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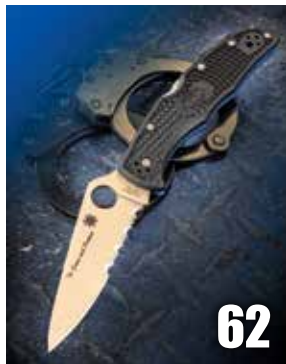
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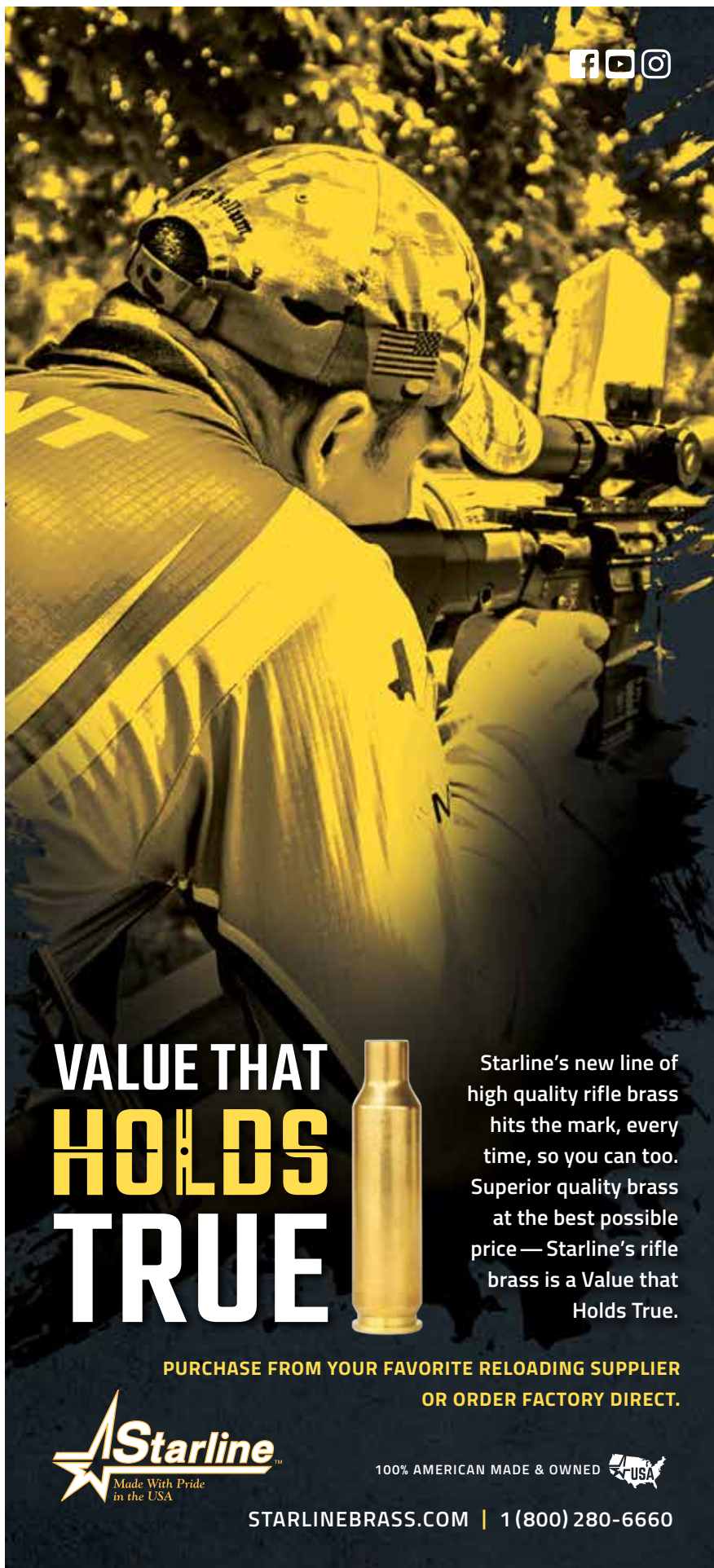
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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER® (ISSN 0145-4250) is published bi-monthly by Publishers' Development Corp., 13741 Danielson Street, Suite A, Poway, CA 92064. Periodical postage paid at San Diego, CA 92128, and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: One year (six issues) \$19.75. Single copies \$6.95 (in Canada \$7.95). Change of address: four weeks notice required on all changes. Send old address as well as new. Contributors submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Payment is for all world rights for the material. The act of mailing a manuscript constitutes the author's certification of originality of material. Opinions expressed are those of the bylined authors and do not necessarily represent those of the magazine or its advertisers. Advertising rates furnished on request. Reproduction or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permission, is prohibited. Entire contents Copyright© 2022 Publishers' Development Corp. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his address. **SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS:** For immediate action email subs@americanhandgunner.com, write Subscription Dept., 13741 Danielson Street, Suite A, Poway, CA 92064 or call (866) 820-4045. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **AMERICAN HANDGUNNER®**, 13741 Danielson Street, Suite A, Poway, CA 92064. **WARNING:** Firearms are dangerous if used improperly, and may cause serious injury or death. Due to the inherent variables in the reloading of metallic cartridges, verify all published loads with manufacturer's data. Consult a professional gunsmith when modifying any firearm. **Be a safe shooter!**





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FINDING GOOD 'RITERS?

I don't know how you were able to get all of your fantastic writers but I'm glad you did.

Lloyd

Thanks for asking this, Lloyd. It's a great question. We frequent all the worst low-life establishments humanity has to offer. You know, places like bordellos, desperado saloons, Dick's Sporting Goods and the Nepalese bar in Raiders of the Lost Ark. Then we ask those folks who creeps THEM out. Voila! Our writing staff! — TM



Ah, the Good Ol' Days ...

My first carry permit was for NH — a four-year, \$10 paper permit signed by the police chief — some 35 years ago. It was a no-hassle deal. My second was a MA permit. It was not as easy but, for a non-resident, much easier than for a resident. All the non-resident permit applications went to the MA state authorities for approval. Then, no photo ID and no “range test” were involved. Residents

had to get the local police chief sign-off, which usually meant “no” unless one had influence with the chief. Some chiefs refused all applications.

I had a lot of competitive shooting buddies who were jealous of several NH guys who had MA permits. We got them because it was a lot better to have a permit hauling a carload of guns and ammo to/from a MA event location if ever stopped. Never had to show it but

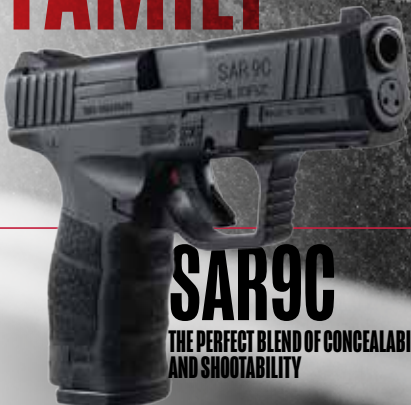
it was good to be able to exercise my Constitutional rights.

Bruce Woods

Plastic Hater

In regards to your Jan/Feb 2021 issue; that's enough already on black plastic guns. You've seen one, you have seen them all. If you are so awestruck by these toys, start a new magazine,

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If you continue to do so, please cut down your coverage to a half-page per gun. All that is needed to cover these is a generic picture (they all look alike) with the critical data, manufacturer and price. There is no sense wasting column inches on these copycats.

Plenty of gun companies continue to make real guns from wood and steel. These should be your focus, not those plastic aberrations.

G.F. Smith

Anyone have the numbers for GLOCK, Smith & Wesson, Springfield Armory, H&K, Sig. et. al? We need to tell them no one is interested in the hundreds of millions of guns they've sold! But seriously, this letter is a great example of why we try so hard to balance coverage between classic wood and steel, plastic (gah!), customs, semis and revolvers. Different strokes for different folks. —TM

The Whinery



While reading the Jan/Feb edition of *Handgunner*, I saw the article by Dr. Will Dabbs titled "Getting Away With (Attempted) Murder." I must say this article has offended me more than anything I have ever read in a shooting magazine. I did not subscribe to this magazine to read articles such as this.

This article wreaks [sic] of advocacy for red flag laws, a practice which is both practiced and abused in the state where I reside. Yes, it is certainly possible what the author says is true, but it is just as likely other factors are at play and the story is not as it seems. This is why we have a judicial process, rather than basing a verdict on circumstantial information.

If your goal in publishing this article was for shock value, you have succeeded. Now cancel my subscription.

Peter Corash

We're completely stumped by this interpretation of the story. Perhaps one of you can help figure out what triggered Mr. Corash so? —TM

Help! Creative Reloading!

With the continued shortages of ammo and components, many of us have turned to handloading, casting our own bullets and downsizing our caliber choices. For .380 ACP, most of the available data is for jacketed bullets. Very little handloading data is available for cast bullets and what there is usually calls for the "traditional" powders like Bullseye or Unique, which are them-

selves scarce, and that data itself has not been updated for years. I find very little or no data for some of the newer more readily available powders for use with cast bullets, especially in the 95- to 100-grain range.

Might your handloading guru be able to generate an article addressing this gap? I'm sure many other faithful readers and subscribers would join me in welcoming such an article.

Thank you! Season's greetings and keep up the good work — you do publish a fine magazine.

Mike Shapiro

A few issues back, Lindsey Bertomen wrote a "Handloading" column about using alternate powders. We got lots of letters asking for even more, so we're on it. Stay tuned... —TM

Guncrank Newsletter

Will's article, "A Tale of Two Terrible Things" is superbly written, entertaining, and worth repeated discussion. I am very appreciative of his writings. Excellent!

American Handgunner has so many wonderful writers. Keep up the good work.

Cy Aures



Custom Markings

I enjoyed Greg Derr's article, "Masterpiece Marking Methods." I have a Commander built by Arnold Capone of King's Gunworks I acquired many years ago from my brother. All the parts are stamped with the crown and capital "K" enclosed in an oval. There is a stamp by the S&W revolver sight inlet into the slide, on the trigger, on the barrel bushing, etc. I have attached a couple of pictures of the stamps. I won Class A a couple of years running in our little action pistol club with this gun, and it has served as a carry piece, so it is well-used. It is the most accurate centerfire handgun I own.

Keep up the good work — your magazines are my favorite and a definite cut above your competitors' efforts.

Eric Van Stralen

Black Swan Rarity

In *Cop Talk* (Jan/Feb 22), Ayoob mentioned some people call incidents when a .45 ACP fails to stop as "a Black Swan rarity." In the incident I will relate, I had armed myself with a GLOCK 21 and stoked it with 230-grain Winchester

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SPEAK OUT

Black Talon JHPs.

During a traffic stop, an individual physically assaulted me. His left hand was on my shoulder and his body was in contact with me. As his right hand came toward me from concealment, I pressed the muzzle against his (right) nipple and fired. The offender abandoned his attack immediately and took flight. Therefore, I did not fire any other shots.

I could see no reaction from the man, other than he ended his attack. I literally wondered if I had somehow missed! I watched as he ran between our vehicles then across the parking lot. After about 30 yards, he looked over his shoulder and realized I was not chasing him. Having been involved in a shooting, I elected to protect the scene. At this point, he stopped, looked at me, and said, "You shot me." Then, he sat down. The crowd of people standing around closed in on him and whatever he had in his hand was quickly removed.

This miscreant was life-flighted to the hospital and survived. Subsequently, I learned my bullet ripped through his right lung, lacerated his liver and destroyed his left kidney. I eventually recovered that bullet, and it is perfectly expanded.

It is not a "Black Swan" incident for a .45 ACP to fail. The simple fact is all handguns are poor stoppers. Therefore, when armed for defense, carry the gun that you shoot most accurately. Not the gun that carries the most cartridges! (Then, fight your way to a rifle!)

R.E. Thornton



Victory's Virtues

I truly enjoyed Roy's piece on the WWII S&Ws. I too feel the soul of these classic firearms. My father-in-law was a career Marine and he had a Victory that was with him in Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal and other scenic Pacific locales. When he passed away, I was honored to be trusted to care for this weapon. Somewhere over the years, the pistol lost its lanyard loop. I have located an original replacement to bring the piece back to its original glory.

Thanks, Roy, for extolling the virtues of this weapon much better than I ever could.

Semper Fi.

Allan Owen

Suppressors?

The new bill/law now in NY making it illegal for an individual to build a gun for their personal use prompts a question. Is it legal for an individual to build a suppressor for their personal use only?

Bill N.

Suppressors fall into an entirely different category than homemade firearms as they are NFA (National Firearms Act) items. Per federal law, you cannot build your own, even for private use, unless you do the complete "approval" process and tax stamp with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It's too detailed a process to document here so please refer to ATF.gov for more info. —TM

More .40

While reading through the *Speak Out* section of the Jan/Feb issue, I read the letter from George Waters asking about the .40 S&W. As far as answers go, it appears the .40 is dying off. Since many

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trends in cartridges tend to follow law enforcement and state and local agencies tend to follow federal agencies (particularly the FBI) on the decision to return to the 9mm, the Bureau may have put the .40 S&W into a coma. Prices of ammunition, developments in bullet performance and the return of the 10mm may have also helped to move it to the back burner.

Dale Cheuvront

Danger?

As a happy subscriber, I was surprised, to say the least, by Mr. Clough's deflecting take on his finding that on several occasions, the slide dropped when he slammed a new magazine into the Kimber Mako, noting in each case that the slide did strip a round off the mag, placing the gun in battery. He writes maybe this was a function of how hard he seats his mags. This condition causes a very serious safety problem, certainly worthy of being investigated and not glossed over. If that gun was mine, it would be sent back to Kimber.

James B. Astrachan

This might be one of those agree to disagree topics. I see this a lot, with many different gun designs. Heck, the Mauser HsC was designed to do just that. Anyhow, the slide slams forward

with more force (farther back) when chambering a round anyway, so it's no more dangerous than racking the slide. I'd assume the gun is pointed in a safe direction when inserting a mag, just as when chambering a round. When this happens, I check to make sure a round is properly in place. — TM



EDC Taunting

My Lone Wolf Distribution knife says, "EAT LEAD FASCIST SCUM!" I was tempted to dump my daily carry briefcase, but I didn't want you guys to feel inadequate.

Brian Leak

War of 1812

Hey guys, great article on Jackson but if "allowing the U.S. to win the War of

1812" is any indication of the author's research, the entire article is suspect.

GT Corbett

Well, we got our conscripted sailors back and some picturesque Western Florida beaches out of the deal, so many would consider that a victory. Besides, you can tell we won because we're not all speaking English these days! Oh, wait ... — TM

Whinery Advice

Kudos to Tom McHale for your succinct, appropriate and on-target response in *Speak Out's* "The Whinery" in the Nov/Dec 2021 issue. Do we need to hear more from the whiners in order to dispel more myths and misinformation? Asking for a friend!

Thank you for the always informative issues — read them cover to cover ...

Deb C.

Well Deb, we got another Whinery letter this month ... Perhaps you can help us understand that one. I'm baffled. — TM

Pistol Packin' President

Andrew Jackson won his second presidency on the slogan "Jackson and no bank." Successful in foiling another



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SPEAK OUT

bankster's coup, he left instructions for his tombstone to display the words, "I killed the bank." However, like much of history, it has been rewritten by the victors. Likewise, it was known after the trial that the misfiring assassin Richard Lawrence was set free by faking lunacy, admitting he was put up to the deed by wealthy European interests. My takeaway from our pistol packin' president is always ready, the divine may intervene, and when you stand up for good, evil will try to cut you down.

Richard K.

More Hi-Power Info

His Highness Editorial Emperor McHale,

I've thoroughly enjoyed Roy Boy's *Insider* columns on the inner workings of the 1911, being a single action fan myself. In the Nov/Dec issue, he asked us to submit ideas to cover. Recently there has been renewed interest in the P35/Hi-Power with Nighthawk Custom offering their semi-custom rendition, and now Springfield Arms bringing forth their first commercial offering, hopefully

with more to follow. I'd like to fantasize that in the coming years, SA will do for the P35 what Kimber did for the 1911.

I humbly submit the following. How about some more in-depth mechanical coverage, fixes, upgrades and general workings of the P35 in *The Insider*?

Paul Romanych

Don't Reload This!

I am always picking up brass at the range. Recently I found this Magtech [sic] headstamped case, and I was surprised. What is the purpose of the added thickness to the case?

Carl Thomas Zmuda



crush and destroy it. It's a Maxtech, not a Magtech case. Magtech cases are normal and acceptable to reload. Maxtech uses an internal sleeve and shelf to prevent bullet setback and

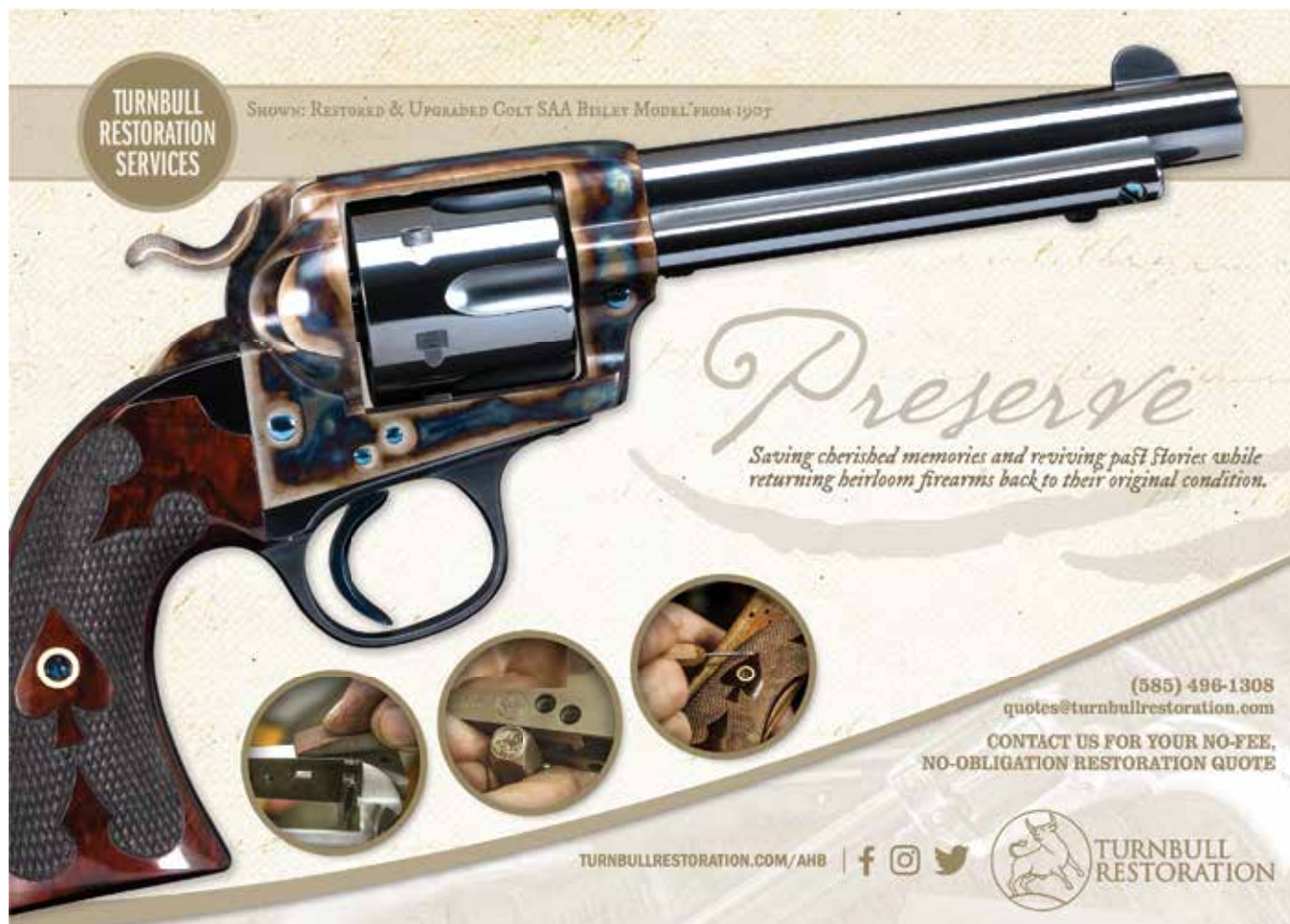
establish an overall length. It also has a significantly reduced case volume, so we have no idea what the pressure will do even with a normal load recipe. It's not worth trying to make it work. As a public service, kill it, so someone else doesn't pick it up and try to reload it! —TM

About Accuracy ...

I must take exception to Mr. Snyder's comment in the January/February 2022 edition of *Speak Out*.

While his point is well taken for Law Enforcement and Military, and from what I have read over many decades by professionals like Mr. Ayoob, the average civilian encounter is in the range of 5-7 yards. Compact handguns are designed for this distance and purpose. Yes, full-sized handguns should be able to be accurate out to 25-50 yards, which is why they are issued to military and law enforcement.

