure enough, the accuracy of the 10mm Auto brass trimmed to a length of .865" was outstanding. Magazine capacity in a Government Model was one more than a .45 and only one less than a .38 Super. Here is a good cartridge!

Paul and the Pachmayr Custom Shop gave the project a thumbs up. It was time to place a custom order for ammunition.

*Continued on page 80*



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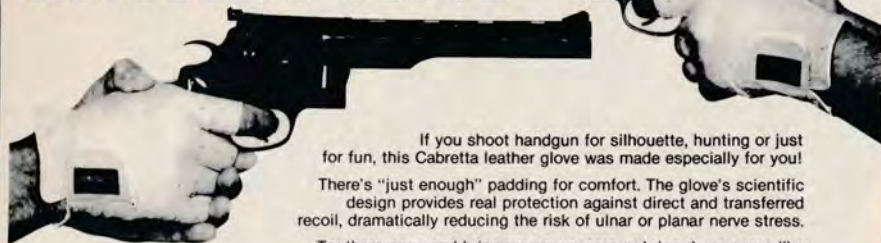


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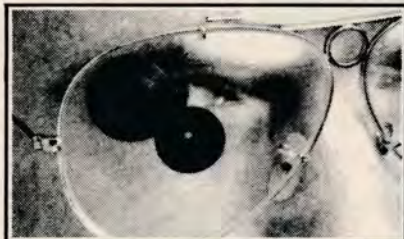
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## .40 S&W

Continued from page 78

However, Bruce Baker was not about to invest six digits of Pachmayr dollars into something called "Centimeter." My money, my name. Barrels were ordered from Irv Stone at Bar-Sto Precision Machine with the cartridge designation 10mm PGW for Pachmayr Gun Works.

Paul Liebenberg applied his considerable talents to customizing a Colt Government Model in 10mm PGW and the gun and cartridge were reported in the July/August 1986 issue of *American Handgunner* although the article referred to the cartridge as the Centimeter because by then yet another twist had affected the Cartridge Of A Thousand Names.

Meanwhile, Pachmayr had begun making inquiries into the production of factory ammunition in 10mm PGW. Market studies were commissioned, potential sales were calculated. Federal Cartridge agreed to load ammunition headstamped 10mm PGW, but the minimum order was 250,000 rounds.

The studies showed that the return would not justify the investment and the 10mm PGW never got off the ground. Bruce Baker wisely withdrew from this project and the cartridge reverted back to being called Centimeter, which is when *American Handgunner* ran our article.

## Centimeter

By now the cartridge was becoming quite a chameleon—.40 G&A, Centimeter, 10mm PGW and then Centimeter again.

Meanwhile, Paul Liebenberg left Pachmayr and opened his own shop called Pistol Dynamics. He retained his respect for the Centimeter cartridge and continued to offer the round in his remarkable custom guns.

One customer who liked the Centimeter was Paul's good friend Tom Campbell, a popular and highly regarded competitor on the professional circuit of big-money handgun matches. Tom also worked for Smith & Wesson.

Get it? Now the connection finally clicks. Tom Campbell... S&W... Paul Liebenberg... Centimeter... .40 S&W!

At the 1989 gun industry trade show known by the acronym SHOT (Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade) Tom was passing out a questionnaire to knowledgeable gunsmiths and competitive handgunners asking the simple question:

"What can Smith & Wesson do to make a competitive pistol for match shooting?"

Tom gave me a form and I simply wrote, "Manufacture a 1911 Government Model" and handed it back. Tom laughed good naturedly, but that wasn't what he had in mind, "Very funny, Cameron, but how about some ideas on what we can do."



But as he handed me the questionnaire from his briefcase, I saw a manilla folder labeled "Centimeter."

"So, you guys are gonna make a Centimeter?" I asked Tommy.

"Ahem, what makes you ask?" he replied nervously.

"That folder in your briefcase," I said as I pointed at it, "That plus the fact that I know you and Paul are buddies— and he's pushing the Centimeter."

"Uh, well, we've looked at it," Tommy acknowledged, "but nothing serious."

This conversation took place in January of 1989, and by February Paul Liebenberg had completed a Model 5906 in Centimeter. From here things moved pretty quickly.

## FBI's 10mm Lite

A few months later, Paul was hired by Smith & Wesson as Chief Engineer of the new S&W Performance Center. Until he moved to Massachusetts, he would continue to customize guns for S&W on an individual basis, as he had done with the 5906 chambered in Centimeter.

Meanwhile, the FBI announced that they would accept samples of 10mm Auto pistols loaded with special "FBI 10mm Lite" ammo for testing to determine the new FBI service pistol.

On the line would be the most prestigious law enforcement contract of the decade, possibly the century!

The gun company that switches the FBI from revolver to auto with *their* gun would have a whopping great feather to put in its cap. It would also have the entire law enforcement market beating its door down to buy guns just like the FBI!

The ballistics specified by the FBI called for a 180 gr. hollowpoint bullet to travel at 950 fps.

What a coincidence! The Centimeter shoots a 180 gr. hollowpoint bullet at 950 fps!

## Developing The .40 S&W

The coincidence was not exactly accidental— S&W commissions a prototype pistol firing a shortened version of the 10mm Auto with *exactly* the ballistics that the influential FBI is looking for? Random chance?

Of course not. S&W fully appreciates the significance of the FBI's new pistol test.

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Plans are quickly but surreptitiously put into motion. S&W president Steve Melvin knows that the Centimeter works beautifully in the Liebenberg-custom 5906.

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and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute (SAAMI) meeting and pulls aside Winchester exec Jerry Bersett. They conspire on a secret development project for a new cartridge, the .40 S&W, and swear each other to the strictest code of silence.

Immediately the plan is implemented as Winchester engineers go to work. The ballistic benchmark is the down-loaded FBI load, the "10mm Lite." Duplicate this load, S&W says, in a round that will cycle in our 5900 series of 9mm pistols—make a round like the Centimeter.

### Inside The .40 S&W

Smith & Wesson engineers hit the ground running with their computer-aided-design programs. The detail of the CAD-CAM program is incredible; the engineers literally look inside a gun to see what ramifications the new cartridge of the Nineties would have on a semi-auto design of the Fifties.

A potential problem surfaces—the large pistol primer of the 10mm Auto case could impact the ejector in a 5900 pistol when retracting the slide with a loaded round in the chamber. Uh-oh.

CAD-CAM shows that substituting a small pistol primer solves the problem nicely. The two companies remain in close touch throughout the development of the cartridge, and the S&W eggheads quickly alert their Winchester counterparts of the need for a small pistol primer.

Additionally, the designers decided to shorten the .40 S&W case from Centimeter's .865" to .850". The shorter case fits the 9mm cycle-envelope better because the 9mm case is .754" long.

The maximum overall length of a 9mm Luger cartridge is 1.169" while factory .40 S&W rounds run 1.125".

There's still another benefit to the shortening the .40 S&W. Lawyers, the bottomfeeders of society, always lurk greedily to suck the lifeblood from anything worthwhile. Smith & Wesson moved to circumvent their parasitic prowling by insuring that the new .40 S&W cannot properly chamber in a gun made in .40 G&A, 10mm PGW or Centimeter.

This is easily accomplished by merely shortening the case length, satisfying the vampires-in-suits. (Do you know there is actually a book out that tells lawyers how to sue a gun company? It's called *Firearms Litigation* by two vultures named Windle Turley and James Rooks. And you wonder why there are so many warnings and cautions in a gun's instructions, or on the gun itself in the case of Ruger!)

The internal geometry of the two cases is a more significant difference than case length. The Centimeter is just a trimmed-down 10mm Auto—nothing more—so obviously it shares the same interior case dimensions. Not so the .40 S&W.

The case wall thickness around the web of the .40 S&W tapers much more



sharply than the 10mm Auto case. The .40 S&W was primarily designed to fire 180 grain bullets and the seating depth of this bullet is such that it would swell the case if the same 10mm Auto case wall thickness had been used.

The base of the .40 S&W case is thicker than the 10mm Auto, obviously, because the small primer pocket leaves more brass than a large. This stout web in conjunction with the short, thick case walls make the .40 S&W case *inherently stronger* than the Centimeter case, or the 10mm Auto for that matter.

### .40 S&W Performance

Understand this— factory .40 S&W ammunition is *unusual*. Generally speaking, most cartridges are loaded to their full potential. When you buy a box of Silvertip .30-'06 for your deer rifle, for instance, you can be secure in the knowledge that Winchester packed as much punch into the cartridge as reasonably possible.

Special target loads, down-loaded for low recoil and superior accuracy, are an exception. Most factory ammunition is pumped to within 5% of the maximum SAAMI *working* pressure, however, Winchester's .40 S&W 180 gr. load tested at only 30,500 CUP compared to a maximum working pressure of 35,700 CUP. That's only 85% of maximum.

"You can load it hotter than we do. Our 180 grain load is a specific load (manufactured to FBI specifications)," explained Winchester's Mike Jordan.

He acknowledged that Winchester is currently loading the same powder in the .40 S&W as they use in the 10mm Auto, which explains why the .40 S&W burns very dirty: the powder is too slow.

Shooting .40 S&W ammo leaves a considerable amount of unburned powder granules in the gun which is indicative of the powder's burning rate being too slow.

I pulled a bullet and weighed the factory charge at 10.5 grs. of a dense ball powder. A charge 8.5 grs. of the moderately slow burning Winchester Super Field achieves the same velocity of this 10.5 gr. factory charge, so obviously the factory powder is slower than Super Field.

Incidentally, the runaway favorite powder for handloading the .40 S&W is Winchester's Super Field. This new shotgun powder was introduced to replace WW 473AA and it is just a hum dinger for the .40 S&W.

My reloading tests, which are summarized in the accompanying chart of handloads, found that Super Field produces the highest velocities with the lowest pressures which, sports fans, is the definition of an efficient load.

So if you want to handload the .40 S&W, buy a keg of Super Field and save yourself a lot of unnecessary homework. For IPSC "major" loads, pour in 7.5

*Continued on page 86*

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# MASSAD AYOOB'S CLASS:

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By Cameron Hopkins

**M**assad Ayoob's introductory course called *Judicious Use of Deadly Force* is guaranteed to raise your consciousness, double your income, help you quit smoking and give you a total mastery of gunfighting.

That's all the bullshit you get because the rest of the class is deadly serious.

Ayoob's probing insights into the dynamic of self-defense—both philosophically and pragmatically—are vividly illustrated with his exceptionally well-researched classroom lecture combined with his audio-visual presentation on video cassette.