I've been shooting for over 50 years, and I can speak for us "older" shooters who still use iron sights on handguns; I don't know if I could even see out to 50 yards, much less hit my target with a compact 9mm. At 7 yards, I can still hit my 8"x11" target in the X and ten ring with a 3.5"-barrel 9mm with all eight rounds. Whether



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or not I could hit the same target at 25 yards is questionable.

Barry Spinka

If I may, I'd bring attention to these discussions' apples and oranges element. When we test handguns, we want to know what the gun and ammo combination "can" do — mechanical accuracy. Making efforts to remove sighting error, what size groups can a handgun print at 15 or 25 yards? As you note, that may be a very different thing than what a given shooter can do. Folks might be surprised at how mechanically accurate those compact pistols can be. But, as you note, they are more challenging for the user to shoot accurately at longer distances. — TM

Perfect Revolver

A few years back, I added to my revolver collection with a Jerry Miculek edition of the S&W 625. And, to make the Performance Center version of the 625 even better, I did a trigger job on it per the Jerry Miculek video — which makes it pretty easy for non-smith to do it. Results: It's still a very accurate gun — more accurate than any of my semi-auto .45 ACP guns. It still has exhibited 100% reliability. Its SA pull is now three pounds, and its DA pull is a buttery

smooth seven pounds. Everyone who shoots it raves about it. It's my rendition of a perfect DA revolver though I have several that are really, really good.

Happy New Year!

Bruce D. Woods

Articles Please!

As a long-time subscriber, I hope you'll honor a request for a couple of articles.

First, could one of your writers describe Hollywood's gun safety procedures? We're all pretty mystified by what went wrong with Alec Baldwin.

Second, as a pistol instructor, I've observed more than once that a shooter has inadvertently flipped off the safety on a 1911 or similar semiauto when putting it into a vertical shoulder holster. Could one of your writers please address that?

I realize you have better things to do than listen to the whining of one of your readers, so thank you for listening anyway. You guys run a great magazine, and I particularly enjoy the one-page or two-page articles.

Mike Barrett

I am a regular subscriber to *American Handgunner*, which, in my

opinion, is the best handgun magazine out there. The articles are always informative. With the recent accidental shooting that occurred on a movie set, I would love to see an article in *AH* about firearms used in the movies, how they are supposed to be made safe while appearing realistic, typical precautions taken while filming, and how the rigged ammunition differs from typical live ammunition. I think it would be a topic of great interest to all of us who enjoy firearms.

Terry R. Nye

We get some of our best ideas from readers' notes just like this, so keep the story requests coming! Thanks for writing in! — TM

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TOM MCHALE

VANTAGEPOINT

This pistol ships with extra-tall white dot sights, co-witnessing naturally through the lower part of a red dot sight.



ALL HAIL THE NEWEST, OLDEST HOT CALIBER

SMITH & WESSON JUMPS INTO THE 10MM POOL



Note the new flatter trigger and extra-wide safety "leaf."



It's hard to argue with 15+1 rounds of 10mm in a standard carry-capable pistol.

What's old is new. Or is it, what's new is old?

We're seeing a resurgence of the 10mm; this during the same era when the 9mm is raging against .40 S&W in all the "most-tactical-est" circles. Maybe people are tired of compromises? The 9mm is hard to beat in the capacity-per-cubic-carry-inch competition, and calibers starting with a "four" represent the big, fat bullet bloc. Go big — in either capacity or power — or go home!

Like the .40 S&W, the 10mm represents a happy middle ground in the capacity spectrum, offering another round or two over .45 ACP in the single stack category and several additional cartridges in double-stacks. Considering today's example, the new Smith & Wesson M&P 2.0 10mm packs a whopping 15+1 capacity into a "normal-sized" package.

Remember the last time Smith &

Wesson produced a 10mm semi-automatic pistol? It was way back in the 1990s with the 1006 line and several variants. So, 10mm aficionados fret no more; you can get a modern service pistol, complete with all the latest bells and whistles.

Optics Ready

The new M&P 10mm 2.0 features the C.O.R.E. optics system, meaning the slide is cut and ready to mount a wide variety of optics. Before my first range trip with the new M&P, I went ahead and installed a Trijicon SRO. The process was easy peasy using the Type 1 adapter plate. The 10mm model comes with seven different mounting plates to fit a plethora of red dot sights. You'll also get a slide cover plate if you want to run with irons only.

When peering through the gun-top TV, I noticed how the folks at S&W had kindly equipped this pistol with tall sights. With no tinkering on my part, the irons co-witnessed perfectly

and were visible in the bottom 10% of the Trijicon SRO window.

Trigger

I've got a 9mm M&P 2.0 sitting here on my desk and the newest trigger system on the 10mm is a bit different. The original trigger was far more curved, offering a hook-like feel on the finger. It also used a hinged trigger mechanism for the trigger safety instead of a leaf in the trigger face. The new model takes an all-new approach. It's a "leaf" design, but instead of a thin blade, it's about 3/8" wide and flat on the front, so you really feel it on the trigger finger. It's also aggressively spring-loaded. I like the overall geometry of the new trigger design better as it's a lot flatter. I never really cared for the aggressive hook trigger of the original 2.0 model.

The pull weight measures 5.5 lbs. The take-up segment is a bit gritty, presumably from a bit of roughness on the striker block or its channel. I do notice it smoothing out with use. Being a bit of a trigger snob, I'd likely



replace the whole trigger with an Apex Tactical set anyway.

Geometry

You will notice a slight size increase in the grip area to accommodate the larger 10mm rounds. Doing some rough measuring using my reloading calipers, I see the grip is longer front to back than the 9mm model: 2.185" vs. 2.115". This translates to a bit of trigger reach difference: 2.62" for the 9mm compared to 2.87" for the 10mm.

My hands are size large according to the gloves I buy and I find I have no trouble reaching the trigger with the center of my index finger pad on the face. I still have a healthy gap between the length of my finger and the frame, so I'm definitely not stretching. S&W includes four different backstrap replacements to tweak the pistol to your hand size. I left the default Medium in place.

10mm Ballistics

Over the years, the 10mm has been called many things, most notably a ballistic match for the .41 Magnum. That's not exactly true. The .41 Mag readily digests heavier bullets and launches most of them quite a bit faster than a 10mm auto pistol. Sure, there are some low-end .41 Magnum rounds in the 500-ft.-lb. range, but many exceed 1,000 — a number somewhat out of range of 10mm loads.

However, the 10mm sure is peachy for a "normal" semi-automatic pistol. Discounting gas-operated monstrosities like the Desert Eagle, the 10mm delivers quite a bit more kinetic energy and momentum than any of the big three of 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP. How much more? A spunky 9mm defensive round like Federal's HST launches a 124-grain bullet at 1,150 fps or so, depending on the pistol. That yields about 365 ft.-lbs. of energy. A .40 S&W might get us into the 440-ft.-lb. neighborhood with a 180-grain bullet at 1,050 fps. A .45 ACP shooting a lighter and faster 185-grain projectile at 1,030 fps delivers 435 ft.-lbs.

The 10mm, on the other hand, handily adds 100+ ft.-lbs. to those numbers with many 200-grain loads exceeding the 1,100-fps mark and generating 550 to 580 or more ft.-lbs.

From the new M&P, I tested several factory 10mm loads. At the lighter end of the scale, the Doubletap Lead-Free 155-grain averaged 1,227 fps, delivering 518 ft.-lbs. at the muzzle. SIG's V-Crown 180-grain defensive load left

The M&P 2.0 10mm includes the C.O.R.E. configuration and ships with seven mounting plates for various optics.



the M&P at 1,166 fps, generating 543 ft.-lbs. Speer's 200-grain Gold Dot moved at 1,042 fps, cranking out 482 ft.-lbs. Last, Federal's 200-grain HST reached 1,109 fps for 546 ft.-lbs.

Accuracy from 25 yards, shooting five-shot groups from a Ransom Multi-Caliber rest was peachy. The SIG, Federal HST and Gold Dot loads measured 2.7", 2.49" and 1.59".

What's It For?

The deciding effectiveness factor isn't caliber or energy since all standard viable defensive calibers have little trouble penetrating humans. Thousands of data points from actual shootings show little statistical difference for metrics like one-shot stops and the number of shots to incapacitate between different calibers. So, while 10mm is clearly more powerful, this won't necessarily translate personal defense invincibility.

However, it's hard to argue with "bigger" with one huge caveat — one has to be able to control the pistol, putting shots on target rapidly. So, this new M&P 2.0 certainly presents an interesting carry,

duty, or home defense option.

I'd also place this gun in the "super handy for general outdoor use" category. If you camp, hike, four-wheel, or hunt in wild critter territory, having a gun with more "oomph" might be just the ticket. While few would choose a 10mm pistol over a big lever gun in bear country, having 16 shots of blazing-fast hard cast slugs sure does present an attractive option. Having this readily accessible on your belt in a standard holster is even better. Add a red dot sighting option into the mix, and you've got easy shot placement under stress at a distance. Hmmm.

Options

You can order the new 10mm with either a 4" or 4.6" barrel, both with a 1-in-10 twist rate. You can also choose a model with an ambidextrous manual thumb safety. MSRP ranges from \$654 to \$665.



For more info: Smith-Wesson.com, ApexTactical.com, DoubleTapAmmo.com, Speer.com, FederalPremium.com, SIGSAUER.com.

The grip is slightly larger than the 9mm version, and you still have a choice of four backstrap adjustment inserts.



OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTINGS:

NEED FOR A NEW PARADIGM

“We don’t try our cases in the press” has to change. Here’s why.

There’s a Latin saying: *Silentium est consensus*. It translates to “silence equals consent.” When a wrongfully accused person does not answer the charge, most people read it as an admission of guilt. It’s a legal principle of our law that this is not so, but unfortunately, only attorneys and cops seem to realize that.

Those same lawyers and cops have all been told in law school and the police academy, “We don’t discuss our cases in the press; it will all come out in court.” Unfortunately, in recent years, things have changed. Greed-motivated plaintiffs’ lawyers and politically motivated prosecutors have taken to trying their cases in the press, and when the accused do not respond in the same venue, well ... *silentium est consensus* becomes the uncontested verdict in the Court of Public Opinion.

Circle shows Jacob Blake’s knife in his left hand, as cops follow him with drawn guns shouting commands to drop it, moments before he is shot.



Kenosha: Kyle Rittenhouse fires the shot that “vaporizes” Gaige Grosskreutz’s gun arm, which is holding a GLOCK 27 aimed at his head.



RIOTS

Los Angeles, 1992. A hulking suspect became violent during a traffic stop. An early version of the TASER had no effect, and when four LAPD cops “swarmed” him each grabbing an arm or a leg, he threw them aside like a terrier flinging rats. A citizen named George Holliday turned on his new camcorder in time to catch the man, Rodney King, trying to jerk Officer Lawrence Powell’s Beretta from its holster. The batons came out, and a bit over a minute and 50-some PR-24 swings later, the man was in handcuffs. The video found its way quickly to the media.

The suspect was black, the officers white, and the “Rodney King beating” became a national outrage. The public saw, again and again, the ugliest 10 seconds of the video, though King’s gun snatch attempt was never shown until the trial and then seen by only a small percentage of the public. When the cops were acquitted, riots followed, taking more than 60 lives, injuring thousands, and wreaking economic devastation in what was already one of the most poverty-stricken parts of the city.

Kenosha, 2020. Almost three decades later, another video surfaced in a city of 100,000 in Wisconsin. It showed police officers with drawn guns following a black man, Jacob Blake, from the right rear of an automobile containing two little kids, around the front to the driver’s door, where one officer finally shot him seven times behind lateral midline. It became an instant *cause célèbre*: “Unarmed Black Man Shot Seven Times in Back.” The police department said not a word in defense of the officer’s action. The city burned and incurred tens of millions of dollars in damages, and three men were shot on video in demonstrable self-defense, two fatally, by a young man subsequently tried for murder.

From the beginning, a knife had been visible in Blake’s hand, and the officer fired only after he perceived the man turning on him with it within arm’s reach. In truth, the story should have been “Cops Save Black Children from Knife-Wielding Kidnapper.” Yet the “unarmed” narrative continued even after Blake himself confessed he was armed and the state Attorney General’s Office at last released the truth — weeks after the riot and the killings.

BY CONTRAST

Years after the King conflagration, when Charlie Beck became chief of LAPD, he created a policy whereby after any potentially controversial OIS (Officer Involved Shooting) a press conference would be held. It would include the original 911 call, dashcam and bodycam video, scene photos and a narrative of what actually happened. It would be widely disseminated to the public, with the promise the investigation would continue, and the public kept apprised.

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department followed, setting a high

standard for thoroughness. So did a number of other police departments.

LAPD to LVMPD and beyond, except for disturbances caused nationwide by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, every department following this policy has escaped major rioting. The reason is, they have “gotten ahead of the story” and kept false narratives from gaining traction.

We have seen the same principle in armed citizen self-defense shootings. A few years ago in Austin, Texas, John Daub had to shoot and kill a home invader who broke through the front door of his home while his wife and children were present. He was a member of the Armed Citizens Legal Defense Network

(armedcitizensnetwork.org), which had attorney Gene Anthes on the scene before the blood on the floor dried — telling reporters what had really happened. The result: a justifiable homicide ruling and public support and sympathy for John and his family.

A rule of human conflict is *when one’s opponents change their attack strategy, one has to alter defense strategy accordingly*. With today’s twisting of the truth by journalists and lawyers with less than honorable motives, we need police departments and attorneys who will not leave those who righteously pull the trigger unfettered in the unforgiving Court of Public Opinion.



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The Lovell mount and ring system found on this Freedom Arms is extremely effective even under fierce recoil.



THREE STEPS TO PROPER SETUP

I seldom purchase a handgun perfectly suited for hunting right out of the box. There are several things I've got to get right before even taking the gun to the range.

1 IT STARTS WITH THE TRIGGER

First, the trigger has to be good. Good means a crisp, clean let-off without any creep or gritty feel. And a heavy trigger pull is not welcome. Experienced shooters will have their own idea of what pull weight is acceptable or ideal. I'll avoid going into specifics, what works for me may or may

not be best for someone else. Revolvers may be a bit different than single-shot handguns but regardless the trigger pull cannot be overly heavy for consistent accuracy. Recently I tested a revolver with a terribly heavy trigger. According to Lyman's digital trigger gauge, the trigger broke around 8 lbs. For most of us mortals, this takes the enjoyment out of shooting and I won't go hunting with a handgun like this.

There are many competent gunsmiths who know how to adjust the

trigger pull and do so safely, without any push-off. I don't want just any doctor operating on me for major surgery. And I sure don't want a shade-tree gunsmith working on my trigger. I've been more than satisfied with the good folks at Mag-naport International, Jack Huntington at JRH Advanced Gunsmithing and Chris Rhodes of Bayside Custom Gunworks. A good trigger is the first step I take for setting up my hunting handguns.

Weigand Design and Machine provide quality mounts and rings for most popular hunting handguns. This mount and rings will hold scopes securely in place.



2 LET THERE BE SIGHT

Now that we've got the trigger pull ideally modified and grips fitting flawlessly in our paws, we can move on to the next step. *As a card-carrying member of Medicare, I do not hunt with iron sights so all of my hunting handguns wear optics of some description.* Often, I hear shooters complaining about scope problems. It can be downright frustrating! I don't like problems any better than the next guy so I'm going to do everything in my power to avoid catastrophes.

Going out of my way to avoid any pitfalls, I place careful consideration on mounting optics. I want to make darn certain the mount and rings hold the scope securely in place regardless of how much recoil is generated. For many years

GRIP PERSONALIZATION

In the past, we've addressed proper grips and I don't think this step should be understated. We all have different size hands so one particular grip shape will not work for the masses. For pure satisfaction and performance, the grip needs to fit your hand perfectly. Grip shapes can also accommodate specific shooting applications. You may elect to have a particular shape to help mitigate stiff recoil. A totally different grip configuration may be better suited for a single-shot varmint gun. If you're comfortable and happy with factory grips and if they fit your hand perfectly — great! If not, custom grips may be the ticket. Earlier I mentioned Jack Huntington, he knows grips — and what works. Jack has modified existing grips on a few of my handguns recently and it has made a remarkable difference in my shooting enjoyment. He is also keen on making grips exactly how you want for a variety of handguns.

Speaking of custom grips, Rob Rowen is another superbly talented grip maker. Those dall sheep grips Rob made for my Freedom Arms Model 83 .44 Mag. are impressive. Rob also works with customers to get the exact dimensions of grip shape to fit their needs.

Consistent grip tension and placement are essential for reliable handgun accuracy. The grips fitting your hand impeccably will enhance your shooting ability — and more than likely will make you a better shot.

now I have relied on Weigand Design and Machine mounts and rings. The company provides options for most popular hunting handguns. I've installed Weigand mounts and rings on .460 S&W Mags shooting heavy loads without a problem.

Another set of mounts and rings having securely held optics in place include Warne. These products have never failed in shooting a multitude of handguns. They offer a wide selection of both mounts and rings for popular guns.

Freedom Arms offers the Lovell

mount and rings for their handguns. This system holds scopes in place even under .454 Casull recoil. They also offer the T'SOB base mount, which is bomb-proof.

By tuning your trigger, modifying grips to fit your hands precisely and utilizing premium mounts and rings, your performance and shooting pleasure will be enriched. And you're less likely to have heartburn down the road. It's three steps in the right direction.



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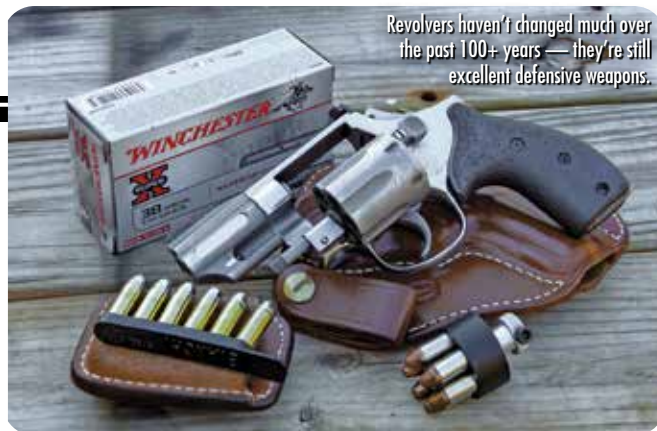


SAFETY TIP: Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.

Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership and carrying of a firearm.

REVOLVER MALFUNCTIONS

Revolvers are great for self-defense. They come in various sizes, an assortment of effective calibers and are easily carried and concealed. A well-maintained revolver is more reliable than a semi-auto during danger-close conflict, typical self-defense. The wheel gun can be jammed into the threat's ribs and fired without worry about a slide being pushed out of battery or contact retarding the slide's action and creating a stoppage. "Limp-wristing" won't create



Revolvers haven't changed much over the past 100+ years — they're still excellent defensive weapons.

a stoppage; you can fire reliably from unorthodox positions. But, like any other piece of machinery, sometimes malfunctions occur. Learning to fight with a revolver includes developing the skills to fix a stoppage.



You can reload using either firing or support hand to manipulate the gun. Both techniques are correct so try both before deciding which is best for you; your choice may surprise you.

FIX IT

Even after taking the proper precautions, stoppages do occur. Fixing the problem relies on "wheel-gun" skills developed through technique and repetition. You stroke the DA trigger instead of the "press" used on the semi-auto. If the hammer drops but only produces a "click," keep the muzzle on target and your eyes on the sights. Stroke the trigger again, rotating the cylinder to the next round. If you had a bad round or light primer strike, the pistol fires. Should you get a second "click," the gun is telling you it's time to reload.

You attempt to fire, applying pressure to the trigger, but it won't move to the rear. Usually, this indicates the cylinder isn't completely locked into place. Again, stay on the target and sight. Your finger comes off the trigger, and the support comes off the pistol and locks the cylinder in place. Reacquire a two-handed grip — assuming there's time — and fire.

If the cylinder won't open for a reload, you'll have to bump it out. It's hard on the pistol, so don't do it regularly, but you do what's necessary in a fight. A failure to properly eject rounds from the cylinder, short stroking the ejector rod, can allow a case to be trapped underneath the extractor. You'll

The shooter creates many malfunctions by improper gun handling and lack of practice. Learning how to manipulate the revolver begins by determining which hand you'll hold it in during manipulations. It can stay in the strong hand or, you can transition it to the support hand. Both techniques are acceptable. Discovering your preference determines how you'll load, unload, reload and clear malfunctions. Plenty of practice is required to become efficient.

Maintaining your wheel gun reduces the possibility of a stoppage. As opposed to the "press" on a semi-auto, stroking the trigger puts a lot of tight tolerance parts in motion. Keep your wheel gun well maintained and clean; it's much more critical with revolvers than semi-autos. Faulty ammo will create a stoppage. High or "blown" primers will cause problems. I've seen steel case ammo where the bullets slipped forward from the case and out the cylinder during firing. A "squib" load — not enough powder to clear cylinder/barrel — can be a real danger for the shooter. Quality ammo only.

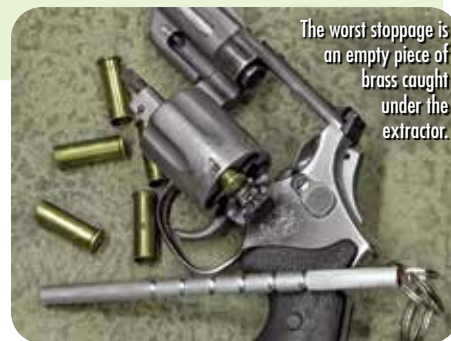
need some type of rod to push through the front of the cylinder to clear the case.

As with all gun handling skills, your goal is efficiency. An introduction to the correct techniques — training — must be followed up with plenty of repetition. Most repetition is "dry," using inert training rounds to practice. Even after learning the revolver's manual of arms, it's always best to have a "Plan B." When a stoppage occurs, or the gun is empty, your most efficient response is a "New York Reload," transitioning to another weapon. A jam or breakage takes time and tools to correct. Having some type of backup weapon is mandatory.

After well over 100 years of service,

PREVENTION

"Revolvers are easy to shoot," they say. "Point and pull the trigger." The same can be said of both revolvers and semi-autos. To use either properly — safely and efficiently — requires a certain degree of skill but the truth is revolvers are more complicated to learn how to use competently than a semi-auto. Developing the proper manual of arms for the wheel gun helps prevent stoppages.



The worst stoppage is an empty piece of brass caught under the extractor.

revolvers are still excellent weapons for defensive use if you're willing to invest the time to learn how to use them. Even if you don't plan to be a wheel-gunner, learn enough to use one in a battlefield pickup scenario. Plus, revolvers are "more funner" to shoot than semis. They're very addictive.



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YOU ARE THE SAFETY

I saw in the news something about an actor who shot members of the production crew, one of them fatally. An issue much debated is who or what to blame; the actor, the armorer, the person who handed the gun to the actor, sloppy safety procedures, ignorance, climate change, monetary policy, the moon phase ... We're told to withhold judgment because we don't know who is responsible. Really? We know who held the gun, pointed it at people and pulled the trigger. That is quite enough.

If there is one thing I believe after 2/3 of a century using firearms, it is this: The person holding the gun is ultimately responsible. It makes no difference if someone assures you the gun is unloaded. It makes no difference if some evil enemy sneaks a live round in the gun. It makes no difference if an insect crawls down the bore and makes a nest. None of these things relieve the one holding the gun from responsibility. The only way to know the condition of the gun is to check it yourself.

There are many rules of firearm safety. Long ago the late Col. Jeff Cooper pared the list down to four: Rule One — All guns are always considered to be loaded. Rule Two — Never allow the muzzle to cover anything you are not prepared to destroy. Rule Three — Finger off the trigger unless sights are on target. Rule Four — Be sure of your target.

These are not the only rules of safe gun handling. You can follow the above and still injure yourself due to an obstructed bore, loading the wrong ammunition, or a broken component of the firearm. What Cooper did was distill the rules down to the essentials. You may one day do something stupid or forgetful. If you follow the four basic rules, always, everywhere, when the day comes you will feel embarrassed and stupid. But you won't have killed or injured anyone.



You have to know every bullet will come to a stop without endangering anyone. One benefit of using a formal range is the safe backstop.



Top USPSA competitors like Rob Leatham train until safe gun handling skills become conditioned reflexes.

Even in the heat of competition, the trigger finger is out of the guard.

RULE 1

Rule 1 does not literally mean you keep all your guns loaded all the time. Personally, the only time I have a loaded firearm is when it is directly under my control: slung over a shoulder, in a holster, or in my hands. What it means is there is only one standard of care for firearms. You wouldn't leave a loaded firearm unattended where a child or irresponsible adult could get it. So, you don't leave an unloaded firearm unattended. *There is only one way to handle firearms — the way you would handle a loaded firearm.*

RULE 2

Rule 2 might be called first among equals. Even if you do everything else wrong, as long as the firearm is pointed in a safe direction you won't injure anyone. Cooper once wrote how he would practice his trigger press by holding his hunting rifle while watching TV. Whenever an ad appeared with the letter "O" he would sight on it and complete a fast, smooth trigger break. Someone wrote to chastise him for breaking Rule 2. Cooper replied he didn't care if he destroyed his TV, and there was a concrete wall behind it that would stop a bullet.

It's true a firearm has to point somewhere. I don't really want to destroy my gun safe, pickup truck, UTV, or hunting blind. But I could live with it. Such things can be replaced. You, your spouse, your child, your hunting partner, the guy next to you on the range, your dog — these things can't be replaced. Don't let the firearm point at them, even for a split second. Practice muzzle awareness until it becomes a conditioned reflex.

RULE 3

Rule 3, finger off the trigger unless sights are on target, I'm happy to say, has become widely practiced. One sees it being observed in news videos. It has become so widely accepted when the rule is broken it comes as a shock.

What I practice, and recommend, is for the trigger finger to be out of the trigger guard, straight alongside the frame. Some shooters say as long as the finger is off the trigger, it is okay to have it inside the guard, pressing against the front of the guard. Personally, I don't like this method. There is still the chance of unintentional firing if for example the shooter is startled or trips and reflexively tightens the hand. I don't find any significant speed advantage.

RULE 4

Rule 4, be sure of your target, includes knowing what is in front of and behind your target. You must know — not hope — the bullet



Rule 4 is "Be sure of your target." Since many defensive encounters occur at night or in the evening, a good rule is "if you carry a gun, carry a light."

is going to stop without endangering an innocent bystander. Jeff Cooper once wrote (quoting from memory): "There are worse things than being shot and shooting someone dear to you is the worst. And shooting an uninvolved bystander is almost as bad, as well as being severely punishable by law."

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A BIRTH YEAR DEVEL INSPIRATION

Having finished a few long projects, I wanted to try something a bit creative. One of my clients has desired a Devel Gammon — another wild 1911-based creation. That will take a while. But in my research for the Gammon, I came across another 1911 by the creative minds at Devel, a Colt Combat Commander modified for defensive tactics. The pistol was fitted with an S&W 439 rear sight, welded front sight, ambi safety, high-rise beavertail grip safety, etc. It also featured a giant mag release paddle. Devel, owned by the late Charley Kelsey, did a lot of wild innovations to several gun platforms. Some were adopted or co-opted by manufacturers.

I had a 1974 Combat Commander in the safe I was saving for a client — his birth year gun. I thought a great way to use it was for a Devel clone or tribute.

This is where the artsy, creative stuff happens. I wanted this project to look period correct but better. Back in the '70s and '80s, there was very little in the way of oversized parts and the welding was

while back, my editor Tom McHale asked me, "What is the difference between a gunsmith and an armorer"? I kinda gave him the short answer about getting your oil changed at a drive-through and getting new pistons in your truck. It gave me a lot to think about.

I look at it this way; part of the job of pistolsmithing is being an armorer and changing sights, replacing broken parts and correcting ejection or extraction issues. Essential work but necessary, particularly when working with firearms — no need for an owner to tinker.

CREATIVE JUICES

Then there is the creative and innovative part of pistolsmithing. Modifying or creating parts to fit a need, adding features that never existed, or just plain metal sculpting. This is the part that excites me. The challenge of making something new or outside the box gets my blood flowing. Don't get me wrong, we all need work to pay the bills and keep the lights on, but it's fun to try new things every once in a while.

I have great admiration for the 1970s and '80s pistolsmiths; this was when the 1911 evolved into the most popular gun in the country. Pistolsmiths like Bill Wilson, Wayne Novak, Jim Boland and Armand Swenson turned the 1911 shooting community on its head. I was in my 20s and couldn't wait for *American Handgunner* to arrive. Each month the bar was raised a bit higher. Boland would be featured with his wild .38 Super, cut and welded everywhere, making the Colt 1911 almost unrecognizable. Wilson would come out with a two-tone Carry Comp. Swenson modified a hard-chromed Colt Combat Commander with an S&W revolver sight and square trigger guard. There were plenty of other smiths who were doing their best to keep up — but innovation is challenging.

primitive. To start, I sourced new parts in keeping with the period look but went with high-quality oversized pieces. The sear, hammer and disconnector are bar stock EDM cut. The barrel is a Kart. The thumb safety and grip safety are reproductions from Evolution Gun Works (EGW). I only had photos to work with, so I guessed a few things.

The checkering is machine cut at 20 lines per inch. The grips I saw on the original were fully checkered but lacked real character. I bought a set of ironwood grips from Jon Aho at High Figure Grips. This was the first set I have purchased from him — they have spectacular grain. I will be modifying them to fit the large mag release paddle. The S&W rear sight was sourced from a used parts dealer. For the unique mag release paddle, I called on Brandon Bunker at Bunker Arms, who

has CNC production capabilities. He is making the parts and engraving them — something I cannot do myself.

To add some authenticity to the project, I got a pair of original Devel magazines from internet friends. Fitting everything was not too difficult from a gunsmithing angle. I spent much time closing all the gaps in the slide to frame fit the ejector and extractor gaps as viewed from the rear. The color photos showed the finish as parkerized, but I think I'll go with a matte Ionbond finish for more durability.

I had a lot of fun making it; I hope he likes it.



For more info: HighFigureGrips.com, EGWGuns.com, BunkerArms.com, Brownells.com, GunPartsCorp.com, HarrisonCustom.com



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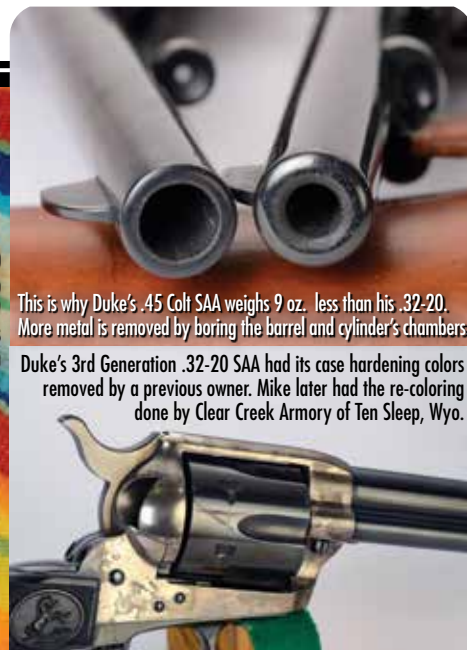
TaurusUSA.com

TWIN



Duke's twin .32-20 Colt SAAs. The top one is from 1899 and the bottom is from 2010. Both have 7½" barrels.

.32-20s



This is why Duke's .45 Colt SAA weighs 9 oz. less than his .32-20. More metal is removed by boring the barrel and cylinder's chambers.

Duke's 3rd Generation .32-20 SAA had its case hardening colors removed by a previous owner. Mike later had the re-coloring done by Clear Creek Armory of Ten Sleep, Wyo.

My love affair with Colt Single Action Army sixguns started in 1968. Thus far, I've owned over 100 of the graceful revolvers. Until recently, only one has been chambered for .32-20 (aka .32 WCF), which might sound odd because the caliber was the fourth best-selling between 1873 and 1941 during the 1st Generation of SAA production.

My aversion to .32-20 formed over 40 years ago with my very first SAA of that caliber. It was most contrary — when machine rest mounted, it would only group into about 4" at 25 yards. Eventually, I measured its bore and chamber mouths by driving soft lead slugs through them. Cylinder chamber mouths were universally 0.310" but barrel groove diameter measured 0.314". This combination is a certain situ-

ation for poor accuracy from any revolver. Thusly I became soured about SAA .32-20s.

Fast forward to SHOT Show 2004. I was on the staff of a different magazine when my boss heard Colt was reintroducing SAA .32-20s in 3rd Generation (1976 to present). He asked me to obtain one for a feature article. I approached some of the three-piece suited reps standing idle at the Colt booth, presented my business card and asked about a consignment .32-20 when available. One fellow looked at my card, and then me, and said, "I've never heard of you, and we're not sending you anything." Yvonne was with me, and as we walked away, she commented, "Aren't you mad?" I replied, "No, that guy was too stupid to care about. He's an example of why Colt is on a downhill slide."

TA DA! A REVELATION!

Now move on to 2021. That summer, much of my free time was spent shooting and handloading for .38-40, .41 Long Colt and .44-40 WCFs. On an Internet website's classified section, I spotted a 3rd Generation SAA .32-20 with a 7½" barrel for sale at an attractive price. The owner was honest; the price was low because he'd chemically removed the frame's case hardening

colors. He did so because surface rust on the frame would deepen into pitting if left be. Since I had previous positive dealings with the seller, I bought that .32-20, figuring to use it for gathering load data for my ongoing SAA project. Its serial number dated it as manufactured in 2010.

Shooting the .32-20 was like having a window opened in a stuffy room. Its accuracy and lack of recoil felt like a breath of fresh air. No need for tedious hand-

load development. This .32-20 shot every load combination well and others outstandingly. There was no need to check, but from curiosity, I found barrel groove diameter, and all six chamber mouths measured 0.310". My only complaint — a minor one — is that smaller bore and chambers weigh much more than a similarly configured big bore. I compared a .45 and this .32-20 alike in every way down to fancy walnut grips. The .45 weighs 39 oz., and the .32-20 is 48 oz.

A NEW PASSION

My new Colt so pleased me I soon sent it to my friend Bill Fuchs at Clearwater Armory in Ten Sleep, Wyo., for re-color case hardening and a set of presentation grade walnut one-piece style grips. While it was there, I instructed Bill to color case harden its hammer as that was standard at one time in SAA manufacture.

People who know me well say I'm impetuous. I say I just make decisions fast. Either way, with such positive .32-20 experience, I began a hunt for another. This time my quest was for a 1st Generation SAA with a 7½" barrel. Such are hard to find, but one is here now, and I'm more than pleased with it. Made in 1899, its condition is about 75%. The newer .32-20's

grips are all that keep it from being 100% original. In its website photos, the grips seemed white plastic on which someone had doodled with a felt marker. Showing the Colt to Yvonne, she exclaimed, "Wow, these are real mother of pearl." Looking closely, it was evident someone had carved lines and curlicues then traced them with ink. There are also a set of stylized initials. Also prominent are checkered finger grooves even carved in the left side grip panel. While not a beautiful set of grips, someone went to great effort to make them personal, so they will stay on the Colt as long as I have it.

How does it shoot? Just like my 3rd Generation .32-20 bullets go right where aimed at 25 yards. Like someone separated from a loved one for a long time, I have renewed my acquaintance with SAA .32-20s with enthusiasm.



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IS YOUR POCKET GUN A RECLUSE?

Shorts and T-shirt season is almost here, and for some of us, that means more pocket carry. If you're reading this magazine, you already know how we feel about pocket carry. It's an excellent solution for many situations, but only if you use a proper and safe pocket holster.

There are plenty of good ones on the market, so consider these "must-have" attributes when choosing yours. It must protect the trigger for safe carry. It must keep your gun in the desired drawing orientation for quick and fumble-free access. And it must separate from your gun as you draw. It's somewhat embarrassing to draw in an emergency and have the holster come out still attached to your gun. Those factors are for safety and function. This last one is for concealment. A good pocket holster must also disguise the outline of your gun.



The holster's interior (body-facing side) is fitted for the specific handgun, aiding stability and a proper draw.

JUST THE FACTS

The Recluse TS (Two-Sided) Front and Solo models shown here are made from tanned horsehide, so there's plenty of rigidity to support even grip-heavy pistols without the dreaded flop developing over time. I've been using these for years in the humid southern climate, and they're as sturdy as on Day One.

You'll notice two distinct profiles shown here. The traditional TS Front cut is for the "regular" pockets up top. You know, the slit ones where you stick keys and phones. The larger TS Solo model is designed for square and oversized cargo pockets. If you want to carry in a suit or blazer pocket, this is your huckleberry. The ultra-wide horizontal base also "fills" the width of the cargo pocket, preventing the pistol from tipping over.

If you haven't tried cargo pocket carry, give it a whirl. Not only are the pockets more accessible, but there's also more loose fabric in the upper leg area to aid concealment. You'll also free up "normal" pocket space for everyday items like keys and change. You do pocket carry in a dedicated pocket, right? I also find the draw far more reliable coming out of a jumbo-sized cargo pocket. There's never a hang-up getting my gun, with my fat hand wrapped around the grip, out of my pocket.



Here's the forward-facing view of the TS Front holster.



Left of the slit is the generous front concealment panel. It covers the entire pistol, so nothing "prints."



The Recluse TS Solo (left) and TS Front (right) for a Springfield Armory XD-S.

A BIG FLAP

So, what's all the flap about Recluse holsters? Exactly. The big flap. Recluse models are designed with a profile concealment flap covering the entire front-facing side of the handgun. The purpose of this wall-o-leather is to eliminate any trace of a gun profile through the fabric of your pants pocket. The leather flap is thick and solid leather like the rest of the holster, so it's going to block all printing from a handgun of any shape completely.

If someone is particularly interested in your pocket bulges, all they're going to see is you have something in your front pocket. The flat shape hints at something like a wallet, phone, or perhaps a small notebook.

If you're tracking this description, you might wonder about the draw. How do you get a firing grip with the big concealment flap in the way? A generous slit makes a hinge for the leather flap so you can easily jam your hand between the flap and handgun. With a bit of practice, you won't need to make any adjustments to your firing grip after the initial grab. Works like a champ.

Most models start at \$74.95, but the price will vary with the options you choose.

When you blade your hand into the holster, the front flap clears so you can get a proper firing grip.



For more info: RecluseHolster.com

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KILLIN' Zs: EPISODE 1

LTC Enoch Price
Crenshaw Barracks
Free Oklahoma Territory

October 11, 2172, anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi

Greetings from Free Montana Territory Kindred Enoch,

I pray this letter finds you well. If you have received it, it is known to you also the caravan by which it is accompanied. Also contained in this caravan are 100 lbs. of wheat flour, 30 lbs. of Adams peanut butter, 50 apples, 100 lbs. of Lovex Buffalo Rifle powder, 50 lbs. of Pyrodex RS, 50 lbs. of Pyrodex P, 50 lbs. of HP 38, 50,000 Winchester Large Rifle Primers, 50,000 Winchester Large Pistol Primers, 10 Lyman 452424

bullet molds, 30,000 Starline 45 Colt brass cases, and 25 lbs. of Eastman Powder

Coat Paint. The firearms contained within are (15) Ruger Vaqueros, (7) Charter Professional models, (3) Charter 73220 models, (5) .45 Colt Henry Big Boy Carbines, and (5) .45 Colt Henry Mare's Leg Pistols.

SGT Nat Tektone is on loan to you to assist in technical advice and help your troops train on small unit tactics. We equip our forward elements in screening operations armed with Henry carbines and .45 Colt handguns. When the Zs travel in groups, the screen units identify and steer consolidated threats. Your other units have AR-10s to prevent Z overrun.

The loads here reflect standard SAA loadings below 14,000 psi. Most of the manuals have a different set of tables for the higher-pressure loads designed for specific firearms manufactured after the late 1990s in the 15,000-30,000-psi range. Do not use the higher pressure loads in firearms unless the manufacturer specifically says it was designed for these loads.

Since the Lyman bullet is a blunt nose bullet, it will work in any tubular magazine in any modern .45 Colt carbine in good condition.

We have included Pyrodex with your shipment. We intended you to use it for Claymores, but it can be employed for loading .45 Colt. The .45 was originally a black powder load and it pushes out bullets with amazing accuracy.

To use black powder or Pyrodex in .45, you must follow these rules. First, brass allocated for black powder must be used for black powder only. The first time you fire and clean it, you will know why. Second, never allow open space inside a cartridge with black powder. This is very dangerous. In .45 Colt, the charge must be compressed. With a dowel, measure the bullet seating depth and ensure your powder level is higher than this depth. Third, measure by volume only.

The original 1873 black powder loading was a 250-grain soft lead bullet over 40 grains of black powder, but this is not necessarily a load recommendation. Have SGT Tektone experiment a bit if you think you'll need it.

HP 38 works well in .45 Colt loads and the Hornady manual lists loads from 4.8 to 6.9 grains in a pistol and 5.1 to 6.9 grains in a rifle. Using the Lyman 452524 bullet and powder coating, it shoots well around 6.2 grains, which gets it around 790-800 fps. In the carbines, it goes around 1,000 fps, with outstanding accuracy.

Lovex D060 Buffalo Rifle is not a traditional loading for 45 Colt. It was designed for straight-walled rifle loadings. Believe it or not, our surplus of this powder has led us to use it for 5.56 loadings, where it works exceptionally well.