The class is largely lecture and video; however, Ayoob teaches various shooting techniques on the range. This Lethal Force Institute "basic" course for civilians covers matters that other shooting schools only dare to touch in the advanced classes, things such as night shooting and flashlight techniques, 360° firing from a rotational stance, practical tactics and strategies plus a stomach-turning presentation on autopsies to learn about the handgun's terminal ballistics.

There is a shoot-don't shoot interaction in which students "fire" a Smith & Wesson revolver at a giant-screen TV in a realistic role-play that simulates different scenarios in which the judicious use of lethal force might reasonably be applied.

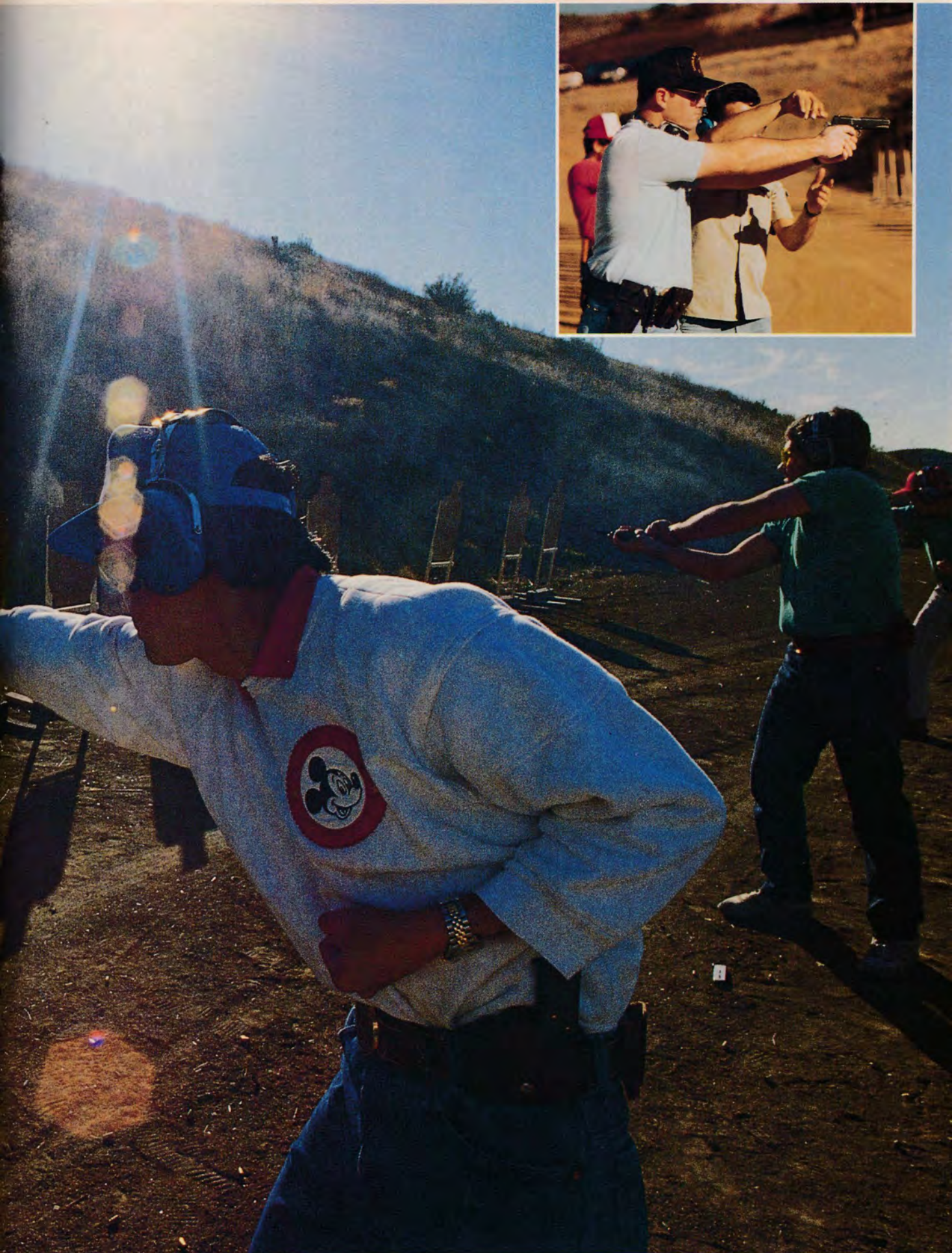
The thrust of the intensive 40-hour, 5-day course is Ayoob's powerful and sharp mind. His wit is honed razor sharp, his revelations of the science of defensive pistolcraft are startling. To put it succinctly, he speaks as well as he writes.

Readers of *American Handgunner* need little introduction to your own Law Enforcement Editor, but perhaps you are not

*Continued on page 88*









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Continued from page 83

grains of Super Field underneath a 150 grain Sierra bullet. Bump it up to 7.7 grs. for a cast-lead 150 grain slug. You're off and running with around 1,200 fps for a power factor of 180.

And this cartridge should be a dandy for IPSC because it offers moderate pressure levels for "major" power factor, less recoil than a .45 along with one more round of magazine capacity. A 1911 magazine holds nine rounds of .40 S&W versus eight of .45 ACP (and 10 of .38 Super).

Surprisingly, the new S&W shooting team is not shooting the .40 S&W in IPSC matches. Of the four team members, one is shooting .357 Magnum, one is shooting 9mm Parabellum loaded to "major" level, one is shooting a .45 ACP and one says he might shoot a .40 S&W if they ever get a good load worked out. The S&W players are allowed to shoot any caliber they choose.

I've shot the .40 S&W in an Ed Brown custom Colt enough to know that it's a good cartridge. It appears that I'm not alone in that belief as the California Highway Patrol has just adopted the Smith & Wesson Model 4006 and the .40 S&W as the first auto pistol authorized by the CHP.

It won't be the last major department to embrace this, the newest version of the chameleon-like cartridge of many names. 

*American Handgunner would like to thank Ed Brown for going the extra mile to build us one of his Mini-Comp custom Colt Delta Elites so we could test the .40 S&W. Our gratitude also extends to Irv Stone of Bar-Sto who made the barrel for Ed's pistol. Last but not least, we appreciate the cooperation of Mike Jordan and Dave Trowbridge of Winchester for valuable assistance in the preparation of this article.*

## .40 S&W LOADS

Continued from page 77

ing up a bunch of rounds with small increments of increased powder charges, usually two-tenths of a grain, and then firing them over a PACT chronograph. The more promising loads were then sent to me from pressure testing in the ballistic lab of Accurate Arms powder.

The data for the Accurate powders was my project, since I have a good bit of experience with them. The accompanying chart shows the results of our work.

Take note that the pressure column does not list a value, but a percentage. All pressure readings were done with a copper crusher system, but all the pressure calibration for this cartridge is for transducer. Rather than create confu-

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sion with two sets of numbers (crusher and transducer), it was decided to assign the value of 100 to the pressure reading for the factory ammo. All the others were scaled from there.

Extreme caution should be used by anyone who wants to use a load listed at more than 110% of factory. But it appears that the loads up to 115% of the factory level would be safe.

### Powder Selection

The powders that work best in the 10mm Auto do not do as well in the .40 S&W, due to the reduced capacity. Accurate Arms No.7 is acceptable for 180 grain bullets (and heavier), but not for the lighter ones. It was too slow to give acceptable results even at 170 grains.

But AA-No.5 will allow the reloader to make major with bullets all the way down to 150 grains, so it is going to be one of the better all-around powders for this cartridge.

The new Olin shotshell propellant, Winchester Super Field, also shows promise. If you want to use Super Field, you may do so. But keep in mind that Winchester has not issued any loading data for this powder in metallic cartridges. Sometimes a powder that is consistent in shotshells is not so in metallic rounds. Until Winchester issues data, be extremely cautious in using the powder for reloading anything other than shotshells.

Perennial "high use" powders such as Unique and WW 231 also have uses in this cartridge. As time permits, various powders will be tested and results reported.

### Bullets

The cartridge was designed around the 180 grain bullet, so it will probably be optimum. Jacketed bullets from 150 grains to 200 grains are on dealers shelves now. Cast bullets from 160 grains to 205 grains are also available. Molds are available from RCBS, Lee, Redding-SAECO, Lyman, and others.

We opted not to use the 200 grain bullets. The heaviest we used was the 185 cast from Paul Miller at Colorado Cast Bullets (2446 Helen Lane, Dept. AH, Montrose, CO 81401). The lightest was the 150 grain Sierra.

### Cartridge Cases

The .40 S&W takes *small* pistol primers, so any loading data for .40 S&W cases can't be used in cut-down 10mm cases which use large pistol primers. There is also some internal dimensional difference between the .40 S&W and 10mm. Using shortened 10mm cases will result in a bulge in the case if a heavy bullet is used. This bulge will cause chambering problems.

We used Winchester brass (obviously) for all testing. Generally, I prime with a Lee Auto-Prime tool. For the 10mm I

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use the No.1 shell holder, but with these .40 S&W cases, several of them wanted to slip through the jaws. A different shell holder may wind up being needed. None of the others on hand fit any better, though. An RCBS tool with a 10mm shell holder gave no similar indication of problems.

If you have 10mm Auto dies, you may already be set. The thing to check is whether you can get the case expander far enough down to flare the case. If not, you will only need a new expander.

Everything is readily available except the guns. However, by the time you read this S&W should have their new Model 4006 on dealer shelves. If not, well, call Ed Brown— he makes a neat .40 S&W Colt!



Marty Liggins is the Technical Services Manager of Accurate Arms Powder Company of McEwen, Tenn.

## LFI

Continued from page 84

aware of the full scope of this remarkable individual's repertoire of talents. Let's dispense with a couple of the more commonly asked questions about Massad Ayoob first.

Yes, he is an American. Born and raised. His ethnic origin is Syria from whence his father emigrated. He is married to Dorothy, who plays an active role in his various companies, and he is the father of two daughters, Cathy, 13, and Justine, 4.

Ask him what he does for a living, and he'll say, "I do the gun." He does the gun in many ways: he is a sworn part-time police captain in charge of firearms training with the \*\*\*\* Dept.; he is owner of Police Bookshelf that publishes his own titles as well as marketing other police and shooting titles; he is the owner of Armor of New Hampshire that sells various police accessories such as Second Chance body armor, PR-24 riot batons and police-only Cor Bon ammunition; he is chief executive of Massad Ayoob Enterprises that offers expert witness services in litigation involving firearms; he is a prolific gun writer with a regular column in *American Handgunner* plus two columns in *GUNS Magazine* in addition to columns and feature articles in other publications; he is the director of Lethal Force Institute where he teaches self-defense techniques and tactics literally world-wide.

Massad Ayoob is a busy camper.

But it his teaching that concerns us here. The Lethal Force Institute is not a shooting school, it is a forum for instruction about the legal, ethical, practical, moral and judicious use of lethal force.

It's at once cerebral and guttural. Ayoob's inquisitive mind probes with a

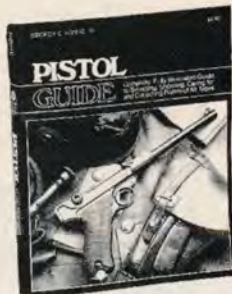


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scholarly exactness into the philosophical matter of blowing a scumbag through the portals of hell. (Precisely which of the eight levels of hell too. Ayoob is remarkably well-read and can quote from Dante's *Inferno*.) But he can fight dirty just as well, grappling with the techniques of street-smart punks which he points out to the class will be encountered far more frequently than Marquis of Queensbury rules.

His language is filthy. There were several women in our class and I wondered how they could endure Ayoob's foul mouth. He joked that he once lost a bet that he couldn't go half an hour without saying the F-word. The LFI course is intensive. One student told me he felt "emotionally drained" after the 5-day program was completed. Another reported that he was "elated" at the end of the course. Massad Ayoob affects people differently, but there's no question that his instruction leaves a lasting impression. You will come away impressed.

Ayoob draws a diverse student body. In the class I attended there was one full-time

**You look up and see this punk shoving a gun in the scared clerk's face screaming, "Gimme yaw f---ing money, motherf---er!"**

police officer, a mechanical engineer, two nurses, four doctors, two dentists, three businessmen, a private investigator, a retiree, an editor and someone who described herself as "mother/wife/teacher."

The class is essentially a "live and in person" version of Massad Ayoob's definitive work, *In The Gravest Extreme*. This pivotal book on vital aspects of self-defense is elaborated upon in the class, however, much greater detail is devoted to some subjects and entirely new topics are also brought up.

For instance, Ayoob delves into some little-known "street survival" tactics such as utilizing public restrooms (yes, there is a right and wrong way). The class includes a role play in which the students are paired off to "charge" one another while each partner in turn stopwatches the time it takes to run and "assault" someone standing 10 yards away. (Our class average was 1.2 seconds for an "attacker" to "stab" you, and that included the time of a 63-year-old woman!)

One of the most revealing things I learned in the class was when *not* to get in a gunfight. Ayoob explained that some

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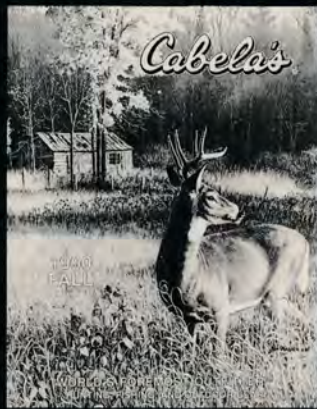
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shooters have a "cavalry to the rescue" fantasy in which a good Samaritan dashes to the rescue and saves the day.

"You're in the back of a 7-11 getting a carton of milk," describes Ayoob, "when suddenly an armed robbery goes down in the front of the store. You look up and see this punk shoving a gun in the scared clerk's face screaming, 'Gimme yaw f---ing money, motherf---er!'"

What is your response, Ayoob asks the class? Assume you are armed.

You'd smoke him, right? Wrong!

Ayoob explained that the vast majority of armed robberies end peacefully—robber sticks gun in storekeeper's face, storekeeper gives robber money, robber runs away.

"Now you want to escalate a non-violent encounter into a gunfight?" Ayoob questions sarcastically, "You would start a gunfight in a store full of innocent bystanders when police statistics show that the robber will nine out of ten times just walk out the door and no one will be hurt? And you would turn that into a blood bath?"

No, explains the street-wise cop, the proper response is to switch your mental state of awareness to Condition Red—violent encounter eminent—and be prepared to defend yourself and others by moving to cover if possible and watching for avenues of egress open to the robber. Prepare yourself for trouble, in other words, don't start trouble yourself.

But what if you did decide to save the day? What would you say to that armed robber?

"Freeze"! No, that's right off of Starsky and Hutch. It's pure Hollywood and a very poor police command because it doesn't mean anything specific.

"Drop it, scumbag"! No, that's too imprecise. Drop *what*? My drawers, my guns, my ghetto blaster—drop *what*?

Ayoob explains that a basic tool of both police officer and civilian is the *command voice* which is a loud, authoritative tone used to deliver a specific imperative. That specific imperative, Ayoob councils, is this:

*Drop that weapon! Don't move!*

Ayoob explains in depth how to interact with responding police officers. He points out the very real possibility of a police officer confusing you, "good guy with gun," for the armed robber! He explains how to avoid this unpleasant misunderstanding just as he point out how you should handle "witness interaction" after a shooting.

Post-shooting trauma is discussed along with the legal aftermath of a righteous self-defense shooting. Like every aspect of Ayoob's class, the instruction in these areas is based on experience in the real-world, not scholarly theory.

In the shooting portion of the class, Ayoob teaches all of the popular techniques—Weaver stance, Isosceles stance, and Chapman-modified Weaver stance





and his own StressFire stance. He recommends to the class that they experiment with each technique and incorporate those elements that best suit the individual student. He sharply criticizes other "shooting schools" that teach one and only one stance because, he says, that is like going to a martial arts school and learning only one punch.

Ayoob delves into advanced shooting techniques such as night shooting with a flashlight in which the students stay late one evening and actually shoot in the dark. Stringent range safety precautions are instituted during the night shoot, just as Ayoob maintains a safe range during all other portions of the class.

The shooting instruction combined with the classroom teaching makes for a true immersion course in self-defense and street survival. The article has been somewhat vague on the precise information that Massad Ayoob so competently imparts to his students because it is not my intention to give away his proprietary knowledge on a free "correspondence course." The tuition for LFI I is \$500 for the entire 40-hour, 5-day class. It is money well spent because you gain both self-confidence and a greater measure of survivability on these increasingly dangerous streets.



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**STEEL CHALLENGE**

Continued from page 69

bouts, Jethro sizzled with the single fastest run to shoot down five Pepper poppers and engage a stop plate, a phenomenal time of 3.02 seconds. In their second bout, Jethro had some misses and The Burner blasted past the young champion with a solid run of 3.58 seconds.

Tied at one apiece, the third and final bout would determine the winner. As the two speedsters blurred into action, suddenly Jethro's gun jammed. Frantically he fought to clear the malfunction but not before Jerry Barnhart could smoke him.

As Jerry was reholstering, he knew immediately that something terrible had happened to his opponent for there was no gunfire coming from the other side. He saw Jethro fighting to clear his jam and immediately Jerry Barnhart called for the Chief Range Officer.

Not knowing that the single greatest display of sportsmanship that has ever been seen at a major match was about to occur, the crowd strained to hear the peculiar conversation that Jerry Barnhart was having with the CRO. He just beat Jethro, why would he be arguing with the match officials?

Jerry wasn't arguing at all, he was requesting that his win over Jethro be reversed and that the two men be allowed to re-shoot the third bout!

"It's not fair," protested Jerry Barnhart, who was shooting for Wilson's Gun Shop and Colt. "Jethro had a jam and we should re-shoot. I don't want to win that way."

When it dawned on the crowd that Jerry had just proven himself to be a true gentleman and a real sportsman, the cheers and applause rang out louder than the gunfire. It was a touching moment in shooting sports—here was a cash prize of \$5,000 at stake between two of the fastest guns, and one of them disqualifies his own win so that his opponent could have a fair chance at winning. I wasn't mightily impressed with Jerry Barnhart's sportsmanship.

And I suppose it was poetic justice that Jerry beat Jethro in the re-shoot by the incredibly close times of 3.15 seconds to 3.13. It might be true that all's fair in love and war, but it's refreshing to see that sportsmanship still counts in pistol shooting.

**Pro Shooting Grows**

A striking contrast between the first Steel Challenge in 1981 and the 1990 match is the professionalization of the sport. Ten years ago there was no such thing as a "pro shooter" but today there are shooters who draw full-time salaries to squeeze a trigger, one of whom recently signed a \$1 million contract!

The concept of factory-sponsored teams has blossomed since Team Safari-

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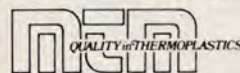


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land pioneered the idea in 1986 at, naturally, the Steel Challenge. Taking Safariland's lead, Springfield Armory elevated the team concept to the next level with a comprehensive program to sponsor matches and individual shooters. Team Springfield now has a full-time position on their payroll of Shooting Sports Coordinator handled most competently by NRA bullseye national champion Tom Woods.

Team S&W was formalized in 1990. Team Colt quickly followed suit and the word is that Team Glock will shortly form.

### The New Team S&W

The Steel Challenge was one of the first Big Money matches and, in 1985, it became the first shooting match to crack the quarter-million-dollar mark in prize money, surpassing even the Bianchi Cup. It was appropriate, then, that the debut of the new Team Smith & Wesson on the pro circuit of pistol matches occurred at the tenth annual Steel Challenge.

(Actually the S&W crew's first match, which they won, was an off-beat match called the Sportsman's Team Challenge in Florida. This was a shotgun, rifle and pistol match that was most memorable for its inept administration, the rash of formal protests and the incessantly broken target apparatus.)

S&W has looked enviously at the burgeoning autopistol market and the effect that Big Money matches like the Steel Challenge can have on the average consumer who "wants a gun just like Rob Leatham's." Consequently, S&W recruited three of the top shooters in the country and put them on their payroll.

The job description is simple: point gun, pull trigger, win match. Veteran competitors Mike Plaxco and Brian Enos, who have never shot anything in speed matches but 1911 pistols, were signed to contracts rumored to be worth \$45,000 a year— not including expenses like ammo, entry fees and custom guns— if they would shoot S&W pistols.

The British-owned gunmaker also inked a contract with rising revolver star Jerry Miculek to continue doing for money what for years he's been doing just for fun— shooting a Model 27 fast and fancy.

A fourth member of Team S&W is Tom Campbell who has, until just recently, worked for only one employer in his whole life. He graduated from high school and went to work sweeping the floors at Smith & Wesson. Even though he's now working for Safariland, Tom is the anchor of Team S&W.

### The Jet's Engine

Everyone said he was going to win it, and he did. Jethro Dionisio smoked 'em. There was never any other leader in the match than the college kid from the Philippines who jumped out in front and



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stayed there.