Buffalo Rifle is not particularly positional sensitive, and it has outstanding ignition characteristics. It can be used for low loading densities, and for most loadings, does not require a magnum primer. Although it is an extruded powder, it has short grains and works well in a powder dump. For the Lyman bullet, we tried 16-17.5 grains and 17.5 grains burns slightly cleaner and yields excellent accuracy. As you can imagine, 100 lbs. of this powder will equip your army for several years.

Thank you for the produce and dried goods. The surplus of berries will keep us in pastries through the winter. I do not know how your troops managed to produce 30 lbs. of honey, but it was welcome, indeed. The knifemaking skills of your factories are exceptional, and your shipment has already been fielded. As you can see, the powder and primer manufacturing from Greater Idaho has completely resumed and we are well supported.

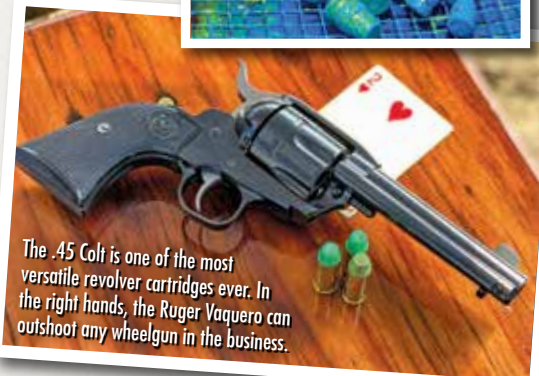
Please enjoy SGT Tektone while she is in your care. She would be surprised I know this, but I understand she likes venison.

May the Spirit of 1776 live on, my Brother,
Malachi



Herter's Inc. (1893 to the early 1970s) was a mail-order company offering good products at fair prices. The .45 Colt cartridges here were all loaded on 50-year-old equipment.

Lindsey used Eastwood Neon Green for the first coat, then dusted with Eastwood Mirror Blue and baked again.



The .45 Colt is one of the most versatile revolver cartridges ever. In the right hands, the Ruger Vaquero can outshoot any wheelgun in the business.



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IN SEARCH OF SMALL GROUPS: PART ONE



It's not the gun ... This Springfield Armory Loaded Target 9mm 1911 on a multi-cal Ransom Rest is a mechanically accurate setup.

TARGET BLINDNESS

The sights were crystal clear. I could see a speck of dust on the front sight if I looked closely enough. The target 25 yards away was a different story. I could barely articulate it. Before you say it — I am well aware it's supposed to be blurry. A crisp front sight and a slightly blurry target are typically a recipe for success. In this case, it was quite the opposite. I struggled to get a consistent sight picture, thereby opening the door to larger than desired groups.

I quickly realized it wasn't the gun or the ammo. I would have a nice knot of three shots nearly stacked on top of one another followed by two shots in a completely different location. Other times, my "group" looked more like a shotgun pattern.

Going down the laundry list of possible solutions, I switched lens glasses colors. I tried several prescription inserts in my

Frustrated. I never imagined shooting groups with a pistol, especially off a rest, could be so challenging. I set up the multi-caliber Ransom Rest and adjusted it so my 9mm Springfield Loaded Target 1911 balanced properly.

I started with my regular shooting glasses and a blinder over my non-dominant eye. In general, shooting with both eyes open is better and reduces eye strain. Closing one eye puts strain on the other eye and gives your brain something extra to focus on.

glasses — my original and others purposely manipulated to make the front sight just a little blurrier and the target just a little less so. Though the modified prescription works well for long range in combination with a long-sight radius, it didn't do much on the 5" pistol barrel, but the astigmatism correction helped.

At this point, I made a significant mental mistake. I convinced myself shooting tight groups was impossible for me. I began trying too hard — gripping the pistol tighter and tighter. Sometimes I knew the sights weren't lined up correctly but pulled the trigger anyway — every shred of confidence evaporated.

Serena has several prescription inserts for the SSP Methow glasses. A clip-on blinder works well for shielding your non-dominant eye.



VISION? OR GRIP?

Exasperated, I turned to George Harris, my remote pistol mentor. As usual, the conversation was enlightening. We first looked at my five-shot "groups" of three stacked shots and two fliers. This happened several times with several types of ammunition. George explained I was likely gripping the gun so hard the mobility of my trigger finger diminished. This happens subconsciously. The gun won't fire, so your thumb begins pushing the gun toward your frozen trigger finger. This fraction of an inch movement has a much larger effect downrange. Why did I have three shots stacked? My over-the-phone diagnosis attributed it to working too hard on my last two shots, trying to make them perfect. I also noticed I'd begin to hold my breath as I struggled

to find the perfect sight picture, further complicating the process.

The next question was deceptively simple: What can you see? I had to think hard — I knew it wasn't what I wanted, but what could I see? I could articulate the shape and the colors of the targets. They weren't well defined, and if I looked for too long, they would all wash into white. I experimented with several target shapes and colors: black circles, black squares, a battleship game target with various colored dots and green circles. The black sights vanished into the black targets. The battleship target was far too busy — I couldn't see the details. Any shots I took on it were based on the white edges of the paper. I had the right idea — it just wasn't fully developed.

George explained as long as I could

see contrast and shape, I could hit the target accurately. Holding center mass on the green circle was the best for me, as it is familiar. Your eyes want to find the center naturally. I'm still struggling to trust them. This proved another of my issues. While I could see the front sight clearly, I was not always focusing on it. Overly concerned about seeing the target, I would alternate my focus from the target to sights. *When I saw the brass eject out of the corner of my eye and the muzzle flash, I knew I was focused on the front sight. The times this didn't happen, I was focused on the target.*

The next step is to continue to experiment with various target shapes. I don't have any stellar five-shot groups yet ... search ongoing!





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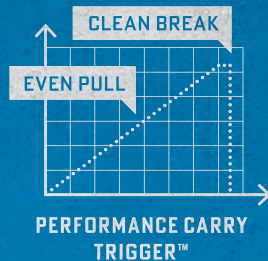
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DOG REDUX: FREE DOG, BAD DAD

Ipenned a previous column about my farm dog, Dog. Dog was just a mutt. She had a crooked tail, mismatched ears and a coat of many colors. However, she was the best pal a guy could ever have.

Dog was, in Southern parlance, an outside animal. She ate from an institutional feeder and took her water from the lake behind the house. She always smelled a bit dog-ish, even when she was clean. Every evening she jumped up in the truck with me when I got home from work just to say "hi."

Dog died of natural causes last year at the ripe old age of 15. Two days before she passed, she and I went exploring around the farm. She was vigorous and enthusiastic to the end.

I have been writing for the gun press since 1989. I'll never be rich or famous, but I do get a fair amount of reader mail. Hearing from you guys is pure joy to a dweeb like me. Not all of it, however, is gleaming.

Opinions

After publishing my first column on Dog, I got one letter from a reader deeply incensed I would abuse my hound so. He was terribly offended Dog had to live outdoors without central heat and air conditioning. He felt my keeping her in such squalid circumstances bordered upon abuse. I fear I simply have to disagree.

Dog's house was well insulated. Every year, my bride took an old sheet

and sewed it into a big pillow. We would pack this ample cotton cloth bag with cedar chips and use that to make Dog's bed. She got a fresh one every Fall. When it was warm, she just curled up on the front porch.

Dog didn't wear a collar. We live so far out she never wandered far enough afield to pester the neighbors. Dog was the master of her own destiny. She came and went as she pleased. Dog wasn't abused, neglected, or unloved. Dog was free.

Dog didn't need to have her glands expressed, and she didn't take doggie Xanax when it thundered out. We saw to it she was kept free from fleas, ticks and worms, but she didn't spend much time at the vet. I have friends who feed their hounds Prozac for depression. Dog had little use for such as this. Liberty was her antidepressant.

My kids used to take an hour's walk around the farm every day as a break from their homeschool curriculum. Dog kept them company every single time. Now the kids are grown and gone, my wife and I do the same most days. Dog never missed one. Though she was not terribly refined, Dog simply reeked of character. She was such an affectionate, civil beast.

Parallels

As go our dogs, so, too, go we. We Americans, at times do perhaps excessively venerate our animals. I am forever



Dog and I had some simply splendid times together. She was an ever-present companion in my walks.

vexed by those of my friends who will travel to the gates of hell to rescue a feral puppy while nonetheless writing a check to Planned Parenthood in support of abortion. The logic of that escapes me.

It does not take a social scientist to demonstrate Americans have grown soft these past few generations. My grandfather hunted blackbirds and opossums to keep his family fed during the Great Depression. Today's generation finds themselves helpless in the absence of proper Wi-Fi.

A human child will rise to the level demanded of it. Expect a kid to behave like an animal and he will do so with verve. Demand she comports herself in the manner of a civilized adult and enforce your will in this regard, and she will ascend to that level. To a lesser degree, our animals follow suit.

I don't want some soft, fragile beast as a companion on my rural walks. Believe me, when I tell you, Dog would have given her dying breath for me had the need arisen. Dog and I loved each other, and I do miss her so.

Reflections

Dog guarded my rural home with singular purpose. She barked at the *Brown Truck of Happiness* like it was a demon from Hades right up until the local UPS driver started giving her dog biscuits. After this, she looked forward to its arrival in a manner that bordered upon unseemly.

God did not design dogs to live like human children. In His infinite wisdom, He built the canine to be the archetypal guardian. You will seldom find a more effective example of tenacity, loyalty and dedication. Dogs are sentinels, comrades and warriors. If yours is not these things, then I humbly assert you might just be doing it wrong.



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This is Dog's resting place today. She overlooks the lake where we had so many good times and is commemorated with a tulip poplar tree.



Dog was just a mutt, but she was such a great pal.



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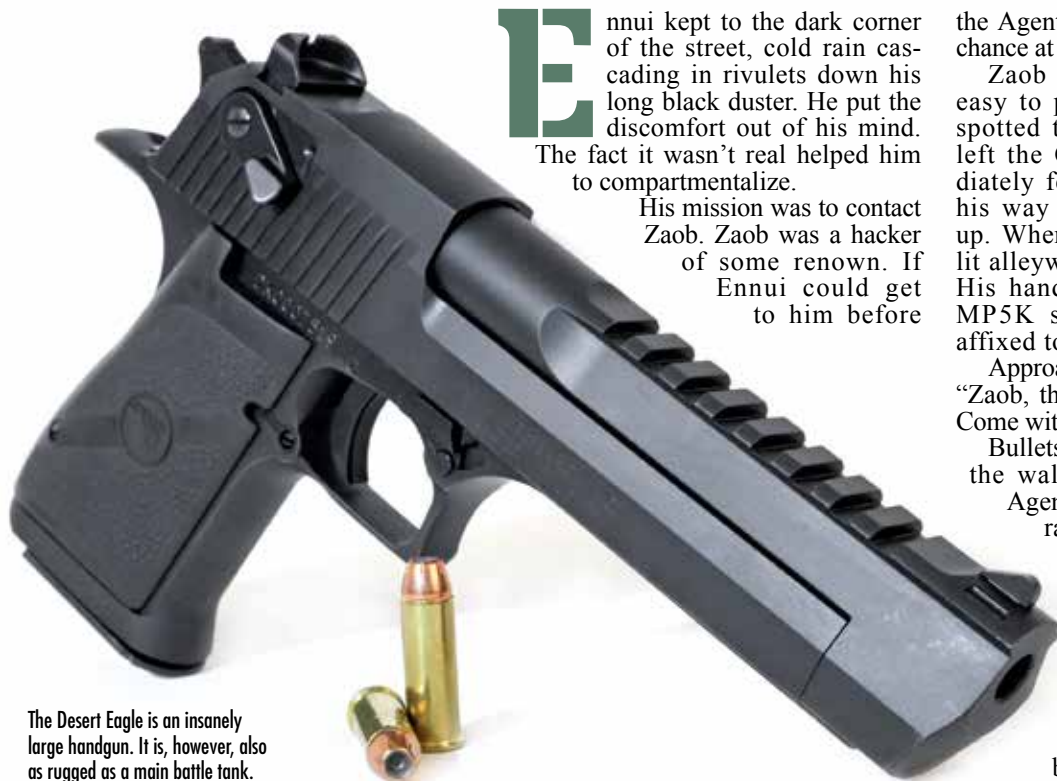
THE LEGENDARY

The lightweight Desert Eagle L5 in .44 Magnum is quite a handful.

WILL DABBS, MD

DESERT EAGLE

THE SUPERMODEL OF COMBAT HANDGUNS



The Desert Eagle is an insanely large handgun. It is, however, also as rugged as a main battle tank.

Ennui kept to the dark corner of the street, cold rain cascading in rivulets down his long black duster. He put the discomfort out of his mind.

The fact it wasn't real helped him to compartmentalize.

His mission was to contact Zaob. Zaob was a hacker of some renown. If Ennui could get to him before

the Agents, they might yet still have a chance at winning this war.

Zaob was fat, like crazy fat, and easy to pick out of a crowd. Ennui spotted the big man instantly as he left the Chinese grocery. He immediately fell in behind him, muscling his way through the crowd to keep up. When Zaob turned into a dimly-lit alleyway, Ennui knew it was time. His hand tightened around the HK MP5K submachinegun, somehow affixed to the small of his back.

Approaching the fat man, Ennui said, "Zaob, the world is not what it seems. Come with me if you want to live!"

Bullets suddenly began tearing apart the walls. Ennui looked up to see Agent Smith charging through the rain, his massive Desert Eagle handgun barfing fire. Ennui had his MP5K out and up in an instant, spraying the alleyway with 137 rounds in a single continuous burst.

In short order, both men dropped their weapons and began inexplicably kung fu



The gas piston is fixed to the slide and vaguely resembles that of the Mini-14 rifle.

fighting in the rain. They leapt against the walls and gyrated in ways otherwise impossible based upon the dicta of both physics and anatomy. *Meanwhile, Zaob waddled around the corner and got sucked into a phone.*

For the uninitiated, all that likely sounds pretty ludicrous. If you've not seen the *Matrix* movies, then I'm kind of amazed you're still reading. However, *The Matrix* was anything but ludicrous — it raised the bar on the science fiction action genre across the board. This film pioneered any number of cinematic effects frequently used today. *It also had guns, lots of guns.*

The standard handgun for the Agents in the film was the Desert Eagle Mark XIX in .50 AE. While the Wachowskis selected these big handguns because of their inimitable aesthetic, John Bowring, the armorer for the movie, dismissed the weapons as “wanker” pistols. I'm not really sure what that means in this context.

Philosophy

The Desert Eagle is indeed the supermodel of combat handguns. This insane handheld howitzer is undeniably pleasant to gaze upon. However, in a proper fight, I might sooner be packing a Civil War-era Colt Navy.

Gisele Bündchen, Cindy Crawford and Fabio undoubtedly “go in for theatrical effect.” However, they would likely not be much help facing down the zombie hordes. Perhaps you could make your escape while the famished ghouls nibbled on their spindly appendages, but I just can't see Heidi Klum holding the line while you stuffed magazines. They look great but somehow lack substance. So it is with the Desert Eagle.

Origin Story

Video game commandos call them “Deagles.” Bernard C. White of Magnum Research and Arnolds Streinbergs of Riga Arms Institute filed the U.S. patent application for the mechanism behind their extraordinary gas-actuated pistol in January of 1983. The result was an unholy union of the AR15 and the Mini-14, all packed into a massive handgun chassis. These guns were first built and marketed by IMI (Israeli Military Industries).

The Desert Eagle is powered via gas



Will made this “carry holster” from seatbelt webbing. Normal people cannot conceal the Desert Eagle. This thing is as big as a sneaker and weighs as much as a half-gallon of milk.

tapped from the bore. This gas impinges upon a fixed Mini-14-style piston that actuates the gun's massive slide. A cam subsequently drives a four-lug rotating bolt akin to an AR15 that affects extraction and ejection.

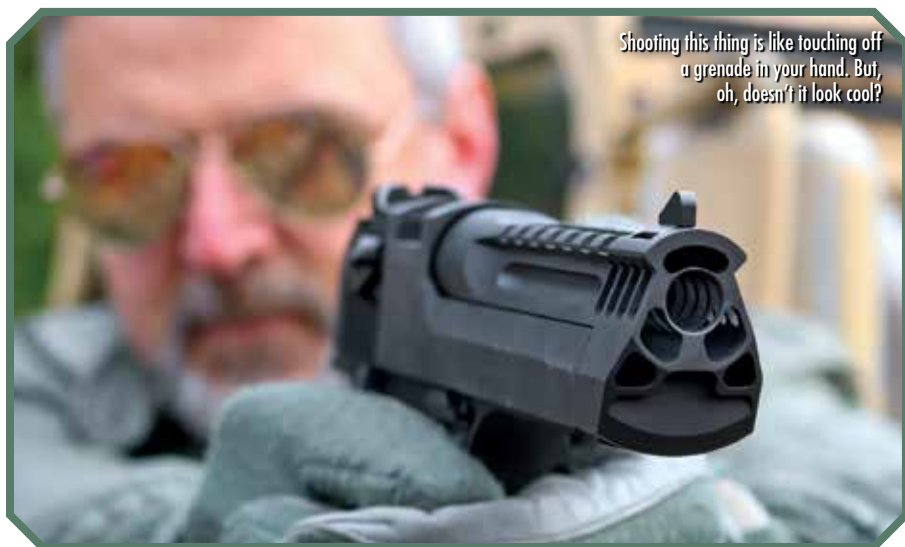
The Desert Eagle is a massive single-action handgun with a surprisingly decent trigger. The safety is a slide-

mounted bilateral rotating drum that disables the weapon. *The curious gas-operated action allows immensely powerful cartridges that would otherwise be impractical in an autoloading handgun.*

The Desert Eagle has been offered in .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum, .429 DE, .440 Cor-Bon, .44 Magnum and .50 Action express. Swapping out the barrel,



The gas-operated Desert Eagle is nothing if not unique on the inside.



The rotating bolt on the Desert Eagle pistol resembles that of the AR15 rifle. Though certainly not interchangeable, they are mechanically similar.



GROM counter-terrorist mob was the only unit I could find that actually drank the Kool-Aid. While this honestly seems a bit insane to me, I bet they were the coolest guys at the SWAT rodeo.

bolt and magazine lets you interchange calibers. The .44 Magnum and .50AE rounds both use the same bolt. The .357 version packs nine rounds in the magazine, the .41 and .44 eight, and the larger calibers seven. Several different barrel lengths are available, but the long ones all look lame.

All up, the Desert Eagle weighs 4.2 lbs. That's nearly twice what an M1911 weighs. It is also as big as a dorm-room toaster. The only way you will successfully conceal a Desert Eagle is if you are a digital construct in *The Matrix*.

The original Mk I was available with aluminum, steel, or stainless frames. The Mk VII featured an adjustable trigger. The latest Mk XIX comes in a bewildering array of finishes, including brushed chrome and titanium gold. The latest models include Picatinny rails on the dust covers and a generous scope mounting rail up top.

How Does She Run?

I actually own two of these ridiculous pistols. One is in .357, while the other is .44 Magnum. Both guns are absolutely enormous.

This is my second .357 Magnum Deagle. I kept the first one for a while and then witlessly traded it for something. In an ongoing quest to right past wrongs,

I found a replacement on GunBroker a few years ago. Interestingly, all three of my guns have been somewhat finicky.

You would think a gas-powered magnum handgun would run reliably from the bottom of the ocean to the moon. However, the Desert Eagle is surprisingly intolerant of limp-wristing. Reliable operation demands an intentionally firm hold.

These guns shoot straight and are reliable crowd-pleasers when my kids' college chums come over to shoot. The aura up close nonetheless wanes over time. Muzzle blast is predictably awesome. When fired at dusk, the flash is visible from space. There's no real point to that, but it looks undeniably cool.

Early on, IMI actually marketed these things to the military and law enforcement. The Polish

Ruminations

"The fact that you've got 'Replica' written down the sides of your guns ... and ... I've got 'Desert Eagle Point Five O' written down the side of mine ... should precipitate a shrinking of your presence."

"Bullet-Tooth" Tony —*Snatch*

What the Desert Eagle truly excelled at was looking awesome. That bought the big gun billing in such action classics as *Eraser*, *Red Heat*, *Demolition Man*, *Barb Wire*, *Last Action Hero*, *Snatch* and *Austin Powers*. However, like a supermodel, the Desert Eagle might best be appreciated on the big screen.

I'm obviously kidding. Despite its epic size, prodigious weight, and gross impracticality, of course, you want a Desert Eagle of your own. A Desert

Eagle will put hair on your chest irrespective of your gender. I write for gun magazines and really should know better, but I still actually bought two. 