The young speedster kept his mental game coolly under control. He won three out of seven stages, took home over \$13,000 in winnings and made his papa, who stood by him throughout the match, just about the proudest dad you've ever seen.

The throttles on the Jet's engines were pushed to the hilt and that engine is a .38 Super full-house competition racing pistol built by Filipino gunsmiths Vic Manguibin and Ely Ramirez of First Option Gunsmiths. The gun is of the "skeletonized" genre popularized by master gunsmith Jim Boland (see May/June 1990). Jethro's pistol weighs only 37 ozs. with metal removed extensively from the slide.

The gun itself consists of a Caspian Arms slide mated to a Colt frame. The compensator is of the double chamber design first made prominent by Bill Wilson's Super Grade dual-comp design. The



Brian Enos was top S&W at 7th place.

kid they call the Jet shot 125 gr. Western Nevada copper-plated bullets.

The "world's fastest shooter" draws his pistol from the "world's fastest holster," an Ernie Hill *FasTrac* speed rig. Since the innovative *FasTrac* was invented two years ago, it's won every Steel Challenge since, first by Angelo Spagnoli in 1989 and again by Jethro this year.

The unique friction-free design allows the Ernie Hill *FasTrac* to give the fastest possible draw. Completely adjustable for cant, the *FasTrac* features a patented mechanism that allows the holster to be positioned at any angle desired by the individual shooter. It's truly a remarkable achievement in competition holster design from the World Fast Draw champion himself, Ernie Hill.

## Meet The Kid

Jethro is an impressive young man. In contrast to his aggressive, flamboyant style of shooting, he is quiet and humble. A polite and courteous young man, Jethro was joined for his victory interview with *American Handgunner* by his father, Jose Dionisio, who supported his



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son throughout the gruelling four day test of speed shooting.

"My dad was the one who really taught me to shoot," acknowledged the young champion, "And he guides me in all my shooting." At this the father glowed outwardly with pride and satisfaction, the healthy, robust esteem that a father takes in his son's accomplishments.

"No, he has the talent to shoot," the dad chimed in, not wishing to detract for a moment from the full glory of his son's victory. The interview was taking place less than half an hour after Jethro had fired the last stage, Showdown, and sealed his win.

Jethro has been shooting competitively for four years and he is the current IPSC national champion of the Philippines. Still very early in his shooting career, Jet has already drawn acclaim at several major matches world-wide. A synopsis of this budding young shooter's major matches is, unlike many of the older veterans, capable of fitting into an inch of type:

**1988 IPSC World Shoot**

26th place

**1988 Steel Challenge**

7th place (won Outer Limits)

**1989 IPSC European Championships**

6th place

**1989 Steel Challenge**

7th place (won three stages)

His shooting goals include representing the Philippines with distinction at the upcoming IPSC World Shoot in Australia, retaining his Filipino IPSC national championship and successfully defending his Steel Challenge title in 1991.

**Match Pressure**

When asked how he handled the intense match pressure of coming into the Steel Challenge as the odds-on favorite, the lad just smiled, "I don't listen to them," he said waving absently at the crowd, "The match isn't over until the last day and last stage."

Some champion shooters insist that it is harmful to look at the scoreboard during a match because it can add to the pressure. John Pride, for example, is adamant about avoiding the obnoxious type of shooter who is quick to say things like, "Hey, you're three points ahead! If you just hold it together, you'll win!" John scorns such a person as a "walking scoreboard" and he positively hates to know what the score is as a match progresses.

Not so the Jet. He doesn't mind in the least. He checked the scores frequently throughout the Steel Challenge.

"I became more confident. I said to myself that all I had to do was shoot one shot, one target, and nothing could go wrong," Jethro explained about his approach to this element of match strategy wherein he stays constantly aware of the top scores.

Jethro is seen before any stage seclud-

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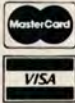
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ed by himself, ringed by the entourage of Filipino shooters who flocked protectively around their national champion wherever he went. He listens to a mental relaxation tape on his Walkman before he shoots.

### Practice, Practice, Practice

To prepare for the match, Jethro and his dad stayed in a hotel near the range for one month prior to the match where he practiced every day. He burned in excess of 40,000 rounds in practice for the match, a bit over 1,000 rounds a day. And that's not counting the year-round practice he does at home in the Philippines where he actively competes in local IPSC matches.

A young man like that with a pocketful of money must have all sorts of plans on how to spend it. Nine grand in cash! Perhaps he wants to buy a new car or a surfboard or take his girl on a really extravagant date.

"The money? I haven't really thought about the money," said Jethro, somewhat taken aback by my question about how he planned to spend his winnings. "Is that how much I won? I haven't thought about it."

"What he means," interjected the father, "is that the trophy is what's really important."

"Yes," Jethro hastened to add, "It's the winning that counts, not the money."

By now I was completely won over by this personable, humble young man. What a refreshing inspiration it was to meet a shooter who truly cares about winning for the sake of winning—not because it would translate into a multi-thousand-dollar endorsement from this gunmaker and a five-year-deal from that holstermaker.

Jethro shot a cobbled-together gun because that's what he *really* likes, not because he was paid to. He snatched his pistol from an Ernie Hill holster because he *really* likes Ernie's leather, not because he's paid to like it.

Speaking to Jethro reminded me of what shooting was like 10 years ago when the Steel Challenge began. We shot then for one reason and one reason alone—for the fun of it. Sure, it's still fun today but I sometimes wonder if the commercialization of shooting hasn't somehow diminished the dedication and commitment of the shooters just as the greening of Christmas has taken much of the spirit out of the Holiday Season.

I dunno, I can't really explain it. All I know is that talking to a nice kid like Jethro made me feel good, made me feel proud to be a shooter. If I wasn't impressed enough already, I asked Jethro what advice he would offer to a new, aspiring shooter and this is what he said:

"All they have to do is be interested in the sport and be dedicated. But the most important thing is to always ask the Lord for guidance so they'll be good in everything they do."





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trap a hip-holstered weapon.

Then he accelerates the powerful sportscar after his antagonists. It doesn't take long. As the Halcon Corvette reaches a point about 15 yards behind the fugitive vehicle, he sees two gunflashes and hears a sound like two firecrackers from the left hand side of the vehicle.

His response is instantaneous: he fires and puts another 185 grain Silvertip through the back window. Again, the occupants duck. The driver veers the lowrider hard right and Halcon follows. He fires again, left hand only like the last shot, and watches the bullet send shredded rubber flying from the right rear tire of the car ahead of him.

There is time for him to think that this is not what he had expected from a 185 grain hollowpoint pistol bullet. The tire deflates instantly, but the car ahead keeps running on the rim.

The chase continues. They turn off their lights. Marc turns off his, pulls right up behind them, and turns his headlamps back on. They fire at him again, and miss. Halcon unleashes in response his seventh Silvertip of the evening; this one punches through the trunk lid of the lowrider.

A Circle K gas station/convenience mart looms up. The lowrider swerves in, narrowly missing people pumping gas, and tries to cut between the pumping islands. The car doesn't make it. Its characteristic low chassis catches on a pump island and snags, like a boat marooned on a reef at low tide.

Halcon knows the pursuit is over.

### Good Guy Wins

He wheels the Corvette to a position in front of the fugitive car and jumps out, the engine block between him and them. Because of his handicap he cannot crouch low, but at least he has partial cover. His .45 is levelled steady.

In the bright lights of the service station, Halcon sees for the first time that the driver is female. It makes little difference to him. He places his front sight on her and shouts, "¡Manos arriba!"

The command is ignored. No one puts their hands up. But no one moves, either, and Halcon is satisfied with that.

Then he sees a figure move in the back, with the unmistakable silhouette of a long gun in his hands. Halcon switches the front sights of his Swenson .45 to this target and snaps, "Okay, go ahead!"

It is a challenge that will not be answered. The figure hesitates, then tosses the gun—a sawed-off .22 autoloading rifle—out the window.

Halcon hears sirens. Police are moving in behind him. The cavalry has arrived.

Out of the corner of his eye, Halcon



sees a man wearing a uniform and holding a radio in one hand and a Smith & Wesson Model 19 in the other. The cop asks intensely, "What's going on?"

"A gunfight," Halcon replies, "and I'm winning!"

### Responding Officers

The moments that followed are now described in Marc Halcon's words.

"The police never ordered me to drop the .45. Highway Patrol, two deputy sheriffs, and another San Diego officer showed up. The chase had covered everybody's jurisdiction. One deputy got out with a Remington 870, climbed over his car, and walked up to the suspects and said, 'First one who moves gets a slug in his head.'

"A sergeant came up to me and asked, 'What have you got?' I brought my .45 down to [low] ready and said, 'They've got another gun in the car.'

"The sergeant told me, 'You caught 'em, you clean 'em.'

"I brought the gun back up and told them to get out of the car. They were removed, put to kneeling, and handcuffed. I now saw there were two females and three males. There was an 18 year old man and four juveniles.

"They found the first gun they shot at me with in the car, a Colt Pocket .25 automatic. I learned later that they were members of a local gang. Apparently, one in the backseat was a prospective member, and they were trying to show him how much fun it was to go out and pop somebody, I guess.

"All five of them were in the backs of the police cars when a sergeant came up to me and asked me to put my gun away, which I did. They called a tow truck for the lowrider, and I heard one of the deputies looking at the bullet holes in it and sounding angry because he didn't get to shoot at moving cars.

"Finally the sergeant asked me what department I was with and I said, 'I'm with the NRA.'

"That not being what he wanted to hear, he asked me to take my gun out and unload it. His gun was in its holster. He racked the slide a couple of times, dry fired it, and stuck it in his belt. He asked me what the hell happened and I explained. They ID'd me and took notes.

"The sergeant gave me my gun back and said, 'Mr. Halcon, I don't want to tell you what to do, but get in your car and don't load the gun in front of me, and go home. We'll be getting in contact with you tomorrow.'"

### Post-Shooting Analysis

There are things that could have been handled better in the above episode, and no one knows better than the participant. "The next time I would chase just long enough to get the license plate, and then back off," says Halcon.