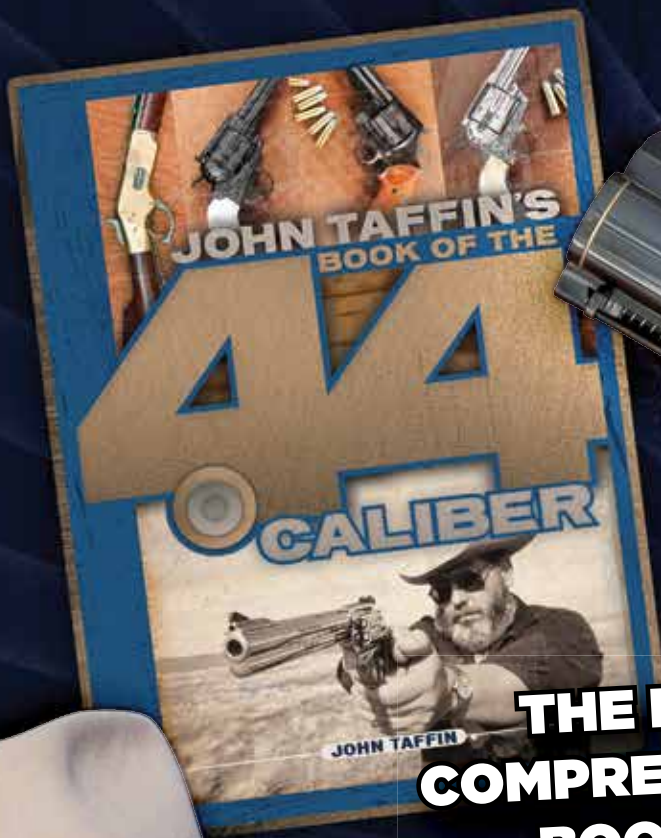
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TAURUS



RAGING HUNTER 460 S&W MAGNUM



A BRAVNY BEAST — FOR BESTING THE BIGGEST GAME!

ROY HUNTINGTON • PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH LLC

The Taurus Raging Hunter in .460 delivers what the old adage describes as: “The rich man’s *demand* for quality and economy — and the poor man’s *need* of economy and quality.”

This beefy magnum sums that up nicely. At about \$1,081, depending upon the exact model, you get a well-designed hunting revolver chock full of compelling features often only available on custom guns. Cue the grin, please.

The Raging Hunter allows you to take the biggest game the world has to offer. Let me say that again — *The .460 S&W Magnum Raging Hunter can take the largest game in the world.* If medium-sized dinosaurs still strolled the earth, you’d be ready. Yet it can still do double duty taking “smaller” game like elk, moose, bear and pigs. It can even do a sort of “triple duty” targeting, plinking or just having fun at the range as a .45 Colt or a range of other cartridges, including the .454 Casull. Versatile? Uh ... yeah.

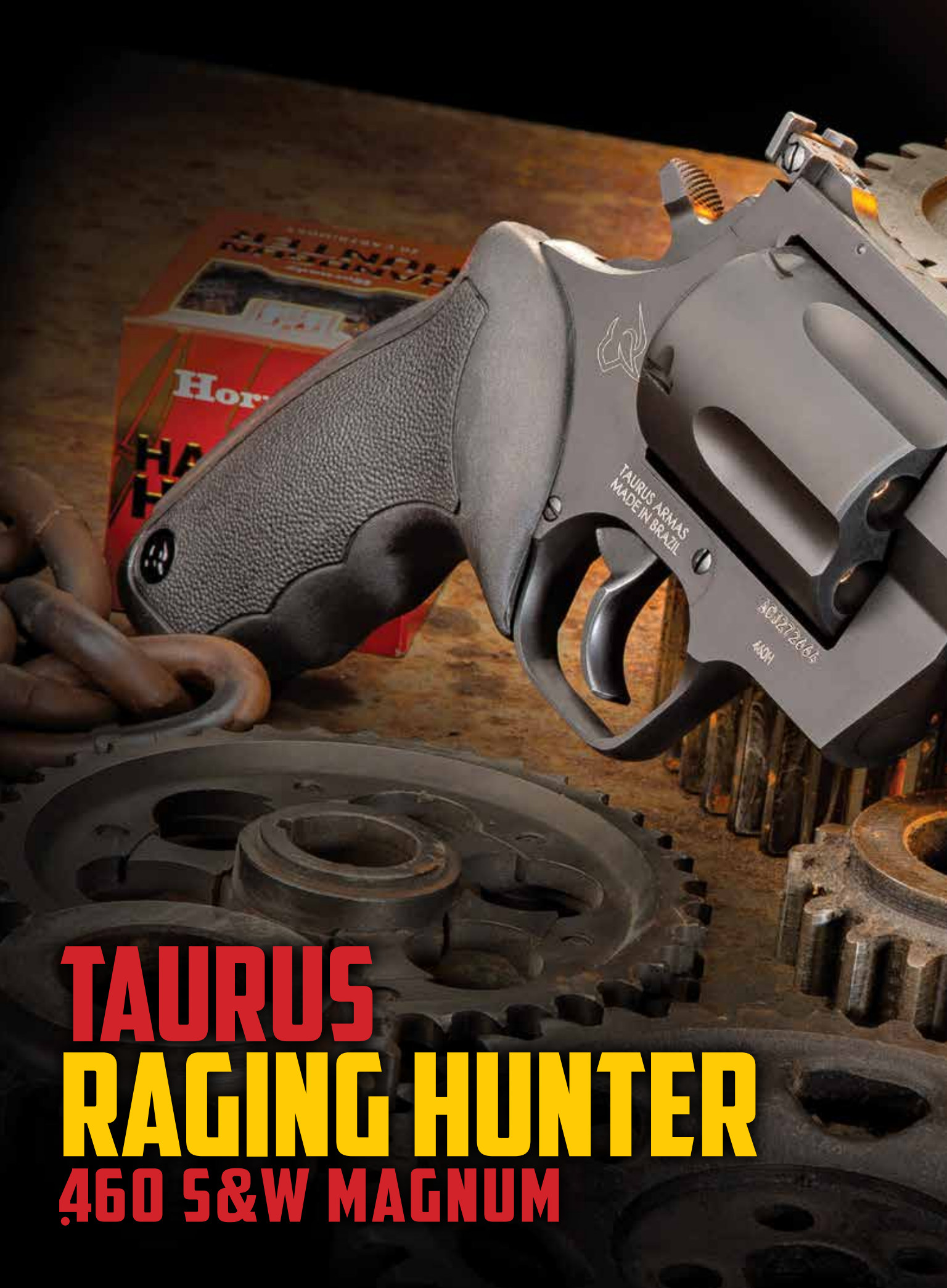
You get all that, my friends, for what’s essentially the price of a basic 1911.

Yet, this isn’t an amateur’s gun, not at any level, even though it’s affordable. It’s on the opposite end of the revolver spectrum from a pocket Model 856 .38 from the same company. It’s a sort of really big versus really little situation. Yet they’re the same in the sense they’re both *expert’s* guns.

As occurs with small frame revolvers, I think too many shooters tend to just believe, “Oh, that’s cool, I could shoot one of those.” But exactly like a 2” .38, the Raging Hunter has its challenges. The small guns can recoil fairly heavily for what they are, can be tough to handle due to their size and they all take a high degree of skill to manipulate the trigger effectively and accurately.

The funny thing is, the 54 oz. Raging Hunter also recoils fairly heavily, can be tough to manage due to their bulk and weight, and the SA and DA action takes real practice and skill to manage well





TAURUS
RAGING HUNTER
460 S&W MAGNUM

AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER[®]





ster. In 2005 S&W introduced the .460 for the same platform, advertising it as the “fastest factory production handgun round in existence” — and they were right. A 230-grain bullet can be tossed out at nearly 2,400 fps due to the rifle-like pressure of 65,000 psi generated by the cartridge. That’s in the same range as a .308 folks. This really ramped up the game for handgun hunters after really big game. I was on a Bison hunt with the .460 and it, well ... worked.

Taurus introduced the Raging Hunter line in 2019 to take advantage of the .460 round, the .454 Casull, .45 Colt and others, proceeding to steal market share across the board. Seeming limitless design elements, calibers and options — not to mention the affordable price and lifetime warranty to the original owner — soon made this new line-up a go-to for handgun hunters across the board.

In just the past couple of years or so, the .460 S&W Magnum Raging Hunter concept has stolen the spotlight, and for good reason. Our own Mark Hampton — without argue the most experienced handgun hunter in the world — said this about the gun recently:

“With a spring black bear hunt in Alaska scheduled, I plan on taking the .460 up north. I’ll be hunting in a two-bear area and will try two different loads if things work out. In my home state of Missouri, we’re scheduled to experience our first black bear season late in the fall, so the .460 may possibly get another opportunity at a bruin. Later in the year a trip to Africa is on-tap for some plains game. The .460 will also get a workout on the Dark Continent for kudu, nyala, warthog and more.”

Mark could — and has — taken some pretty exotic handguns on his world hunts. Yet, he’s taking the Taurus Raging Hunter in .460 and relying on it for these very special opportunities — opportunities where failure is simply not an option. That’s a vote of confidence from a professional and at least to me, suddenly puts my own whitetail deer hunting in perspective. I’m betting a Raging Hunter could handle my modest needs — and yours — just fine.

Specific Strengths

A core platform on the Raging Hunter of an all-steel frame, cylinder and barrel (with aluminum shroud) only starts the process. Add to this a ported barrel, dual lock-up cylinder (front and rear, with two latches to release the cylinder), Picatinny rail, scope mount, cushioned rubber grips, DA/SA operation, transfer bar safety feature and several finish options and barrel lengths help to round things out neatly. I’ve had two test guns in-hand, an 8.37” and

enough to take advantage of the accuracy potential of the cartridge and gun. They’re the same — only different.

The key here is, if you’re set on starting your handgun hunting adventure with a big bore Raging Hunter, take the time to get some help from people who’ve been there. Learn about recoil management, reloading, putting sub-calibers (like the .45 Colt, which the gun also handles) to work helping you to train, and get the manual of arms down pat on how to manipulate the Raging Hunter — well *before* you go into the field.

Time spent on the range learning will make you competent, and just makes plain good sense when it comes to owning a very special revolver like this. It’s also more responsible if you’re gearing up to hunt. You owe the animal your proficiency, don’t you?

History

Taurus introduced a .357 Magnum Tracker revolver some 20-odd years ago and it rocked the industry. I actually took one prairie dog hunting, but that’s another story. As soon as Taurus saw it had a good idea, it expanded the line-up with new calibers and designs. Hunters loved the fact they could enjoy time spent handgun hunting with effectively designed handguns specifically made for handgun hunting — shooting cartridges like the .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum.

When the .500 S&W Magnum was introduced in 2003, everyone soon found out an all-steel, heavy-duty design was needed to handle this mon-

TAURUS RAGING HUNTER

a 6.75" (with a 5.12" also available) and both guns showed similar excellent fit, finish and overall function. Taurus offers consistent quality — and a life-time guarantee to the original owner.

That five-round cylinder is huge, believe me, especially if you're used to shooting .38 and .357 style revolvers. And slipping those big Hornady rounds home seemed almost surreal at first. "How can this be a handgun round," I kept thinking? But it is, and the gun handles the fuss just fine and you walk away without the hair on your arms being singed off. Mostly.

The iron sights are excellent, and fully adjustable. The front is fixed and pinned in but between us, I'm betting it'd be easy to fit an after-market fluorescent dot type sight or something else to fit your fancy. I know, I know, this gun begs for a red dot or scope to really take advantage of the 200+ yard capability if you do your part. But for we mere mortals, unlike Mark Hampton, these good irons are just fine out to the 50 to 150 yards we all seem to honestly take our deer at.

Having said that, the Picatinny rail is well-extended and offers plenty of room and versatility for whatever optic floats your boat. I didn't mount one because the 1.25" groups at 25 yards and 3" 50-yard groups with the irons told me all I needed to know about accuracy. This gun shoots.

The grips really help to make this package shooter friendly too. They're synthetic, really help with gripping the big gun, and absorb enough recoil to keep it fun to shoot. I shot a few rounds DA using the full-power .460 loads and the gun just sort of rolls in your hand and balances right back on-target (check out the video link at the end to see it in action). With the .45 Colt loads, you can wang away at a bank of steel plates pretty much as fast as you can press the trigger well. No issues, no fuss and no muss.

There's a transfer bar for safety, a frame-mounted firing pin set-up, a smooth trigger face for good DA shooting and some aggressive texturing on the hammer spur for SA cocking. I actually found the DA action staged well, allowing me very smooth and consistent DA trigger pulls. The SA pull was right at about 6 lbs. and a bit gritty so I'd likely dry-fire the heck out of it or touch up that action just a tad to smooth the SA out some if I were to keep this gun.

Shooting

I put a total of about 40 full power Hornady loads through my test sample, and another 200 or so .45 Colt and .454 Casull loads. I confess though, even the fire-breathing Hornady loads (a 200-



grain FTX at about 2,200 fps) were manageable, even firing double action off-hand. A Black Hills "Cowboy" .45 Colt load at about 750 fps felt like I was shooting a .22 plinker.

Anyone who has any experience shooting big bores like heavy .44 Magnum loads or even .357 loads in medium-frame guns will handle this beast just fine. The recoil with the full-power .460 is stout, certainly, but there's no pain involved, I assure you. I find shooting the alloy frame .44 Magnums to be punishing, painful and just plain silly to do. The Raging Hunter

felt almost like shooting a black powder pistol to me — more thump and a heavy push than a sharp rap. Don't be askeered of it.

There are lots of factory loads for the .460, and when you add in the various .45 Colt loads, .454 Casull, .45 Schofield and others, you'll never run out of ideas for loads to shoot. And those big straight wall cases are a joy to reload!



For more info: TaurusUSA.com; Hornady.com. Find Roy's video at YouTube.com/FMGPubs

COLT'S GREAT EIGHT



One of the few cartridges offered in all three of Colt SAA Generations has been the .45 Colt. The .357 Magnum was popular in the 2nd and 3rd Generations, but only about 500 were made in the 1930s.

THE MOST ICONIC COLT SAA CARTRIDGES

**MIKE "DUKE"
VENTURINO**
PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO

Duke test-fired this 1913 Colt Frontier Six-Shooter .44-40 from a machine rest at 25 yards. The average of 20 different loads was only 1.99".

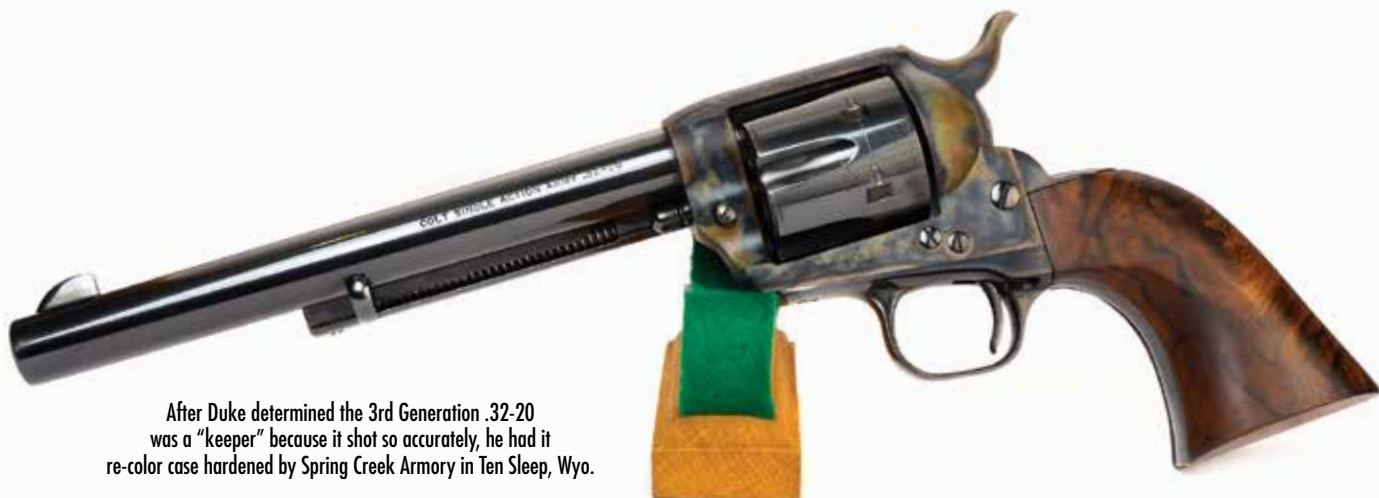


After 50 years of shooting and experimenting, I've come to think of eight cartridges as Colt's *Great Eight*. A book titled *The 36 Calibers of the Colt SAA* by David M. Brown was printed in 1965. The 36 SAA calibers detailed in the book were in the 1st Generation of production from 1873 to 1941.

With over 100 Colt SAAs passing through my hands starting in 1968, only in 2020 did I finally manage to gather at least one each of the *Great Eight* at the same time. They span all three generations.

.32 WCF/.32-20

Since owning my first .32-20 circa 1980, I've eschewed the cartridge as too small, and SAAs chambered for it



After Duke determined the 3rd Generation .32-20 was a "keeper" because it shot so accurately, he had it re-color case hardened by Spring Creek Armory in Ten Sleep, Wyo.

as too heavy. However, upon spotting this 3rd Generation one with a 7½" barrel in late 2020, I realized owning it would fulfill my quest to have all the *Great Eight*. If I do my part from sandbags, it will cluster bullets in quarter to half-dollar size groups. A former owner had erased its color case hardening because it had gathered some surface rust along the way. It's a keeper, so it was re-colored by Spring Creek Armory in Ten Sleep, Wyo.

.38 S&W (& Colt) Special

The .38 S&W or Colt Special was offered in all three generations of SAAs. Some .38 Colt Specials differed minutely in chamber from S&W .38 Specials. However, both would fire .38 Special ammunition, whether labeled Colt or S&W. Mine was made in 1957 and shipped to a sporting goods store in Colorado. It was still in mint condition when I purchased it in 2019. As will be gathered by sharp-eyed readers, I prefer 7½" barrels on my SAAs whenever possible. One might ask, "Why did Colt offer .38 Specials when so many smaller size and lower price handguns were available at the same time?" The answer is the popularity of the .38 Special. It is indeed exceptional in terms of accuracy and versatility.

.357 Magnum

In 1935, S&W unveiled their first magnum revolver — .357 S&W Magnum — and its cartridge, which was simply the .38 Special case lengthened from 1.16" to 1.290". Cylinders were made of a special alloy due to the .357's high pressures relative to other revolver cartridges. Colt quickly followed with their large frame New Service and the Colt SAA. Only about 500 of the latter were made. However, it became second most popular in 2nd Generation production. Mine with the 4¾" barrel was purchased new when I turned 21 in 1970. I sold it twice, luckily to friends from whom I bought

These modern factory loads are seven of Colt's *Great Eight*. From left: .32-20, .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .38-40, .44 Special, .44-40 and .45 Colt.



it back, although it's still likely my least fired Colt SAA.

.38 WCF/.38-40

If forced to pick a favorite SAA cartridge, it would be tough to decide between .38-40 and .44-40. Although I have a half dozen others to choose from, my favorite .38-40 was shipped to Salt Lake City Hardware in 1926. It has a 7½" barrel and overall brown patina finish without pitting. Its grips didn't fit, so I had Bill Fuchs of Spring Creek

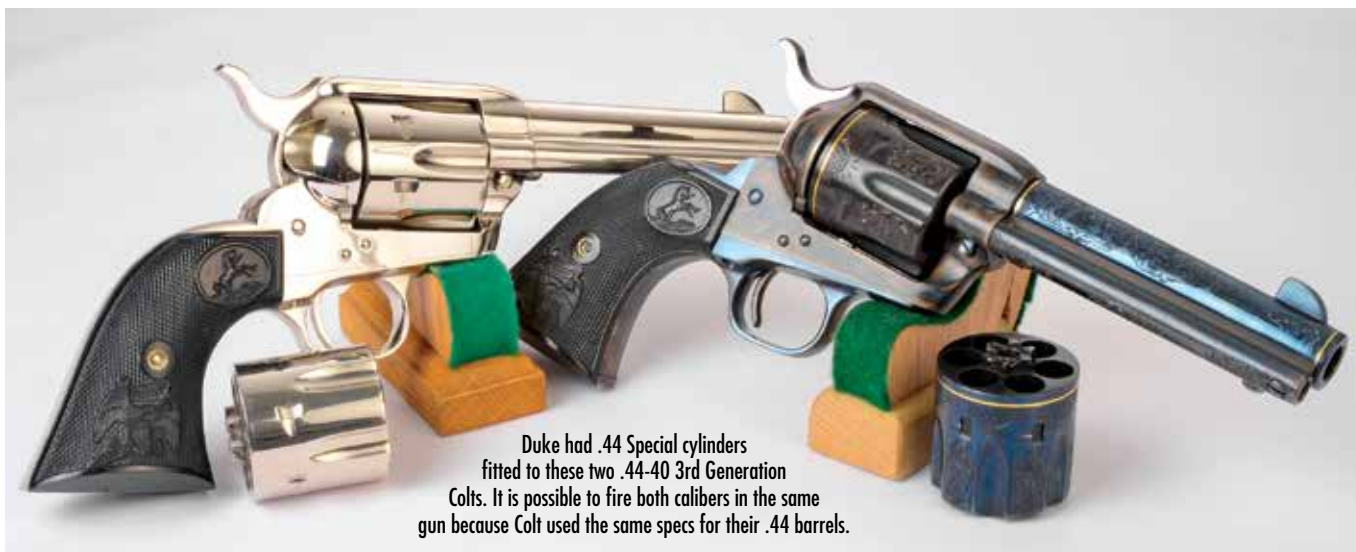
Armory in Ten Sleep, Wyo., make a plain walnut set of the one-piece type to match its finish. It shoots right to its sights. Colt began chambering for this round in 1884 and it became the third most popular among 1st Generation cartridges. It was brought back in 1993 and wasn't dropped until well into the 21st century.