None of the teenagers in the car were

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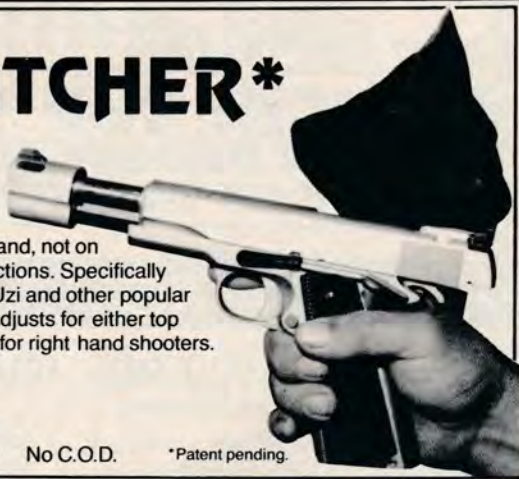
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hit. Halcon's first bullet went into the right rear door of the lowrider and lodged there, and the next two sprayed window glass but lodged in the chrome door molding without entering the vehicle, says Marc, who reports that the fourth and fifth Silvertips went through the rear window into the passenger compartment, the sixth through the tire, and the seventh through the trunk lid into the cardboard liner behind the backseat, from which it ricocheted harmlessly upward.

Marc is wise to recognize now the folly of pursuit. There was no way of knowing whether others in the vehicle were gang members, or simply kids who were unaware that one of their friends had a gun, let alone that he was going to pull it and start shooting. Unlike the Goetz incident, it was never proven that all of the teenagers involved in the attempted murder of Marc Halcon had criminal intent.

Had a bullet sent the lowrider out of control, Halcon would have been legally and morally liable for anyone struck by the vehicle. In any case, once the vehicle had fled, the attack on Halcon had ended and with it had terminated the perfect right to use deadly force in self-defense. It turned out that the "flash" presumed to be gunshot that caused Marc to fire his fourth round was actually a reflection in the review mirror of the suspect vehicle.

While Halcon certainly had the right to pursue, something isn't necessarily smart just because it is legal. Regular readers may harken back to the case of Wilburn Brooker, charged with manslaughter in Miami and hounded into a heart condition by newsman and prosecutors after he pursued a gunman who had robbed him, and killed the offender when he turned and pointed his loaded gun at Brooker a second time.

(By the way, Brooker's record is now clear, his health is reasonably good, and he has his gun permit back.)

### More Lessons

In addition, Halcon was at enormous risk of being shot by police in a mistaken identity situation. It is almost a miracle that he was not killed.

Fortunately, the uncle's description of the situation had gone over the air, and responding officers had been advised that the man in the Stingray fitting Halcon's description was the armed citizen/victim, not the perpetrator.

Confirms Halcon, "I know I'm incredibly lucky the way the police handled it. When my uncle called in, he ID'd me and my beige Corvette and explained I had a gun. In that neighborhood, also, the officers can tell who's who, lowrider versus Corvette."

The author feels that most cops don't assume you're a good guy because of what you drive, how you dress, or what you look like vis a vis the bad guy, however.

Also, once armed police are on the



scene, it is far better for the armed citizen to holster his weapon and turn the situation over to them. Remarks like "I'm with the NRA" are not the appropriate choice of words. Marc would have done better by saying, "Those people shot at me and I will press charges."

And we shall not even discuss the concept of an officer telling a citizen to handle police business. ("You caught 'em, you clean 'em!?" Good Lord!)

Now 36, Marc is older and wiser enough to realize that "OK, go ahead," is not the challenge command of choice. Though it worked that time, Marc now knows he would have been better served with a statement like, "Don't move! Drop that weapon!"

Another danger that fortunately was not realized was wild shots. Firing weak hand only and trying to drive at the same time is not conducive to good hits. (See the Files column on the well-known Connecticut State Police Incident.)

Only Marc's pistolcraft skill, gleaned from years of intense IPSC competition, kept stray bullets from striking bystanders or going through house windows. His shooting was, in fact, remarkably accurate under the circumstances.

### Handicapped Handgunner

Was it Halcon's cane that caused the young punk with the .25 to single him out as a target? Predators avidly seek the weakest prey. Longtime experience with handguns and training in the martial arts, including escrima under Nuri Bahmbo and wing chun, made Halcon no ordinary victim.

It is entirely possible that Halcon's speed of reactive draw and return fire kept the punk with the .25 from putting the third bullet into his head; he had already put the second bullet past Halcon's ear.

Even more than the rest of us, the disabled are targets for violent crime and need the means to protect themselves. With his cane and his 10-pound full leg brace, Halcon could not possibly have fled when the lowrider pulled up next to his car.

Realistic self-defense, for both the able-bodied and the physically challenged, is an important thing to Marc Halcon. For many years a member of the Lemon Grove Rod & Gun Club in Alpine, Calif., he has been president of that organization since 1988. Six years ago in Phoenix he was awarded IPSC's coveted Prix du Presidente, signifying an individual who most embodies the spirit of practical shooting, by J. P. Denis, world leader of IPSC.

The lightweight Commander has been replaced with a Colt Officer's Model fitted with longer Commander slide by Lance Martini, and loaded with Hornady 230 grain jacketed truncated cone .45 ammo for more penetration than the Silvertip gave him nine years ago. In competition—he shoots "B" class—he prefers an Omer Casey five-inch "street comp" .38 Super.

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In 1990, Halcon is running for president of the US region of IPSC. Halcon supporters include both members of the US National IPSC Team as well as rank and file shooters across the country who are looking for the positive growth initiatives that form his campaign platform. His populist message to IPSC shooters is "Because it's your sport."

Halcon is widely seen a role model for the physically challenged shooter. "I have worked with three or four physically disabled shooters," he says. "It's important that the handicapped person realize that some should not have a firearm, such as anyone with severe arthritis who might suffer from recoil. My philosophy is, if you can dial a touchtone phone, you can shoot a gun."

"I think the handicapped should be welcomed into IPSC," he says, "because it is the only sport I know where a handicapped person can compete directly against the world's best. I know, because I've done it. Matches have stairs, curbs, and door openings sometimes, the same obstacles they face daily."

"I don't think the physically challenged should ask for any special rules. If someone comes to me and says, 'I want the targets different because I'm color-blind,' I'm not going to do it. If you can negotiate the course in a safe manner, pay your entry fee and do it. If you can't, there's bowling pin matches, the Masters, and NRA Action shooting."

Halcon now teaches self-defense part-time at his San Diego Firearms Academy. His strong beliefs in combat-oriented handgunning come largely from that night in 1981.

While he knows now that certain aspects could have been handled better, there is no denying that it was his fast and furious response with his legally-carried Colt .45 that left two armed punks fleeing for their lives, instead of laughing at the victim of the latest wanton drive-by shooting.



## LEGISLATION

*Continued from page 17*

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Wayne LaPierre is executive director of the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

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## HANDLOADING

Continued from page 33

and sharpness of the tip on the anvil.

When CCI recently changed their primers so they would work better with the increasingly popular progressive reloading machines, they narrowed their possible considerations down to 64 different candidates from 8,000 different combinations to achieve what they feel is the optimum primer for today's reloader!

Included in that redesign is CCI's "I-5" anvil for improved ignition. They also paid particular attention to off-center sensitivity and set the dimension  $\pm .003$ " off center as a legitimate center hit.

No two priming compounds are exactly the same. The explosive agent, or active ingredient, can be either PETN or TNT. One of these two popular explosives are added to a stabilizer and a binding agent such as gum arabic. Of course, water is added for moisture. But these are only a few of the ingredients commonly used in priming compounds.

### Regular Vs. Magnum

The main difference between regular pistol primers and magnum pistol primers varies depending upon the company of manufacture. Some companies just add more of the active compound to the primer cup, approximately 10% to 15% more in some cases while others say 25% more.

But there is no uniform rule because it may be that a magnum pistol primer will be using a compound of completely different formulation and have a more robust active ingredient than a regular pistol primer from the same firm.

Or, the only difference could be a higher level of metallic fuels in the magnum pistol primer over the same company's regular primer.

Therefore, it is difficult to document the claim made in the past by some commentators that magnum pistol primers "do nothing but raise pressures."

CCI, for example, uses a different priming compound—and more of it—in their magnum pistol primers. But they also use a thicker cup—.0020" versus the .0017" for their regular pistol primer.

This difference in the thickness of the cup also applies to the difference between rifle and pistol primers. Again, however, the rule is not conclusive as some rifle primers may use the same cup material as the company's pistol primer, but only after annealing them for increased strength.

### Unleaded Primers

Lead-free primers are going to change much of what we know about primers because everyone, so far, is using the same ingredient in their construction—daizo-dinitrophenol, or DDNT, to replace lead styphnate. It has to be used in a nickel plated primer cup because it

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Three companies have lead-free primers in use today. Dynamit Nobel uses lead-free primers in their Sintox line of lead-free ammunition. Fiocchi also markets a line of ammunition using a lead-free primer of their own design, but their lead-free primer supposedly uses a barium nitrate oxidizer that emits barium. Europeans look upon barium as being as bad as lead in terms of toxicity, so they may run into trouble because of that barium emission on indoor firing lines.

The only American firm thus far to market lead-free ammunition is CCI and they are marketing it exclusively in their law enforcement line of ammunition because of the obvious tie-in with indoor training ranges.

Everyone in the industry is presently developing a lead-free primer and whether they will acknowledge it publicly or not is a moot point. Lead-free primers are the coming thing.

Some companies refuse to discuss them because even the acknowledgement of any developmental work is considered a breach of proprietary information.

But the path to lead-free priming is not going to be a bed of roses because lead-free primers have one idiosyncrasy that is proving to be quite a hurdle at this point in time for some firms.

At hot temperatures they tend to die. Or, as one industry commentator said, "It's been noted that some lead-free primers have a problem with high temperature storage and some adjustments are going have to be made."

They seem to perform at least as well as lead styphnate compounds at cold or ambient air temperatures, but the problem of high temperature storage may change the way we shooters handle our ammunition until someone can develop new advancements in lead-free priming. (However, CCI assured me they have experienced no problems with high temperature storage because of their oxidizer and fuel combinations.)

One major ammunition firm has been known to have received a governmental contract to complete a research and design project for the United States government on lead-free rimfire ammunition, but this is one of those firms that feels loose lips sink ships and refuses comment.

Lead-free rimfire ammunition is going to pose quite a problem for the manufacturers, if for no other reason than the type of substitute projectile. It may be easier to take the lead out of the rimfire priming compound than it will be to take the lead out of the rimfire projectile and every one close to the problem says lead-free rimfire priming is not an easy thing to do.

In any event, *brisanse* will remain the critical characteristic of the primer. Whether they're made from a compound of lead styphnate or lead-free DDNT, there's always something popping in the world of primers.

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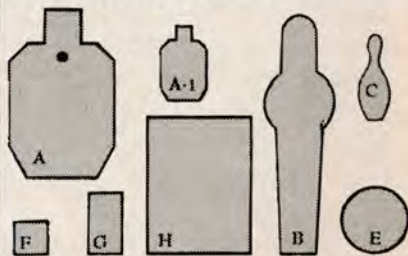
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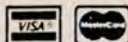


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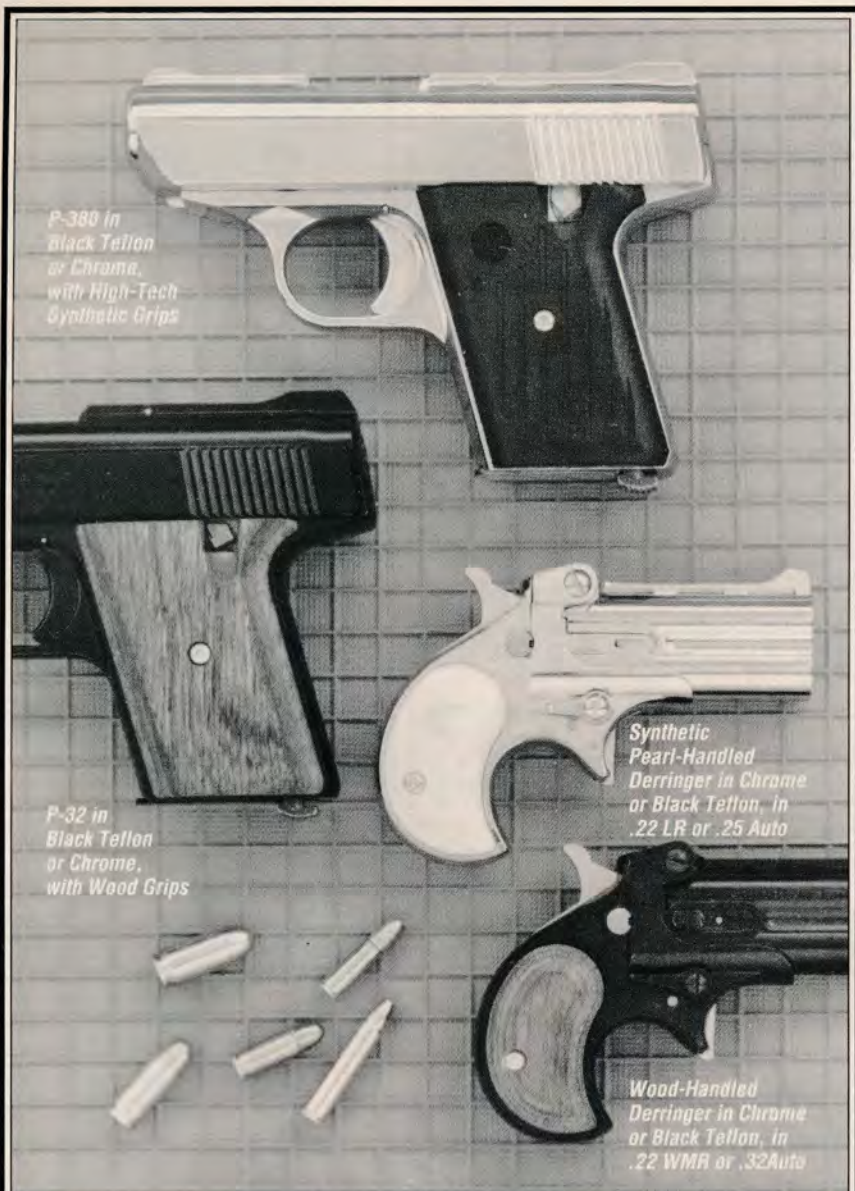
That's it— here's a file, here's a piece of steel. Make a *perfect* cube, each side precisely 1.000" and each corner precisely 90°. Come back in a few weeks with your cube and find out if you're worthy of the famed house of fine firearms. If you are, then in a few years you'll be filing by hand the parts that make up a Holland & Holland firearm.

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Claudio applies a similar technique— meticulous handwork— to the fabrication of his extended mag release button that is

*Continued on page 108*



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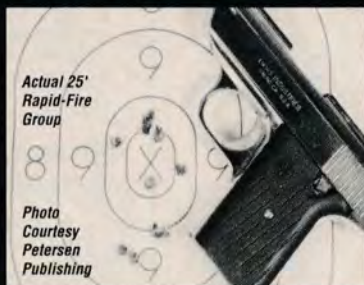
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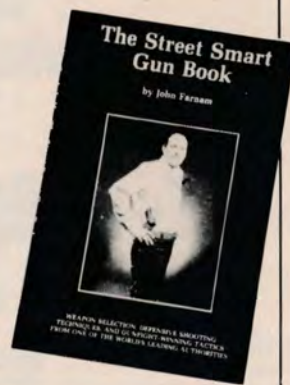
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milled from bar stock. It is detailed with perfectly handcut, fine line checkering. The exhibition-grade Kingwood stocks from Kim Ahrends are modified to accept the custom mag release button.

The trigger guard is cut away, welded back in place and then contoured to shape. It is a squared trigger guard that is checkered 40 lines to the inch. The squared trigger guard serves to provide a firm surface for hooking the weak-hand's index finger around. The "finger forward grip" is a technique to control muzzle flip by extending the hand's leverage further out on the pistol. A squared trigger guard is a more effective gripping surface for this technique than the standard rounded guard.

With a proper grip on the Briley pistol utilizing Claudio's custom slide stop platform, thumb guard and trigger guard, the degree of recoil control over a full-power .45 is astonishing. The shooting grip extends so high on the gun, thanks to the custom beavertail, combined with such great leverage, that the effect is a dramatic reduction in muzzle flip.

### Briley Compensator

Claudio's ergonomic design factors enhance a strong shooting grip that counter-acts felt recoil. In concert with his "human engineering" design is a

sophisticated recoil reducing technology—the Salassa expansion chamber compensator.

The compensator utilizes a large single exhaust port coupled with a deflection shield angled at 45° at the front of the expansion chamber. The exterior frontal surface of the compensator features an extended "nozzle" of steel that seals the gases inside the expansion chamber for a longer time-moment.

The large port in the Salassa comp works very efficiently thanks in part to the angled deflection shield that channels the hot powder gas up and out of the exhaust port to counter-act muzzle rise.

Because the .45 ACP is a low pressure cartridge compared to the .38 Super or 10mm, the gas pressure is insufficient to utilize the benefits of a double-chamber comp best typified by Bill Wilson's revolutionary Super Grade .38 Super.

On his IPSC competition combat pistols without the heavy frame underlug, Claudio does use a double-chamber compensator. He also uses a double-chamber design on the interchangeable .38 Super top end for this Bianchi Cup Model, but he has found the single-port, deflection shield design shown here seems to work best on the low-pressure .45 ACP.

Of course the soft recoil of the 50 ounce Salassa pistol is hard to attribute to the compensator. The darn gun is heavy enough to retard a lot of recoil anyway!

Also, Claudio's novel approach to ergonomic design with his unique features for enhancing a solid shooting grip contribute to lessened recoil.

No, the gun doesn't kick, not even with hardball. It's a combination of the weight, the comp and the ergonomic design that gives the pistol such a soft, comfortable feel.

### New Briley Barrels

One of the primary attributes of a Salassa competition pistol is that it can readily be converted to .38 Super simply by installing a different slide and barrel. But wait, you say, how can it be switched from .45 to Super when the frame must be cut out for a .38 Super barrel's integral "fully supported" feedramp? Easy—meet America's first "fully supported" .45 barrel!

As this article began, I referred to Necessity as the inspiration that led Claudio to improvise many of his own designs when he was working in South Africa. You would think that once he arrived to the bounty of the purple mountain's majesty that he would never again have to worry about scrounging for .45 parts.

Wrong, Patriot Breath, you've not tried to buy a Bar-Sto barrel lately, have you?

When Claudio began work on the gun that would, finally, spotlight his talents that have remained secret for so long, he never dreamed that he wouldn't be able to buy a match-grade barrel for the very first

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gun he would build in America. Hey, these are the amber fields of grain! Where are all the damn barrels?

Well, Bar-Sto barrels are back-ordered up to six months or longer. So popular are these supremely accurate stainless steel match barrels that Irv Stone, proprietor of Bar-Sto, can't even begin to keep up with the demand.

What to do? Well, any other gunsmith would just be SOL, but not our man Claudio. Get this— Claudio *made* his own barrel!

Undeterred by the mere inconvenience

where Colt Pythons sell for over \$2,000, you don't frivolously run out and buy a new gun every time you want a new pistol! You make do with one frame and fit it with two slides and two barrels.

If that doesn't impress you, it should. He made a bloody *barrel!*

Before he went to the considerable trouble of fabricating his own barrel, Claudio had checked around for other sources of superior quality barrels, but he found that Bar-Sto is not alone in being constantly back-ordered.

Bill Wilson's fine match-grade Wilson

out Clark) is constantly sold out. Effective immediately, there is a new barrel maker in town and the name is Briley.

Through the Briley Pistol Division, Claudio will be selling the new Briley over-size, match-grade barrels with and without an integral feedramp in .45 ACP, .38 Super, 9mm, 10mm and .40 S&W. All barrels are for the 1911-A1 model.

Naturally, if you order a custom gun from Claudio, you can specify a Briley barrel or a Bar-Sto or any brand you choose. However, my tests show the new Briley barrel to be every bit as accurate as the best

## *Yes, I have seen a Bar-Sto out-shoot this Briley barrel, but not by very damn much.*

of being without a barrel, Claudio ordered a .45 caliber match-grade blank from Douglas Premium Barrels. He machined the round tube into a Government Model barrel complete with top locking lugs, barrel hood, lower lugs, a chamber and everything!

Harkening back to his experience in South Africa, Claudio designed his .45 barrel with an integral feedramp so that the same frame could also accommodate a ramped .38 Super barrel. In the land

barrels are usually sold out before they can be made. Kart went out of the barrel business several years ago. There are usually plenty of Clark barrels in stock, but Clark barrels are notoriously soft and the integral ramps of the fully-supported Clark barrels have an annoying habit of shearing off.

What all this meant to Claudio is that he would have to make his own barrels. Obviously the supply is not meeting the demand if every high-quality barrel (which leaves

match-grade barrels on the market.

How accurate is accurate? From a Ransom Rest, the Salassa custom pistol shoots the exceptional Federal Match 185 gr. SWC into 17/8" at 50 yards. At 25 yards there's just one ragged hole one-inch around with my favorite IPSC match load of 6.0 grs. of WW 231 under a 200 gr. H&G #68 cast lead SWC.

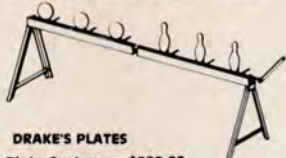
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ular Pistol in .45 ACP still holds my personal best accuracy record (and probably always will) of a mind-boggling .625" for three shots at 50 yards! Yes, I quit after three shots and didn't try for five after seeing one tiny hole in the target!