.41 Colt

A little-known fact is Colt always used the same barrels for .38-40 and

Almost all Colt SAA .38-40s were originally stamped ".38 WCF." The .38-40 marking only came late in 1st Generation production.





Duke had .44 Special cylinders fitted to these two .44-40 3rd Generation Colts. It is possible to fire both calibers in the same gun because Colt used the same specs for their .44 barrels.

These are Duke's handloads in the top five selling calibers of 1st Generation Colt SAA production. From left: .45 Colt, .44-40, .38-40, .41 Colt and .32-20.



.41 Colt. Their factory specs for barrel groove dimensions were 0.401"/0.402". How so? Because the .38-40 isn't a .38. It's a .40 caliber. And the .41 Colt isn't a .41. It's a .38 because bullets in its smokeless powder factory loads are

only 0.386". That necessitates the bullets having deep hollow bases to expand to grip the rifling. My .41 Colt is in fine shape. Barrel length is 5½", and it was shipped in 1902 to Simmons Hardware in St. Louis, Mo. I had to hunt down

three .41 Colt die sets: Lyman, RCBS and Redding to finally get a combination to fit my needs. Be aware .41 Colt dies by the first two manufacturers are no longer made, so I mean literally "hunt down." The same phrase applies to finding suitable hollow base bullets.

.44 Special

The .44 Special is the .44 Russian case stretched from 0.97" to 1.16". I've often drawn the ire of dedicated .44 Special shooters when I say it isn't so special. Don't get me wrong. It's a darn fine round, but I've found it has neither the accuracy potential nor versatility of the .38 Special. As with .38 Special and .357 Magnum, the .44 Special has been included in all three production generations. I'm sure more were made in the 3rd Generation than the first two combined. My only SAA .44 Special wears a 5½" barrel, was made in 1961 and shipped to a dealer in Chicago. Worthy of note is that I searched out blued and nicked .44 Special cylinders for two of my SAA .44-40s. As with .38-40/.41 Colt, the company always used the same barrel specs for their .44s.

.44 WCF/.44-40

It just about depends on the exact day whether I favor .38-40 or .44-40 most. At this writing, my favorite is a very fine condition 7½" .44-40 made in 1913 and it factory letters to a Vertuli Hardware Company address unknown. It has the roll mark on the barrel's left side: Colt Frontier Six-Shooter .44-40. From a machine rest, I fired it for groups with 20 different handloads and the average was 1.99". Not bad for a 108-year-old revolver.

Colt began offering .44 WCF in 1877 (some sources say 1878), and it quickly grew in popularity, but sales slowed dramatically toward the end of SAA production in 1941. An interesting bit of information is early Colt CFSSs did not have the 0.427"-barrel groove

Only four calibers were offered in Colt's 2nd Generation of SAA production. These are factory loads: .45 Colt, .44 Special, .357 Magnum and .38 Special.



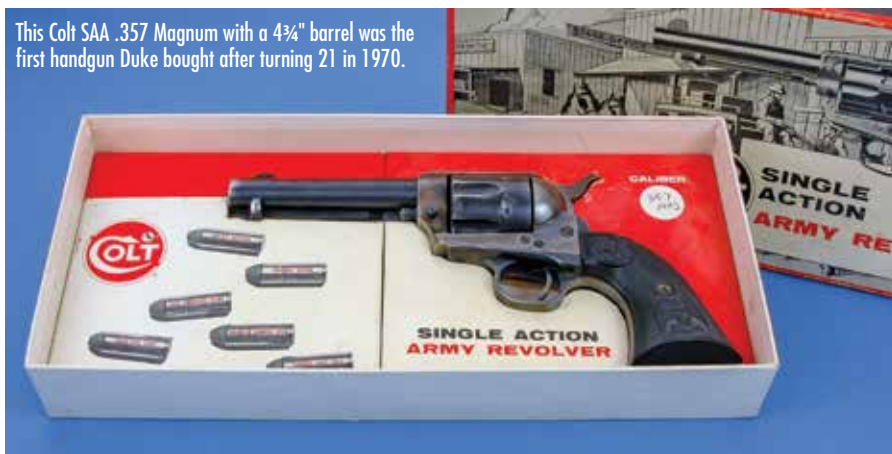
diameter of later ones. They were only 0.424"/0.425". Regarding standard production, Colt only offered .44-40 in 1st and 3rd Generations. I was at the 1982 NRA Convention in Philadelphia when they announced .44-40 SAAs would be made once more. I ordered one right there on the spot.

.45 COLT

Of course, the all-time most popular Colt SAA chambering has been .45 Colt and was the introductory cartridge in 1873 for Colt's brand new "Strap Pistol." It has been most popular in all three generations. The first barrel length was 7½" issued to U.S. Cavalry troops until the 1890s. The 5½" length came out circa 1875, and the very popular 4¾" length was standardized in 1879, although Colt made some on special order before that. It seems Colt offered their new sixgun from the beginning in nicked finish and blue/color case hardened. I've seen Colt .45s with barrels as short as 2" and as long as 16".

My very first Colt SAA was bought in 1968 when I lived in West Virginia. It wore a 5½" barrel and had been built in 1964. I was working at a freight company during summer vacation after my first year of college. One of the truck drivers, a "windy"

This Colt SAA .357 Magnum with a 4¾" barrel was the first handgun Duke bought after turning 21 in 1970.



sort, said he had a "Colt .45." I asked, "Automatic?" He said, "Nope, a revolver, one of those cowboy guns." I bugged him for weeks to bring it so I could at least see it, but he never did. Figuring he was blowing smoke, I gave up. One Friday payday, just as I got home, he called and said, "If you want to buy that .45 for \$100, come meet me at the docks." That was about all my take-home pay, but I hot-footed it back there and was surprised he had what he bragged he had. It was pristine and started me on the SAA path to this day. Too bad I don't have it still. Living in Montana by that time, I sold

it in 1977 because I wanted a new scope for my latest fixation — varmint shooting.

I currently have more .45s than the other chamberings, with barrel lengths ranging from 3½" to 12" in nickel finishes, blue/color case hardened, and full blue. There is a target sighted New Frontier .45 in with them, which was a present from Hank Williams Jr. the first time he invited me to his home. Colt Peacemaker .45s may not be my favorite, but they are near the top, by golly!

That's it, a brief history of the Colt SAA's *Great Eight*. I'll never get tired of Colt SAAs of any caliber! 

Convenient, Reliable, Effective. North American Arms, 5 Shot, Stainless Steel, .22 Magnum PUG w/Tritium XS Sights. Comes Stock with Hogue Rubber Slip-on Grips. American Made in Provo Utah. Retail at \$370



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FILLING THE POWER GAP

ROY HUNTINGTON



THE 30 SUPER CARRY

This video still shows the 30 Super Carry at full recoil in a Nighthawk Custom model. Roy found it to have less recoil than a similarly performing 9mm load.



It's said around 65% of ammo sales from the big makers are 9mm loads. I'm not surprised, although while the .380 is making some inroads, it's nothing the 9mm needs to fret about. Yet, the .380's potential has undeniably grown in leaps and bounds due to ammo technology over the past few years. Many .380 loads today manage decent penetration in calibrated gel, putting it smack into competition with many 9mm loads. But even with that, mainstream America still leans heavily toward the 9mm.

If you look at the situation hard, though, you can see there's a bit of a performance gap between the 9mm and the .380. Cartridges like the .38 Super, .40 S&W, and even some hot .38 Special loads can handle the same

The Gold Dot bullet in the 30 Super Carry.



The 30 Super Carry has a very slim case, allowing up to two more cartridges in 9mm single stack magazines.

jobs and with a bit more punch. But what if you *don't* want more recoil, bigger guns and more fuss? Then your choice defaults back to the 9mm or .380.

For revolver shooters, the .327 Federal and even the .32 H&R Magnum offer nice gap-fillers. Say, a 115-grain bullet at around the 1,200+ fps mark hits the in-between spot neatly. But what if you have your heart set on a semi-auto? You'd do what we all do now — go for a small to mid-sized 9mm or a “pocket”

sized .380 and buy the best ammo you can find. Most of us have convinced ourselves we've made the right decisions based on our needs, budgets and abilities — then hit the streets.

But haven't you always thought, gosh, wouldn't it be great to have “something” else to choose from?

The 30 Super Carry

It seems the brains at Vista have been hard at work over the past couple of years trying to fill that unoccupied spot. What they've come up with is an interesting series of solutions to some old problems.

Created specifically for concealed carry, the “30 Super Carry” offers performance matching (and even besting at times) the classic 9mm. All the while handily outperforming the .380 —



Nighthawk Custom will initially offer two models for the 30 Super Carry chambering: the GRP (left) and the President.

while still fitting inside a 9mm platform.

The 30 Super Carry is rimless and has the same OAL dimensions of typical 9mm loads but is slimmer. The bullets are 0.312" caliber and come in 100- and 115-grain weights. The different ammo brands from Vista (Federal, Remington, Speer and CCI) all have assorted bullet styles loaded into the 30 Super Carry loads. These include typical FMJ (flat point) target and practice loads and the famous Gold Dot and HST bullets.

The Gold Dot and HST have long-established track records as solid performers in real-world shootings. The 30 Super Carry averages around the 1,250 fps mark with a 115-grain defensive bullet — and this load isn't for the faint

of heart as it generates some 50,000 psi of pressure. A high-performance 9mm load can generate "up to" 35,000 psi at maximum pressure. Even the cherished .38 Super and .357 Magnum max out at about 36,000 psi for some perspective.

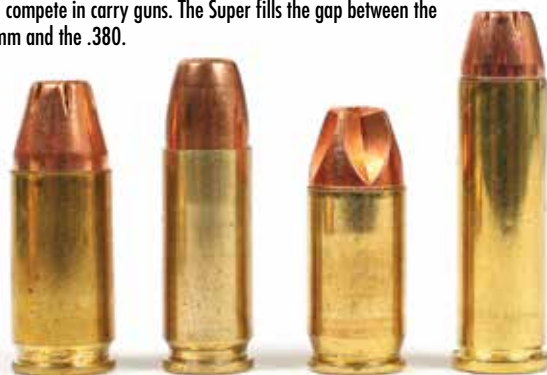
This is a hot load but remains controllable, flat-shooting, and fits and handles well in common 9mm autos. Do I have your attention yet?

Performance Tidbits

I attended a product launch hosted by Vista and Nighthawk Custom late in 2021 and was introduced to this compelling new cartridge. We also handled two new 1911-based guns NHC has tailored to fit them specifically — the President and the GRP.

According to Vista engineers, the 30 Super Carry defensive ammo expands reliably in gel to about 0.56" while still penetrating that magical 12" to 14" needed to stop a bad guy. A similar 9mm bullet expands to about 0.65" with comparable penetration. The difference between the two final dimensions is essentially a moot point, especially since

Left to right: The 9mm Luger, 30 Super Carry .380 ACP and .38 Special all compete in carry guns. The Super fills the gap between the 9mm and the .380.



variables in real-world targets could easily swap those two dimensions.

I think some of the real magic here, too, is the fact the slimmer case allows at least one more round in a single stack magazine (sometimes two, depending upon the exact gun design) and at least two more rounds in double-stack mags.

Smith & Wesson will also be offering their Shield and Shield EZ in the 30 Super Carry. Look for holsters readily available by the time you read this, along with additional customer support with products from RCBS, Blackhawk, Hoppes and others.

Vista's ammo side of the house is offering a good range of loads initially. Look for defensive loads in 20-round boxes with FMJ "practice" rounds in

Cartridge bases are labeled "30 Super Carry."





A 115-grain Gold Dot 30 Super Carry recovered from gel. Expansion is close to 9mm performance with similar penetration.

50-round boxes. Prices are competitive with similar loads in 9mm.

Shooting

My initial impression when I first shot the 30 Super Carry in Nighthawk's 1911 was the round was a bit "snappy." The slide ran very fast, but recoil was very moderate and easy to control. I felt like I was shooting a very light-bulleted 9mm load in a lightweight gun.

By shooting a similar model in 9mm, then immediately shooting the

30 Super Carry model, I found the Super Carry to recoil just a tad less than the similar bullet weight 9mm load we were shooting. The "sense" of a fast-moving slide is there when you shoot it and I think videos of me shooting both guns seem to hint at the same thing.

The 30 Super Carry in the NHC gun was also extremely accurate. We were getting essentially ragged one-hole groups out to about 15 yards and were able to reliably down 8" plates at 50 yards. Bang, clang, bang, clang one after another, once we got the sight

picture nailed down. This seems to be a very flat shooting round.

We also shot the test gun fast and close at multiple targets and the plate rack. The NHC gun handled fast and sure and the quick slide movement helped to keep the muzzle moving quickly and surely from target to target.

I was able to get a test gun just before I put this article to bed. Bench resting in my backyard range showed the accuracy seen at the event wasn't a fluke. I'd call this a reliable 1.5" or smaller gun at 25 yards. It also allows you to recover from a shot very fast, making plate runs great fun and a breeze.

I can see this gun eventually on the competition circuit in a high-cap frame. Can you say 22 or maybe more rounds in a single mag? All the while being flat shooting, fast in recovery, reliable and extremely accurate. I'm betting we'll see this sort of thing soon.

The NHC Gun

I was not able to get a gun from S&W; however, the Nighthawk gun was a real pleasure. Based on their famous GRP model, the 30 Super Carry calls for a \$100 upgrade, so MSRP is \$3,299.

.40 S&W 115 GR. HONEYBADGER™

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According to Mark Stone and his son Landon (who handles marketing and writer relations for NHC), this new chambering took a good deal more than simply changing out the magazine. There were many tiny details needing tweaking, changing, or re-engineering to get the 30 Super Carry to function 100% in the 1911 platform. Once they had things dialed in, it turned out to be a joy to shoot. It also manages 11 rounds in the magazine.

During my day trip to Nighthawk, I saw at least a thousand rounds run through two test guns in the hands of a dozen different shooters. I didn't see a single malfunction — all I saw were grins.

In my own shooting at home, I had about 200 rounds of engineering test ammo (115-grain TMJ) to play with. There were no malfunctions of the NHC gun or the ammo. And, I'm pleased to say, my 100-yard torso gong clanged admirably.

Do We Need This?

I think so. I entered into it wondering why this new round had it over a .380 or a 9mm. By the time I was

finished shooting, testing and learning, I realized Vista did excellent work in identifying a hole in the power line-up, then filling it with innovation, excellent design — and power.

I tend to sort of think of the 30 Super Carry as a sort of “semi-auto” .327 Federal. If I'd named it, I'd have called it the “30 Magnum Carry,” as I think it checks off all the boxes for that. You get the power, penetration and reliability of a defensive

9mm load, with the concealability of a .380 in many cases. Suddenly the world of small, easily concealed handguns can offer a new choice for a shooter — and more magazine capacity than a similar 9mm.

Thanks, guys.



For more info: VistaOutdoor.com (Remington, Speer, CCI, Federal); NighthawkCustom.com; Smith-Wesson.com

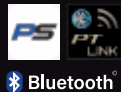


Federal, Remington, CCI and Speer will all offer 30 Super Carry loads.

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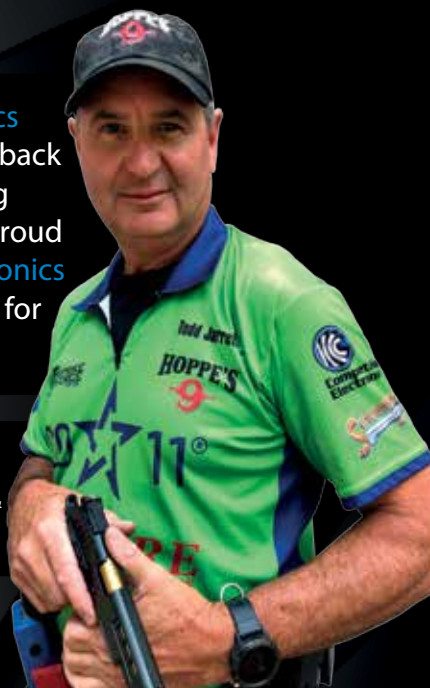
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A BETTER POCKET PISTOL DESIGN?

THE SAVAGE MODEL 1907 PISTOL: EATING COLT'S LUNCH



In its day, the Savage Automatic was state-of-the-art firepower barely bigger than the palm of your hand.



The manual safety is relatively easy to activate with the shooting hand's thumb and locks the slide closed or open for cleaning.

Today, we associate the Savage Arms Company with exceptionally accurate, innovatively engineered, well-made and value-priced rifles. Quality sporting rifles were always their main product line and the company made its reputation with their brilliant rotary magazine hammerless lever-action Model 1899 rifle.

In 1908, while still essentially a newcomer to firearms manufacturing, Savage boldly introduced their Model 1907 pistol. It was the first of a small family of pocket handguns (including the Model 1915 and Model 1917) intended to compete directly with Colt's wildly popular Model .32 ACP

1903, and later .380 ACP Model 1908 pocket autoloaders.

In the first years of the 20th century, autoloaders were gaining popularity worldwide. *Fabrique National* in Belgium struck a deal with American arms designer John Browning to manufacture and market his Model 1899 pistol and its new .32 cartridge. It was an immediate hit commercially and with the Belgian military adopting it as the Model 1900. FN's success with the little autoloader did not go unnoticed at Colt. They bought Browning's next autoloader



Perhaps the first practical, tactical, one-handed magazine release catch is found on the Savage Automatics. Most pocket autoloaders had magazine catches mounted on the heel of the grip well into the 1950s.



The high capacity, double column, grip-mounted pistol magazine debuted in the Model 1907 Savage Automatic.

design and wasted no time getting the Colt Model 1903 into production. It proved a wise decision. Colt's first foray into the pocket autoloader market was an instant hit with the public. Savage took note and hoped to cut out a share of this market for themselves eventually.

Pocket Improvement

To compete with an industry giant like Colt was no small thing, especially when they were first to market with an excellent product. It took a few years, but Savage discovered the basis for a worthy challenger to Colt's supremacy in the 1905 patents of Elbert H. Searle, a former U.S. Army ordnance officer at Springfield Armory. *In a time of great engineering diversity in autoloading pistol design that sometimes resulted in bizarre-looking, ungainly and impractical firearms, Searle's patent drawings suggest an advanced grasp of ergonomics and an aesthetic sensibility combined with sound practical engineering.* From Savage's point of view, I suspect three unique features of Searle's designs stood out as the means to achieve a competitive edge over Colt's Model 1903. They were a turning barrel, delayed blowback operating system, a double-column magazine, and a fingertip-operated magazine release button. They incorporated all three in their new Model 1907 Savage Automatic.

The delayed blowback feature allowed the Savage pistol's slide, and

Right: Though there was nothing unmanly in packing a .32 ACP pistol in the heyday of pocket automatics, Savage focused considerable advertising on the fairer sex.



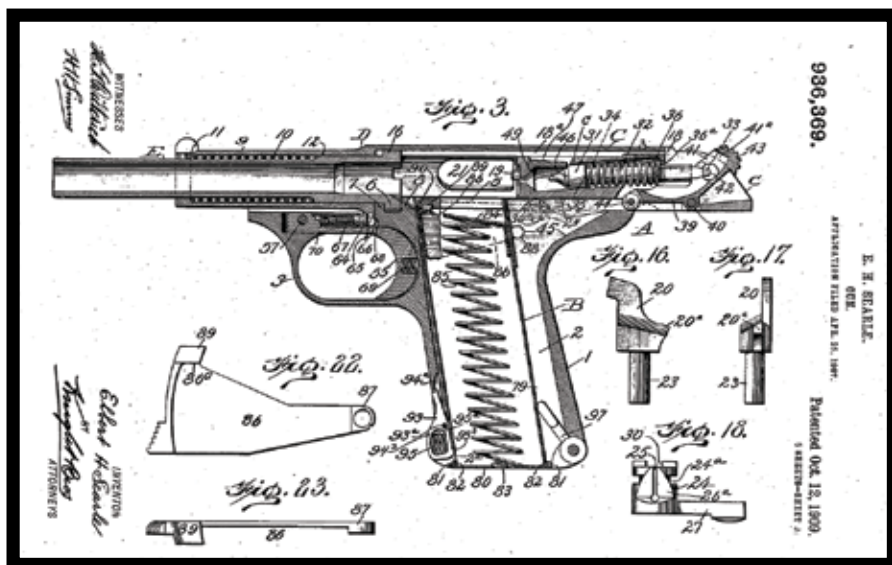
thus the overall gun, to be smaller and lighter than the simple blowback pocket Colt. The Savage weighed only 19 oz. to the Colt's 24 oz. and it was a quarter-inch smaller in height and length, too, despite having the same barrel length.

Magazine Innovations

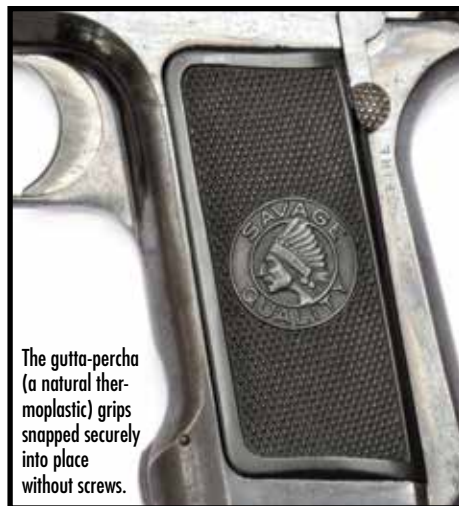
The double-column magazine in the Savage production model had a 10-shot capacity, two shots more than Colt's single-stack magazine. While

double-column detachable magazines for autoloaders had already appeared in Europe (the Bergmann-Bayard pistol comes to mind), they were inserted in a magazine well forward of the trigger guard. The Savage, like virtually all modern handguns, located the magazine inside the grip frame.

To expedite magazine changes, Searle positioned the magazine release button on the front grip strap to be oper-



All Savage Automatics were striker-fired. What looks like a hammer is a manual cocking lever for the striker.



The gutta-percha (a natural thermoplastic) grips snapped securely into place without screws.



Above: The "Aims as easy as pointing your finger" and "Ten Shots Quick" slogans weren't hype. The first time Frank shot the pistol, he fired 11 rounds in less than three seconds.

ated with the index or ring finger of the shooting hand. Savage must have perceived it as a genuine tactical advantage since it allowed the shooter to drop the empty magazine while readying a replacement magazine for insertion with the off hand. *It was the fastest system around for pocket autoloaders for decades.* The Model 1903 Colt,

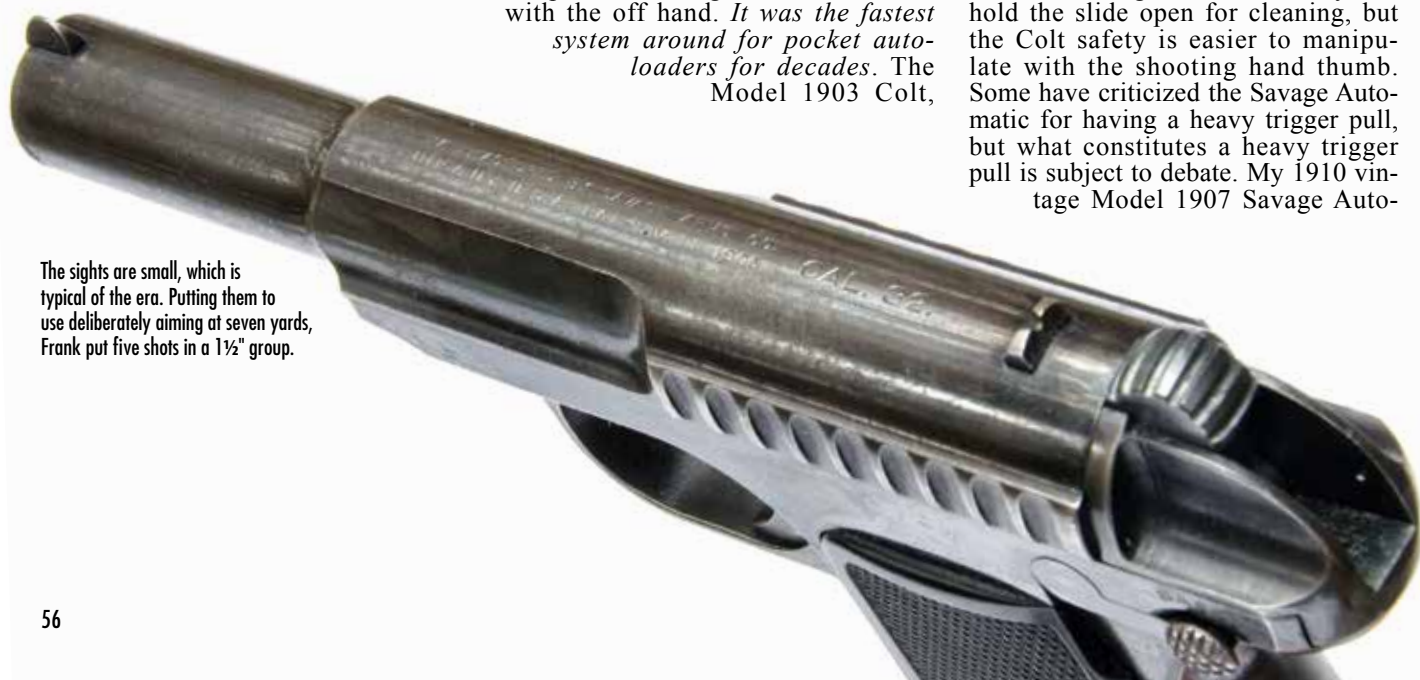
and virtually all other pocket autoloaders, had their magazine catch on the heel of the grip frame, which required the shooter to first remove the empty magazine with his off hand before inserting another.

Handling & Shootability

The Model 1907 Savage Automatic had more subtle advantages over the Colt's Model 1903. Both guns point well, but the Savage's sleek, minimalist, slide and low bore axis gave it better pointing characteristics and helped mitigate muzzle flip between shots for faster and more accurately placed follow-up shots. In addition, the Savage's delayed blowback operation allowed it to harness more power from the .32 ACP cartridge than a simple blowback. Perhaps this also increased the recoil impulse and I wouldn't disagree. However, I think the Savage's low bore axis compensated for it.

Initially, the Model 1907 Savage Automatic cost the same as the Model 1903 Colt. Overall, I think the Savage Automatic was always the better gun in all respects but the manual safety. Both the Savage and Colt safety can hold the slide open for cleaning, but the Colt safety is easier to manipulate with the shooting hand thumb. Some have criticized the Savage Automatic for having a heavy trigger pull, but what constitutes a heavy trigger pull is subject to debate. My 1910 vintage Model 1907 Savage Auto-

The sights are small, which is typical of the era. Putting them to use deliberately aiming at seven yards, Frank put five shots in a 1½" group.



matic has close to an 8-lb. trigger pull, but it is crisp. The only time I notice it is during deliberately aimed shooting. In fast tactical shooting, it doesn't seem to be a detriment. While we consider 8 lbs. heavy by today's standards, it was not out of line for pocket pistols of this era. Keep in mind, nobody wants a pocket pistol going off while it's in their pocket.

Not Hammer Time

Though appearing to have a hammer, the Savage Automatics are not hammer-fired. Where the "Hammerless" Model 1903 Colt is a hammer-fired pistol with the hammer concealed under the slide, the Model 1907 Savage Automatic is a striker-fired pistol with the end of the striker extending out the back of the slide like a hammer. I see three advantages of attaching the end of the striker to an exposed cocking lever. First, you can cock the striker by hand to make it easier to rack the slide back to chamber a round. This was important for many women shooters, a demographic that Savage targeted. Second, the externally mounted cocking lever made it easy to see or feel if the striker was cocked. Finally, in the event of a misfire, the striker can be re-cocked without racking the slide. This being said, it takes some substantial thumb strength to cock that striker lever! Even a man can't do it while maintaining a shooting grip.

Savage introduced its first pistol to the public in 1908 and kept them in production for nearly 20 years. Reliable, well made, well finished and well-advertised, the guns seem to have sold as fast as Savage could make them. Savage ate Colt's lunch in the pocket .32 automatic market, outselling them domestically from 1909 through 1914 and then again after the World War in 1919. During the war, Savage fulfilled large orders for its pistols from the French military (and a small order for the Portuguese military). Still, most of their wartime manufacturing work was focused on producing Lewis light machine guns for the Allied Nations. The last model of the Savage Automatic pistol, the Model 1917, was offered in their catalog until at least 1928. In total, Savage made over 272,500 pistols over 20 years. The .32 ACP models outsold the .380 ACP guns by nine times.

I expect the Great Depression had a lot to do with discontinuing the Savage Automatic line. To Colt's relief, Savage never made another pistol.



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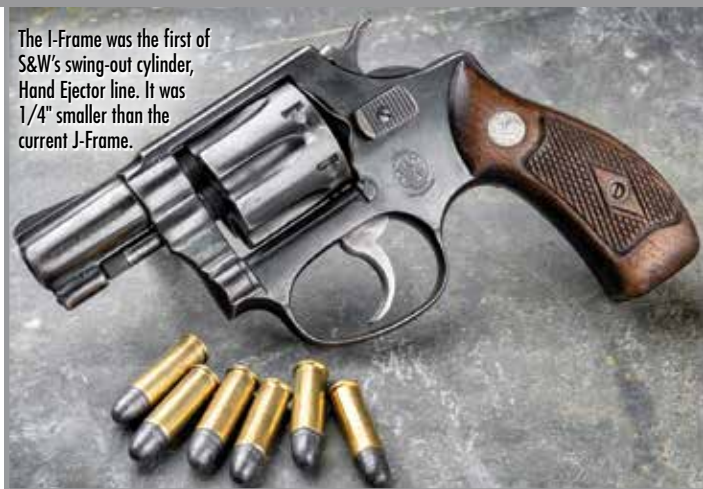
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DEMYSTIFYING ALL THOSE S&W

The I-Frame was the first of S&W's swing-out cylinder, Hand Ejector line. It was 1/4" smaller than the current J-Frame.



The M-Frame was the smallest Hand Ejector. The parts were so tiny, it was the most tedious to build.

J, K, L, M, N? E-H-O

FRANK JARDIM
PHOTOS: F.J.G. JARDIM



The K-Frame is S&W's medium-sized model, an excellent compromise between weight, size and firepower. Revolvers of this size were the backbone of police armament for most of the 20th century.

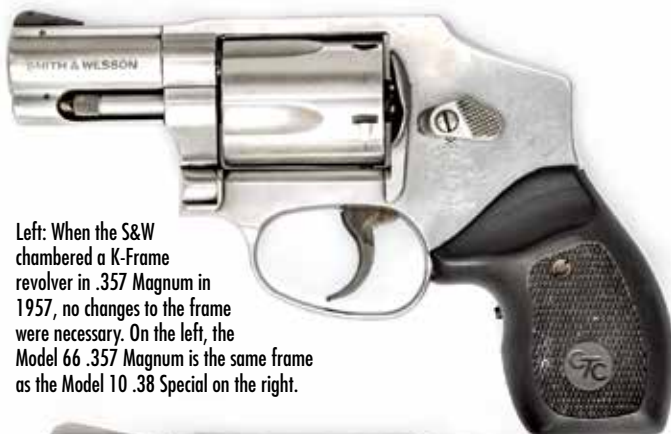
Regardless of the specifics of a particular revolver's purpose, its ergonomics, size and weight always affect its shootability. Grip frame size and shape are more than just a matter of shooter comfort; they affect the handgun's controllability in recoil and rapid double-action firing.

No revolver manufacturer has ever topped S&W regarding the sheer diversity of their revolver frame offerings. With so many to choose from, selecting the right one can seem a daunting task — at least until you understand what all those letters mean.

History Of Soup

The present alphabet soup of letter frame designations began at the end of

FRAME TYPES



Left: When the S&W chambered a K-Frame revolver in .357 Magnum in 1957, no changes to the frame were necessary. On the left, the Model 66 .357 Magnum is the same frame as the Model 10 .38 Special on the right.



The J-Frame is currently the smallest offered by S&W.



the 19th century when S&W introduced their new solid-frame, swing-out cylinder, revolvers — the Hand Ejector models. The S&W's unique frame lettering system goes back to the birth of the modern DA revolver we know today. Unlike the earlier numerical method, the letter system referred to frame size only and was not intended for marketing use.

The company produced swing-out cylinder revolvers on eight basic frames sizes. In order of their introduction, they are I, K, M, N, J, L, X and Z.

Except for the toy-like tiny M-Frame, if you laid out all the S&W frame sizes in alphabetical order, you'd observe increasingly large handguns whose cylinder windows grow to accommodate bigger calibers. That increasing physical size generally includes larger grip frames and more weight, but there are quite a few qualifications to those last two points. Except for the X- and Z-Frames, which are only made with round-butt K-sized grip frames, S&W offered all of their frames at one time or another with both full size, square-butt, grip frames and smaller round-butt grip frames. There's much more to their revolver product line than small, medium and large.

M-Frame: Tiny & Delicate

The M-Frame, made from 1902 to about 1922, had petite proportions making it ideal for small hands. It was marketed as the Ladysmith. A seven-shot, it was chambered in .22 S&W Long.

I-Frame: Versatile

The I-Frame looks like a slightly shorter J-Frame. In truth, the J-Frame is

a 1/4" longer I-Frame. The I-Frame was the first of the Hand Ejector models to go into production in 1896 and was made up to 1960. It was also S&W's first swing-out cylinder revolver. This compact frame was the basis for various six-shot .32 and .22 LR and five-shot .38 S&W caliber snubnose, police service, sporting and target models. This frame's death knell was sounded by the growing popularity of the .38 S&W Special, which couldn't fit in the I-Frame's short cylinder window.

J-Frame: Pocket Firepower

The J-Frame was a powerful pocket .38 S&W Special snubnose introduced in 1950 to compete with Colt's Detective Special. It had the same grip size as the I-Frame, but the cylinder window was lengthened. After 10 years of concurrent manufacture, S&W concluded there was not enough difference between the I- and J-Frame to warrant continued production of the

former. Hence, the J-Frame took on all its predecessor's roles. It's now offered as a five-shot .38 S&W Special or .357 Magnum, an eight-shot .22LR and a seven-shot .22 Magnum.

The J-Frame was offered in more materials and styles than any other S&W frame. Begun in carbon steel by 1952, the first lightweight aluminum alloy Airweight models appeared. In 1965, the J-Frame Model 60 snub-



All S&W frames, except the X and Z, allowed a choice of grip frame shape. The round butt (left) was for better concealment. The bell-shaped, square-butt form had more gripping surface for better control.

Comparison of the three perennially popular frame sizes, top to bottom: J-Frame, K-Frame and N-Frame.

longer cylinder window to accommodate the .357 Magnum cylinder. In 2001, key-operated internal locks were added to the left side of the frames, an unpopular feature that became standard on all S&W revolvers.

K-Frame: Perfection

S&W's medium-sized Hand Ejector revolvers were based on the K-Frame and debuted in 1899 as the Military & Police model. The K-Frame was designed around a six-shot .38 caliber cylinder and a new cartridge significantly more potent than the .38 Long Colt then used by the U.S. Army.

Then, as now, the size and weight of the K-Frame are perfectly balanced with the .38 S&W Special cartridge for quick handling and shootability. The K-Frame was also slightly smaller, lighter and more graceful than its medium-frame Colt competitor. The K-Frame could be had in snubnosed, service, or target barrel lengths, with fixed or adjustable sights, round- or square-butt grip frames, carbon or stainless steel, and in .22 LR and .32 S&W Long target shooting models. Modern offerings include a 6-shot .22 Magnum, an 8-shot .22 WMR and 6- and 10-shot .22LR models.

S&W pushed the limit of the K-Frame when they began chambering it for .357 Magnum in late 1950. The K-Frame proved strong enough to handle a *limited* diet of 158-grain magnum loads.

L-Frame: Goldilocks

Law enforcement demand for a medium-sized revolver strong enough for long-term use with the preferred 125-grain JHP .357 Magnum load motivated the development of the L-Frame in 1986. The grip frame area of the L-Frame is identical to the K-Frame, but the upper portion was strengthened and enlarged. *To give you an idea of how much bigger the L-Frame is, its cylinder can accommodate seven rounds to the K-Frame's six.* The L-Frames were made in carbon, and stainless steel and aluminum/Scandium alloy, with round and square butt

weight and 19.5 oz. for the original carbon steel Model 36 Chief's Special. The most recent J-Frame innovation is the M&P Bodyguard 38 snubnose featuring an entirely new aluminum alloy/polymer/steel composite frame weighing just 14.3 oz.

The first J-Frame was the Model 36 Chief's Special with a conventional exposed hammer. In 1952, the concealed hammer Model 40 Centennial was first offered, followed in 1954 by the shrouded hammer Model 49 Bodyguard, which allowed thumb cocking for precise SA shooting. The modern versions of these vintage frames are still made today, in addition to a magnum length J-Frame with a 1/8"

nose was S&W's first stainless steel revolver. In 2002 S&W made the Model 360PD, a .357 Magnum snubnose with an amazingly light and strong aluminum/scandium alloy frame. It weighed only 11.3 oz. empty, compared to 14.3 oz. for the aluminum alloy Model 637 Chief's Special Air-



The X-Frame was designed to be the most powerful production revolver in the world. They are chambered in .500 or .460 S&W Magnum.

The L-Frame revolvers were born to shoot .357 Magnum all day long. They have a K-Frame-sized grip but are more heavily built above.

grip frames, and as 6- or 7-shot .357 Magnums, 7-shot 9mm, or 5-shot .44 Magnums. All had adjustable sights. All in all, they proved a good compromise between power and shootability, smaller and faster handling than the massive N-Frames and stronger than the K-Frame.

N-Frame: Manly Frames

Many young men bought N-Frames hoping to grow hair on their chests. The N-Frame was the largest of the Hand Ejector frames and remained the company's biggest and heaviest for nearly a century. Introduced in 1908, it was meant for the most potent .44 and .45 caliber cartridges of its day. Larger in every dimension, it had the steel to spare for long-term durability.

In 1935 it was selected to be the platform for the first .357 Magnum, and later the .44 and .41 Magnums. The great advantage of the N-Frame was its mass and strength, but it was not a pistol for those with small hands, and its size and weight made it a substantial load to carry by today's standards. However, it was not overly burdensome compared to its big-bore peers. The S&W N-Frame remains the most graceful and lightest of the DA .44 Magnums revolvers.

Models were offered in round or square butt grip frames, with fixed or adjustable sites rear sights, and carbon steel, stainless steel, and aluminum/scandium alloy. N-Frames traditionally use six-shot cylinders, but eight-shot .357 Magnum and 9mm models were recently introduced, as well as a six-shot 10mm Auto.

X-Frame: King Kong?

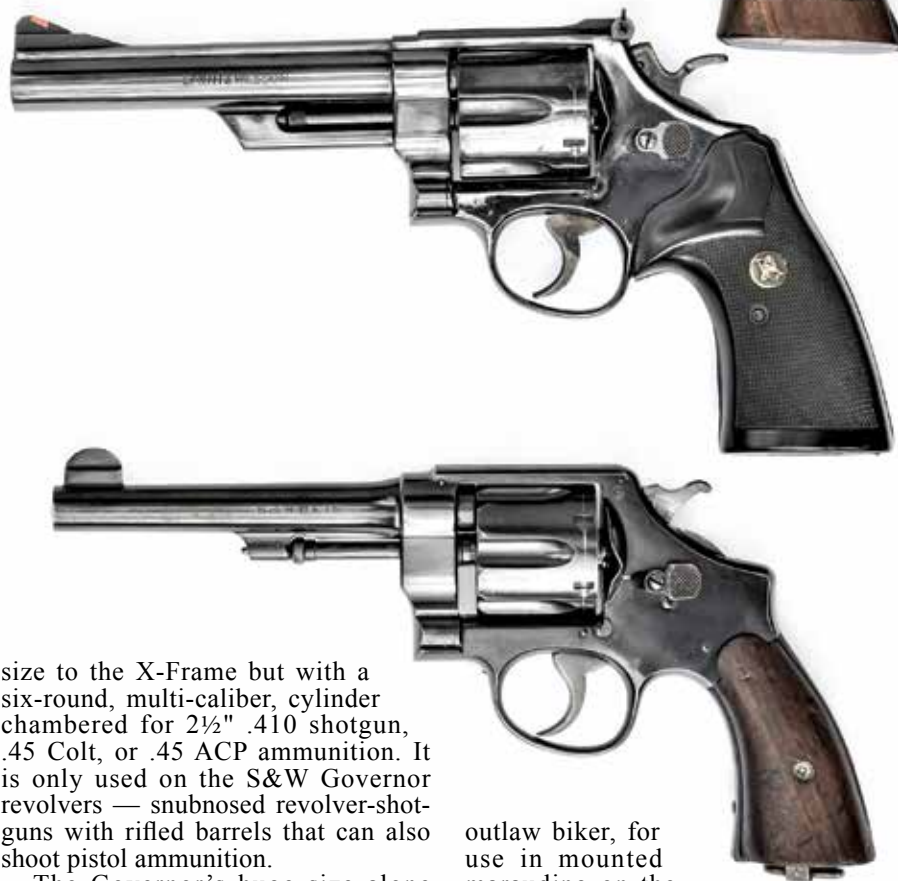
Introduced in 2003, the biggest, heaviest and most powerful S&W hunting revolvers are built on X-Frames of stainless steel and have a five-shot capacity. Designed around the .500 S&W Magnum, they are the most powerful production revolvers in the world. They're also chambered in .460 S&W Magnum, billed as the highest velocity pistol cartridge. Saying they are suitable for any large game animal in North America is something of an understatement.