Still, I don't think anyone can fault the Briley barrel for its sub-two inch group, five shots, at 50 yards. It's as much a testimony to the quality of the barrel as it is to Claudio's ability to properly fit that barrel.

## Combat Amenities

In addition to the more glamorous work, like Claudio's handmade accessories and unique compensator design, the Salassa custom pistol also features some standard combat amenities.

For the trigger, Claudio selected one of the new McCormick super lightweight match triggers with a titanium bow and a carbon fiber pad. This new trigger works very well, but I'm also impressed with how racy it looks. It really is sexy!

Chip McCormick's high-performance hammer and sear combination were also chosen and, thanks to Claudio's skill at mating those parts precisely as they should be, the resulting trigger pull measures a beautiful two pounds even. More than just the lightness of the pull, the Salassa trigger job is just as crisp as the starch in an Englishman's collar.

The gun is finished in the popular two-tone mode of blued slide atop hard chromed frame. For the hard chrome finish, Claudio insisted on the superlative work of Jim Kelley at Metaloy Industries. More guns in *American Handgunner* boast the distinctive, rugged Metaloy finish than all other plating processes added together. Metaloy really is that good.

Even though handcut checkering has come to be accepted as "standard" on a combat pistol, Claudio's checkering shines as anything but ordinary. Unlike all the other 'smiths who offer a choice of 20 lpi or 40 lpi, Claudio long ago settled on what he feels is the perfect balance between hard-biting purchase and a degree of comfort.

Some shooters feel 20 lpi is worth the callouses it takes to get used to the abrasive gripping surface, while others will accept the less secure 40 lpi in exchange for hands that are not bloody chunks of meat after a few hundred shots. Claudio splits the difference exactly with his expertly cut checkering at 30 lines to the inch on the gripping surfaces—the front strap, mainspring housing and front of the squared trigger guard.

On the areas where checkering is more cosmetic than functional—the rear of the slide, underside of the trigger guard and mag release button—the traditional 40 lpi is employed. Such fine checkering does look better on these smaller surface areas.

A Bo-Mar combat sight is melted into the slide in exactly the way it should be. Claudio carefully milled the slide with a



design by Richard Zapperoli

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series of cuts to sink the Bo-Mar tastefully into the slide.

This is much preferred to the quick and dirty method of some 'smiths where the back of the slide is simply lopped off and the Bo-Mar screwed in place. Claudio does it right, there's not a glimmer of daylight showing in the dovetail for the Bo-Mar.

The top of the slide is nicely serrated, purely a cosmetic touch. Notice that the serrations extend all the way to the very end of the compensator. Again this is indicative of the attention to detail in a Salassa custom pistol. All too many 'smiths just run the lines out to the end of the slide and don't bother to continue them on the much smaller, thus harder to cut, surface of the compensator. Not Claudio Salassa.

The pistol is adorned with an exhibition-grade set of Kingwood stocks from Kim Ahrends. Right down to the grips, everything is absolutely Best Quality on a Claudio Salassa custom pistol.

And that is why the secret guns of Africa's premiere pistolsmith have been well worth the wait.



Readers interested in further information on the guns of Claudio Salassa or the Briley Comp Choke may contact him at the new Briley Pistol Division, Dept. AH, 1085 Gessner, Space E, Houston, TX 77055. If you wish to speak by telephone, the number is (713) 932-6995.

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## LIL RUGER

Continued from page 57

In addition, Horvath had jeweled the sides of the hammer and trigger and made a cylinder pin with a flat face to allow maximum ejector rod travel to fully extract empties.

On the side of the frame, the original ".357 Magnum" had been replaced with "44 SPL". I have seen a number of conversions from big-name gunsmiths that still had ".357 Magnum" stamped on the side. To me, it spoils the whole conversion.

My Little Ruger arrived just as I was leaving for the first Shootists Holiday and I took it along with a generous supply of Lyman's #429421 Keith bullet over 7.5 grains of Unique. They proved capable of making the little Ruger sing but before we even had a chance to shoot it, other Shootists were trying to talk me out of it. After we shot it, I knew I had a winner.

That was in 1986 and since that time a number of other pistoleros have also had Andy Horvath build up Little Rugers for them in various calibers. I recently called four of these in and put them through their paces in calibers .44 Special, .45 Colt and .41 Magnum. The Three Screw Ruger .357 is too small in cylinder and frame for the .45 Colt and .41 Magnum, which should only be built on New Model frames.

Two significant additions have been made to my special Little Ruger. For packin', a Thad Rybka M81 Crossdraw holster has been added and the .44 itself has been beautifully engraved by Tedd Adamovich of BluMagnum Grips. Both the holster and the engraving enhance pride of ownership of the .44 Ruger.

I find myself more and more reaching for this no-nonsense sixgun and holster combination when I head for the mountains, foothills or desert. I usually pack a Colt Commander .45ACP or a Ruger GP-100 when I am testing other guns, but lately they seem to be taking a back seat to the Little Ruger.

For this special gathering of Little Rugers, fellow Shootist Jerry Danuser of Missouri sent along his .44 Special and .45 Colt Sheriff's Models and friend David Dworsky of Texas contributed his .45 Colt and .41 Magnum Horvath Little Ruger sixguns.

Danuser's .44 Special Ruger is built on a .357 Three Screw Blackhawk that I located in a local gun shop. The alloy grip frame has been polished and fitted with ivory micarta grips, the hammer is jeweled and the balance of the gun is richly blued. Since this Ruger was already retro-fitted with a Ruger transfer bar at the factory, the action is not quite as smooth as my own .44 Special.

A second Little Ruger from Missouri is in .45 Colt chambering and started life as a New Model .357 Blackhawk. The



entire sixgun has been satin nicked highlighted by a jeweled bright nickel hammer and trigger, and all screw heads, frame pins, cylinder flutes, ejector rod head, and base pin have all been brightly polished. Contrasting nicely with the satin nickel finish is a pair of ebony grips. Since this was originally a .357 Magnum, the cylinder is too short for some .45 Colt handloads.

Texas's contribution to the testing project consisted of a Ruger Stainless Super Blackhawk cut to four inches and fitted with a standard stainless grip frame. Since it started as a .44 Magnum, its cylinder is long enough to handle the longest of .45 Colt handloads. The round butted grip frame has been fitted with ivory micarta grips. The Ruger Stainless Blackhawk .44 would also be a good candidate for a conversion that maintains the original caliber but with four-inch barrel and rounded butt.

The second Horvath Little Ruger sixgun lent by David Dworsky is a Three Screw .41 Magnum, round butted, finished in bead blasted nickel, hammer and trigger jeweled, and barrel cut to three and one-half inches. Again, grips are ivory micarta that look and feel particularly good.

Single action sixguns have always been my passion, but these round-butted Little Rugers redefine the shooting of big bore single action sixguns. The simple act of round butting the grip frame changes the perceived recoil significantly and the heaviest loads can be shot in relative comfort.

The four-inch or shorter barrel makes them particularly fast out of a properly designed holster, and I would certainly not feel that I was giving anything away to those armed with semi-autos or double actions revolvers, at least for the first shot. No gun is any faster for the first shot than a single action sixgun.

### Special Loads

While testing the .44 Special Little Rugers, I stumbled onto an excellent .44 Special load, namely the BULL-X 240 grain semi-wadcutter Keith style bullet over 11.0 grains of HS-7. At just over 900 feet per second in a four-inch barrel, this load proved to be exceptionally accurate. I expect to be using this load in the future in longer barreled .44 Special sixguns, expecting it to break 1000 feet per second in seven and one-half inch barreled sixguns.

For the .45 Colt, the long time favorite load of Lyman's 260 grain Keith bullet, #454424 over 10.0 grains of Unique proved to be very accurate at 1000 feet per second, as did both the 300 grain NEI #310.452 Keith and BRP's 300 grain Lyman #454629GC. Both gave the same 1000 feet per second over 21.0 grains of WW296.

The Bull-X 255 proved to be a good bullet with 18.5 grains of #2400 at, again,

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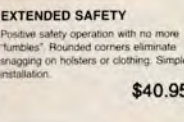


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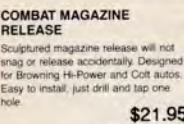
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1000 feet per second and the same bullet performs well over 10.0 grains of Unique. The .45 Colt has always been a most versatile cartridge and continues to be in the Little Ruger .45's.

I did not spend as much time with the .41 Magnum Sheriff's Model as the others, but it proved to perform well with 13.0 grains of Blue Dot under the Bull-X 215 grain semi-wadcutter bullet giving groups under two inches at 25 yards which is excellent for a three and one-half inch barreled sixgun.

Horvath does all the standard sixgun work, trigger jobs, action tuning, custom barrels, sights, etc. He can also provide steel ejector rod housings for those who, like myself, detest alloy housings on single action sixguns. His finest work however is his Little Rugers. His last .44 Special conversion went through Thad Rybka to well-known sixgunner Hank Williams Jr. who I understand does something else on the side. That alone should speak highly of Andy Horvath's work.

For those who may be interested in .44 Special conversions, Horvath offers the following:

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## IPSC

Continued from page 29

off when the gun is hot. It should work on guns that are shot a lot, and not get gummy or stiff on duty guns that ride in the holster for weeks at a time without being used.

This is asking a lot, but there are quite a few lubes now available that give excellent performance, such as Break Free, G-96, Prolix, and TriFlo. I'm sure there are several other lubes that will work just fine.

One of my shooting buddies uses STP and says it works as well as anything. Recently I've been using a product called Minute Man High Tech gun oil and in firing several thousand rounds through three guns it has worked perfectly.

It's a very "slippery" lube that seems to make the gun cycle with unusual smoothness. The maker claims it will not freeze at -60° F, nor boil off at 575° F. This sounds like more of a margin than one would need, but after 200 rounds or so of Bill Drills (i.e., draw and fire six A's under two seconds), the gun gets mighty hot.

Minute Man's address is 4304 6th. Ave., Tacoma, WA 98406, or call (206) 752-3255.

The next step is to put the lube

*Guns and magazines often get blamed for problems that are actually the result of poor reloads.*

where it's needed. A reader from Florida named Jim Moore outlined a procedure for oiling the 1911 pistol in a letter to the Nov/Dec 1982 issue of *American Handgunner*, and I later found that pistolsmith Mike Plaxco uses the same method. It goes like this:

With the gun empty, lock the slide back and put a couple of drops of oil on the barrel, spreading it around on the area where the bushing rides. Turn the gun upside down, put a drop of oil in the disconnector notch of the slide and a couple of drops on each of the slide rails.

Now close the gun and put a drop or two of oil on the barrel at the front of the ejection port, keeping the muzzle down so the oil will flow into the locking lug area. Cycle the gun a few times, wipe off any excess oil, and the job's done. The gun should be lubed at the start of every shooting session.

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figure of speech it has some merit, but if it's meant literally, it's not very bright advice.

Imagine waiting for a flight at an airport coffeeshop and hearing some mechanics at the next table chatting: "Yeah, the engines on that 727 are a few hundred hours overdue for a major overhaul, but hey, they aren't broken, so let's not fix them."

With things that have to work—like airplanes and competition guns—parts subject to heavy wear should be replaced long before they are worn out, not after they break. That's the price you pay for reliability.

Fortunately in the case of handguns the price isn't too high. In most cases springs and the extractor are the only parts that need replacement.

A spare extractor should be fitted at the time the initial gunsmithing work is done. Whenever the gun is field stripped for cleaning, a round should be slipped under the extractor hook to check for proper tensioning. If the extractor won't hold the round in place, it should be replaced.

Incidentally, to prolong extractor life always load the gun by inserting a loaded mag and then cycling the slide, so the round slides up the breechface and under the hook. Dropping a round in the chamber and then closing the slide forces the extractor to snap over the case rim and greatly decreases service life.

The recoil spring and firing pin spring should be replaced at regular intervals. Pistolsmith Bill Wilson suggests that the recoil spring be replaced every 2,000 rounds for a standard 1911 (every 4,000 rounds if the gun is compensated) while the firing pin spring should be replaced every 5,000 rounds.

In my opinion a properly fitted extractor should go 10,000 rounds at a minimum; the one in my current .38 Super match gun has gone 50,000 rounds and still works fine.

**Proper Maintenance**

The maintenance routine I've used for years with good results is pretty straightforward.

Lube gun before every shooting session and every 250 rounds thereafter.

Every 500 rounds, field-strip gun and clean it, paying particular attention to the feedramp, chamber, locking lug area on barrel and slide, the breechface, extractor, and ejector.

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## AIMPOINT

*Continued from page 44*

but since the adjustments were moved inside, they benefitted from slightly lighter mounts.

Then, almost all at once, they began to shrink. The little Aimpoint 1000 was the first of the Amazing Shrinking Aimpoints and it still resides on my Model 41 bulls-eye .22.

The Model 2000 was the next miniaturized Aimpoint and it quickly became the darling of NRA Action Shooters. It had a small, short tube which greatly reduced its weight, but it had a rather ungainly arrangement of battery compartment and rheostat that made it look like the Enterprise with one engine gone.

### New Model 3000

So what Aimpoint has done is combine the good features of both the 1000 and 2000 models into the new Aimpoint 3000. It has the tube of the 2000 and the battery compartment of the 1000. The result is a much more compact arrangement with the battery, rheostat and switch tucked neatly parallel with the tube.

The rheostat of the new 3000 is a Mil-Spec part that looks just like the 1000's, but is actually, according to Kim Hendon of Aimpoint, a better quality part. The package looks much better and avoids some of the mounting problems that were encountered with the 2000's battery pod getting in the way.

The Aimpoint 3000 comes complete with rings, polarizing filter and battery. The only other thing you need is a mount, and the standard rings fit Weaver style bases which seem to be standard for handgun mounts. The entire setup carries a suggested retail of \$229.

At the range the Aimpoint 3000 performs just like it should. I mounted it on a Bianchi Cup revolver, sighted it in, and shot a match. No, I didn't win but that wasn't the sight's fault.

One criticism leveled at Aimpoints in

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general has been the fact that you can see a small hump in the tube where the diode is mounted. On the 3000 it's located at about 2 o'clock in the tube and appears as a black bump.

### Aimpoint's Revolution

Aimpoint has addressed some of the problems that surfaced with the older 2000 and made a better sight, but the thing that really amazes me is how quickly, and thoroughly, these gadgets have changed the way we shoot.

At first they were viewed as weird gadgets that only an equipment nut could love. I don't completely disagree with that thought. The early Aimpoints were so heavy and bulky that they discouraged people from trying them.

The real revolution began when the sights began to shrink. Where someone might have balked at adding a pound to the weight of their pistol, few complain about six or seven ounces.

And, with the weight barrier broken, shooters discovered in droves how really useful this type of sight can be. As long as you can hold the red dot in the bulls-eye and avoid jerking the trigger, you're going to have a good shot. That, neighbors, is good news.

New users of red-dot sights often complain that they can't hold the dot still. They're right, nobody can hold it perfectly motionless. But you don't need to.

What is happening is the floating dot, even though the sight itself has no magnification, appears to magnify your normal movement. With iron sights the same degree of movement is there, but it doesn't appear to be as great.

The red dot really gets your attention and makes it *appear* as if you're wobbling more. You have to train yourself, through practice and dry firing, to accept a certain amount of motion in the dot.

When you do you'll be surprised to find, even though it's jumping like a crazed redbug, that the shots will still be just as good or better than with iron sights.





## GLOCK WINS FIRST .40 S&W POLICE SALE, BUT S&W GETS CHP CONTRACT

**T**he on-again, off-again Beretta Model 92 slide is off again. We were the first gun magazine to report the Italian pistol's annoying tendency of its slide breaking in half, but that problem seemed to have been resolved when the Army re-tested the Beretta against the Ruger P-85 and the S&W 5906 and the Beretta won again.

But now the slide problem has resurfaced in the Navy.

Lt. Cmdr. Joe Marlowe at the Navy Special Warfare Command headquarters said the elite Navy SEALs have deep-sixed the Beretta and switched to the SIG P-226, according to a report in the *San Diego Tribune*.

"The reason: several SEALs were wounded by their Berettas when firing them in operational conditions," reported the *Tribune*.

Marlowe said the SEALs would resume use of the Beretta M-9 "once the army works out the problems."

The first police department to adopt the .40 S&W is the South Carolina State Police and the gun they chose is the Glock Model 22. The Model 22 is a full-size service pistol using the proven Glock 9mm (Model 17) frame and a new "size 40" slide.

Second place for selling a .40 S&W goes to Smith & Wesson with a large batch of Model 4006's going to the California Highway Patrol.

An Oklahoma holding company has bought Charter Arms. Manufacturing will continue in Connecticut, but assembly will be in the union-free Sooner state.

In the fine spirit of Iran-Contra, the FBI has covered up the stink over its purchase of 10mm Lite ammo from Federal that prompted a formal protest to the GAO from Winchester.

The FBI paid \$313 per 1000 rounds to Federal versus \$165.42 from Winchester. That resulted in a waste of \$5.9 million of your tax dollars and Winchester rightfully demanded to know why their low bid was not accepted.

According to an industry insider, the FBI coerced the maker of Silvertips into withdrawing its protest by some subtle arm-twisting—drop that protest now, if you ever want any more FBI business!

Winchester's protest has been withdrawn.

Dave Stanford, outgoing president of USPSA, has declared he will urge that IPSC rules be changed to declare 9mm

Major and .38 Super as minor, period.

Says Stanford, "I saw few alternatives other than to state that 9mm Luger would score in Minor class, as would .38 Super with less than 150 gr. bullets."

Far be it for the firearms bureaucracy to know anything about guns! I know it's asking a lot for a federal bureaucracy to know what it's doing, but the BATF is outclassing itself this time. Among the BATF's computer records of confiscated firearms are these gems: .30-'06 revolvers, 12 gauge pistols, .25 ACP shotguns and .25, .28, .223 and .308 caliber revolvers.

The Army MTU (Marksmanship Training Unit) will be fielding an "Action Team" in 1991 to compete in the Bianchi Cup, Steel Challenge, The Masters and



**John French, California gunsmith extraordinaire, is the new chief of revolver development at the S&W Performance Center.**

various IPSC matches. Long known for their domination of international and conventional bullseye matches, the US service team will have to prove itself in the action disciplines.

Pistolsmith John French, whose sensational "Buff Buster" conversion of a Ruger Redhawk was featured on our Sept/Oct 1988 cover, has been hired by the Smith & Wesson Performance Center.

John will be in charge of custom revolver development and will work with noted gunsmith Paul Liebenberg, who is the Chief Engineer of the S&WPC.

The Performance Center is taking

orders now. For information, write S&W PC at 2100 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, MA 01102.

It looks like Dan Wesson is finally shipping their PPC and Bianchi Cup "custom" revolvers. These slab-sided, bull-barreled, four-pound monstrosities have got to have the stiffest damn trigger pulls of any so-called "competition" guns I've ever had the displeasure to tug on.

For close to \$1,000 a crack, you'd think "the other Wesson" could put a decent DA trigger on them, but apparently not.

My advice: buy a used Model 10 Smith and send it to Ron Power or any of the leading revolversmiths. For roughly the same money, you'll get a real custom gun with a vastly superior action than those Dan Wesson crunch-n-yanks.

Predictably, when the new Colt's Mfg. Co. bought Colt Firearms from Colt Industries the new owners fired the company's old president. There's nothing wrong with installing your own man when you buy a company, and the decision was no reflection upon the significant accomplishments of that bum they threw out.

He didn't draw unemployment for long. Gary French, the former Colt chief executive, is now the president of Sturm, Ruger and Co. Mr. French left behind an outstanding record with Colt and it is not surprising that his considerable talents were acquired by Ruger.

In case you're wondering why an outsider took the top spot in a family-owned business, an insider says that Wm. B. Ruger's sons, Tom and Bill Jr., both declined the job. Good luck, Gary, it sounds like these guys might know something you don't!

Meanwhile, back on his old stomping grounds, Colt is moving boldly forward. The Hartford gunmaker signed top ranked IPSC shooter Jerry Barnhart to the new Team Colt.

Also, Colt says their new .44 Magnum Anaconda should be available early this fall. The rampant colt might soon be dancing on another new model, a double-action 9mm (.40 S&W?) that is slated to be announced at the 1991 SHOT Show.

Olympic pistol shooting gold medallist Sorin Babii of Rumania fought against loyalist troops in the streets of Bucharest during the successful *coup d'etat* against dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

The champion pistol shot stationed himself alongside Olympic rapid fire gold medallist Corneliu Ion and conducted counter-sniper action to support the freedom fighters who toppled the Ceausescu regime.

Stick that in your pipe, Sarah Brady. What you and the other gun grabbers at Handgun Control Inc. can't seem to grasp is something Mr. Babii and Mr. Ion will never forget—an armed society is a free society.





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