A 4"-barrel X-Frame .500 Magnum is about 14 oz. heavier and 3/4" longer than a 4" barrel N-Frame .44 Magnum, but the X-Frame was designed with the K-Frame's smaller grip frame, and a round one at that, for the same reason the L-Frame was. You can put larger stocks on a small grip frame if you have big hands, but you can't put smaller stocks on a large grip frame.

Z-Frame: The Hybrid

The Z-Frame, introduced in 2011, is the newest frame size and close in

The N-Frame was the largest size offered by S&W until 2003 and is about as large as a revolver can be and remain tactically practical. Top to bottom: Model 58 .41 Magnum, Model 29 .44 Magnum, Model 1917 .45 ACP.



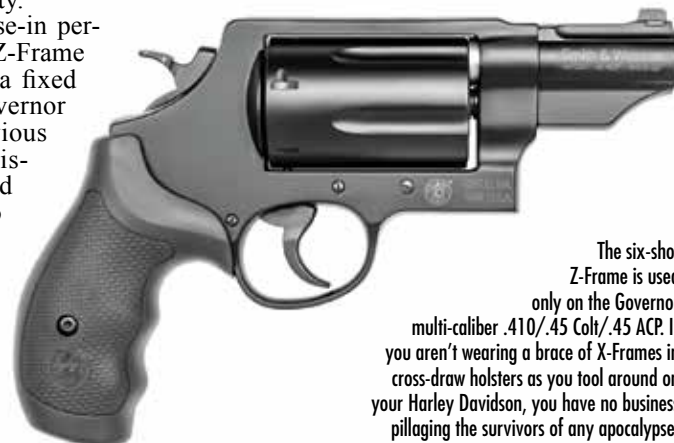
size to the X-Frame but with a six-round, multi-caliber, cylinder chambered for 2½" .410 shotgun, .45 Colt, or .45 ACP ammunition. It is only used on the S&W Governor revolvers — snubnosed revolver-shotguns with rifled barrels that can also shoot pistol ammunition.

The Governor's huge size alone gives it a formidable appearance. The gun only weighs 29.6 oz. empty because the Z-Frame is made in S&W's super-light and super-strong aluminum/scandium alloy. To make it easier to handle, they utilized the K-Frame grip, selecting the round butt version for versatility.

Intended for close-in personal defense, the Z-Frame is made only with a fixed rear sight. The Governor revolvers have obvious merit as bedside pistols, but they would have been ideal to "repel boarders in a different time." That being said, they could also prove well suited for defense while in a vehicle, or if you are an

outlaw biker, for use in mounted marauding on the lawless highways and byways of a post-apocalyptic America driven to bankruptcy, social collapse and ultimate ruin.

And there you have it — revolver naming demystified.



The six-shot Z-Frame is used only on the Governor multi-caliber .410/.45 Colt/.45 ACP. If you aren't wearing a brace of X-Frames in cross-draw holsters as you tool around on your Harley Davidson, you have no business pillaging the survivors of any apocalypse.

SPYDERCO'S ALL-STAR STEEL



Aqua Salt Black



Amalgam Compression Lock



Endura 3 Lightweight
Thin Blue Line



Manbug Wharndcliffe



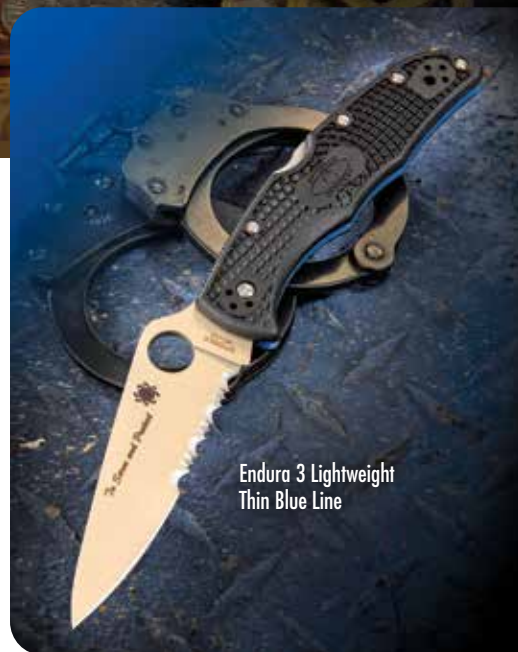
PAT COVERT
PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
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GENERATIONS OF PROVEN FIXED AND FOLDERS

Spyderco keeps it fresh with new hits and old favorites.

You can always tell a successful cutlery manufacturer by the way they keep their new knives exciting and their old standards hopping. Spyderco manages to do both with extreme effectiveness ever since they released their first folding knife with their trademark hole-in-the-blade over 40 years ago. Many of their early models such as the Police, Endura and Delica are still mainstays in the Spyderco line-up, but annually the company launches a host of new models with creative, envelope-pushing designs to delight their customers.

"Spyderco is experiencing a rapid mid-life growth spurt, as is much of the knife industry," Spyderco Public and Media Relations guru Joyce Laituri tells *Handgunner*. "Business has been good for the cutlery industry these past two years. Our product line is evolving, growing with new designs, steels and materials we've not used before." We've assembled some of the compa-



Endura 3 Lightweight
Thin Blue Line

ny's newer fare here as well as some of their fresh, updated older models that still remain popular among the company's ravenous flock.

New And New Again

One of Spyderco's new breed of tactical folders is the Brian Lai-designed Amalgam. At 8.90" overall and 5.10" closed, this is a handful of knife. Weight-wise, however, the Amalgam is a very manageable 4.3 oz., thanks to its Carbon Fiber/G10 laminate frame. The Amalgam's 3.40" flat ground Drop Point blade is served up with premium CPM-S30V stainless from Crucible Industries, the leader in proprietary

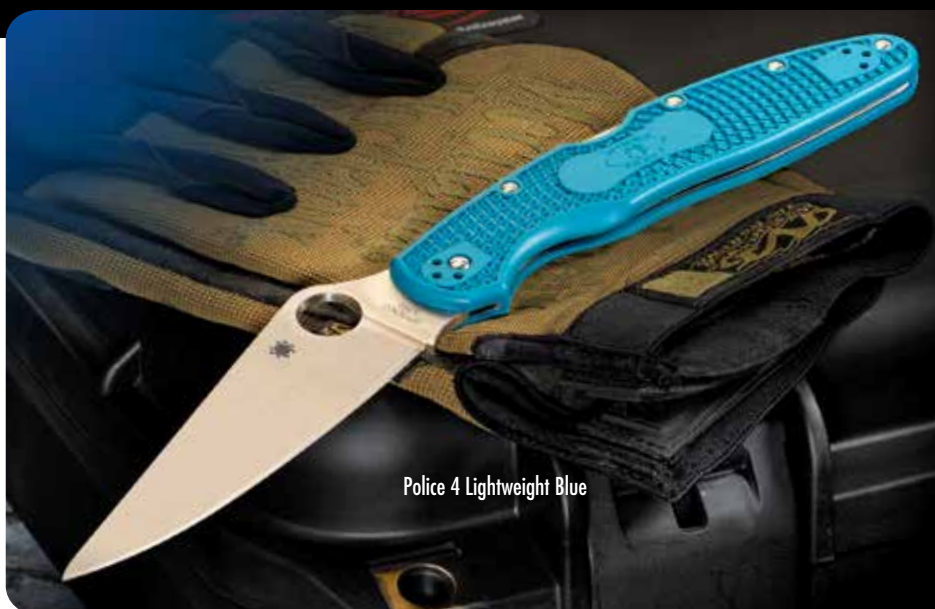
blade steels. The user has the choice of deploying the blade by way of a rapid-fire flipper or the standard Spydie-hole (both ambidextrous) with the aid of ball-bearing washers in the pivot. The blade locks up via Spyderco's patented Compression Lock, conveniently located on the top rear spine of the handle, and there's a 4-position pocket clip offering up multiple carry options. Whether you carry the Amalgam for self-defense or daily chores, the gang's all here to make your trek through life a safe, well-equipped one.

The Spyderco Police is the longest-running model in the company's line. Introduced in 1981, the Police model preceded the modern-day tactical folder wave (which took root at the beginning of the first Gulf War) by nearly a decade and lives on today in its fourth generation. The Police 4 Lightweight Blue folder is one of the latest iterations. This is a big 'un — 9.9" unfurled with a blade length of 4.38". The blade is of Bohler K390 high carbon tool steel that, when deployed, snicks into place via a lock-back mechanism. The model featured here has a plain-edge blade, but a serrated version is also available — as well as stainless steel options. At 4.2 oz., the Police 4 Lightweight Blue is indeed light for its size. As is common with Spyderco, there is a four-position pocket clip and, when adding the Spydie-hole to the equation, makes it totally ambidextrous.

Spyderco's Endura is another stalwart that has "endured" through four generations since its release in the 1980s. The Endura 4 Lightweight Thin Blue Line folder is part of a new series of knives dedicated to first responders with a portion of sales going to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation. These knives are connoted by the motto *To Serve and Protect* etched on the blade, attractive blue anodized liners, and a blue spacer on the spine. The Endura 4 is a nice-sized EDC at 8.78" overall with a closed length of 4.98". The blade is a plain-edge Drop Point of VG-10 stainless steel, 3.80" in length. The handle is black FRN with a lock-back mechanism and, in true Spyderco fashion, there's a pocket clip positional at all four corners. If the Police 4 is a tad lengthy for you, the Endura 4 series is around a half-inch shorter.

Bigs And Littles

Spyderco has always kept a bevy of smaller calves and colts in the stable and the Manbug Wharncliffe carries on this tradition in spades. A scant 4.39" overall, the Manbug donates 1.91" to the cutting cause with a wicked, flat-edged VG-10 stainless Wharncliffe blade. A cousin to the Sheepfoot style, both are



Police 4 Lightweight Blue

known for excelling at utilitarian chores. The flat-ground blade has a satin finish mated to a 2.50" black FRN handle and there's a lock-back mechanism on the rear spine. There is no pocket clip, rather the Manbug Wharncliffe is a hideaway knife meant for loose carry in the pants pocket or concealed elsewhere such as in a jacket or formal coat pocket. Could it be used for self-defense in a pinch? Don't tempt it.

Prefer a fixed blade? The Spyderco Salt Series is a group of knives with H-1 steel, a proprietary steel developed by Spyderco for use in locations or applications that are cruel by nature. H-1 steel replaces Carbon with Nitrogen, which makes it impervious to rust or corrosion. The Spyderco Aqua Salt Black is a 9.33" tactical fixed-blade geared for a surreptitious blend of combat and utility. The Aqua Salt Black's blade is 4.78" of black TiCN coated VG-10 Steel (available in plain edge or fully serrated) mated to a

black FRN handle featuring a nice palm swell for superb grip. Included with the knife is a black polymer sheath with a G-Clip attachment that allows belt or waistband carry. When you're not facing off with bad guys the Aqua Salt Black can perform a multitude of field chores with gusto.

Down The Road

I asked Joyce to look into her crystal ball and tell us what we might expect to see from Spyderco in the future. "In the trending lane, we're seeing a greater interest from customers in new blade steels." Laituri hints, "Knife consumers are savvy when it comes to materials and we'll not be disappointing in this area. We also have numerous never-before-seen designs and variant offerings of some of our best sellers." Stay tuned, we'll be here for it.



For more info: Spyderco.com



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SCAN TO ENTER



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MACROSTREAM USB**



PLUS



**COLD STEEL
TI-LITE 6" ALUMINUM**

Engineered for accuracy right out of the box, the *K-12 Sport* is the crown jewel of the SAR USA lineup. It's also what we're giving away in this issue of *American Handgunner*. With competition-performance at a price point within reach of every shooter, the *K-12 Sport* pistol features a 4.7" hammer-forged, match-grade barrel with recessed crown, a comfortable grip, flared mag well, skeletonized hammer, an overtravel stop in the back of the trigger, a low-bore axis and an ambidextrous manual safety. The frame and slide are precision-machined forged alloy steel with a hard-white chrome finish. The *K-12 Sport* also has front and rear slide serrations, a high-ride beavertail and an adjustable rear target sight and trigger. Two 17-round magazines are included. This hammer-fired, single action 9mm pistol may become the most accurate factory pistol you will ever shoot and would be a great choice in the limited division of the USPSA.

Another prize in this giveaway is Cold Steel's *Ti-Lite* (S35VN) folding knife with a 6" plain-edged kris blade made of AUS 10A steel. With an OAL of 13" and weighing 7 oz., the *Ti-Lite* has stainless-steel leaf spring locks, a Griv-Ex handle and a steel pocket clip.

The *Macrostream USB* provides as much as 500 lumens of light at a beam distance of 90 meters. This lightweight, rechargeable flashlight with a run time of two hours on High fits the palm of your hand or inside your pocket.

Join this giveaway for a chance to win SAR USA's *K-12 Sport*, Cold Steel's *Ti-Lite* and Streamlight's *Macrostream USB*! Enter now at AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways/ or mail a post card! —Jazz Jimenez

K-12 SPORT

MANUFACTURER: SAR USA

SARUSA.COM, (833) 727-4867

CALIBER: 9MM LUGER, CAPACITY: 17; BARREL LENGTH: 4.7"

LENGTH: 8.5", WEIGHT: 46.9 OZ.

VALUE: \$842

TI-LITE 6" ALUMINUM

MANUFACTURER: COLD STEEL

COLDSTEEL.COM, (877) 269-8490

VALUE: \$109.99

MACROSTREAM USB

MANUFACTURER: STREAMLIGHT

STREAMLIGHT.COM, (800) 523-7488

VALUE: \$54.68

TOTAL VALUE: \$1,006.67

John shooting
the 5" Model
1926 .44
Special.



THE 3RD MODEL HAND EJECTOR

**S&W'S
MODEL
1926**

**.44
SPECIAL**

The 3rd Model Hand Ejector arrived in 1926 and evolved into the Model 1950 Target in 1950.

It is no secret that my passion is big bore sixguns. For most sixgun applications we can get by quite well with the old-time, pleasant shooting .45 Colt or .44 Special.

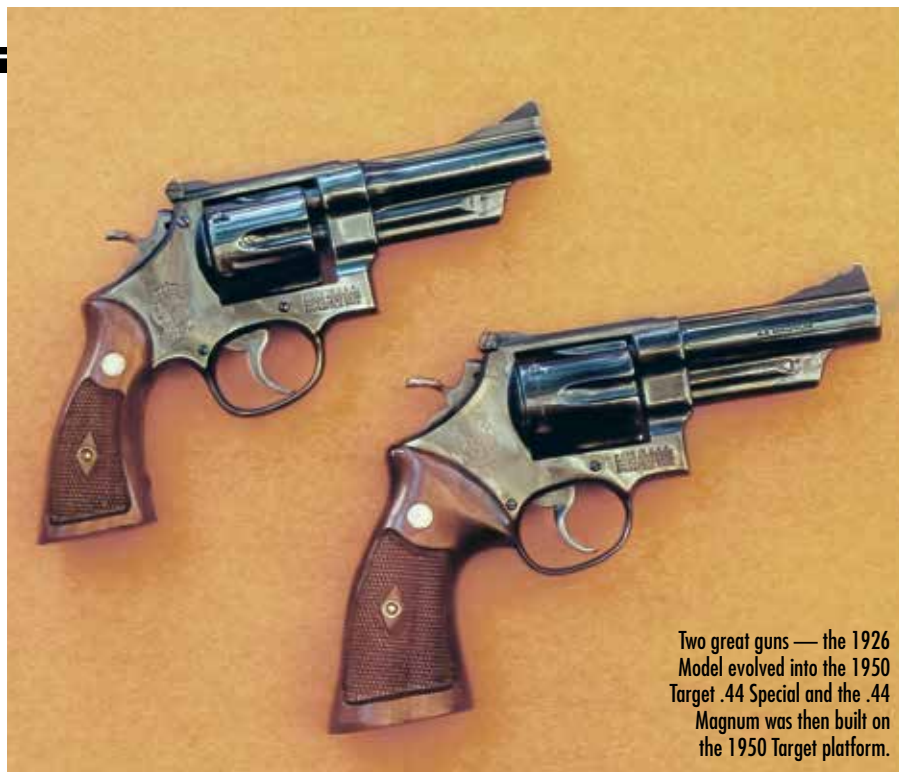
The .44 Special has now celebrated its 100th anniversary having been first chambered in the 1907 First Model Hand Ejector, the legendary S&W New Century or Triple-Lock. This was S&W's first foray into a large frame, double action, swing-out cylinder revolver. It may have been their first attempt, but they definitely started at the top with what many would consider the finest big bore double action sixgun ever to come from the mind of man.

Triple Lock

The Triple-Lock was so named because the cylinder was locked in three places when its competitor, the Colt New Service, only locked its cylinder at the rear. To highlight the capabilities of S&W revolver-making skills, they added a third locking feature at the front of the cylinder.

The phrase "built like a Swiss watch" may have actually been first applied to the Triple-Lock because of this third locking feature. A locking lug machined into the front of the crane matches up with a spring-loaded latch at the bottom of the enclosed ejector rod housing below and integral to the barrel.





Two great guns — the 1926 Model evolved into the 1950 Target .44 Special and the .44 Magnum was then built on the 1950 Target platform.

The enclosed ejector rod was also first found on this First Model Hand Ejector. Perhaps this was perfection in a double-action. If this were a perfect world, this perfect sixgun would still be in production.

A \$2 Step Back

In 1915, just eight years after its introduction, the Triple-Lock was removed from production and replaced by the 2nd Model Hand Ejector. To save production costs, both the third locking feature and the enclosed ejector rod were dropped. This resulted in a price reduction from \$21 to \$19. Anyone with the worst math skills can see this figures out to a loss of one of the greatest sixguns of all time for a measly \$2! The Triple-Lock's replacement was still a good sixgun, it fell short when measured up against its bigger brother.

Sixgunners soon began badgering S&W for the return of the Triple-Lock, or at least the enclosed ejector rod. All pleas fell on deaf ears for the next decade or so until one astute distributor, Wolf and Klar, placed an order with S&W for what was to become the 3rd Model Hand Ejector, or as it is more commonly known, the Model 1926. This special .44 Special did not really replace the 2nd Model until 1940. Up to that time they ran side by side. However, the Model 1926 was a special order sixgun that was not cataloged.

Ranger Ready

Word spread quickly and the Model 1926 .44 Special became popular with

lawmen, especially in the Southwest and along our southern border. On a recent trip to Texas, I was privileged to visit The Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco. I was most pleased to find Model 1926 .44 Specials on display that belonged to no less than five Texas Rangers. I had already known about the pair belonging to Capt. Lone Wolf Gonzauillas and his highly engraved, gold-encrusted 5" six-guns were prominently displayed. Also found were a 4" nickel-plated version that belonged to Capt. J.M. Fox; a 5", nickel, Capt. Frank Probst; a 5", blue, Capt. Frank Hamer; and a 4" nickel that had been used by Red Burton. Hamer should be recognized as the Ranger who ended the bloody exploits of Bonnie and Clyde. As normally happens when Hollywood touches something, he was nothing at all like the Ranger portrayed in that movie.

Long And Short Actions

We have bemoaned the fact this is not a perfect world. First, S&W dropped the Triple-Lock. They came very close to correcting this misstep by introducing the Model 1926. As with the Triple-Lock, the Model 1926 still had the "long action" which is particularly good for shooting double-action style. Bullseye paper punching was the number one game and even law-enforcement officers trained by shooting single-action-style at paper bullseyes. A very few, who were the savviest of peace officers, realized revolvers were meant to be

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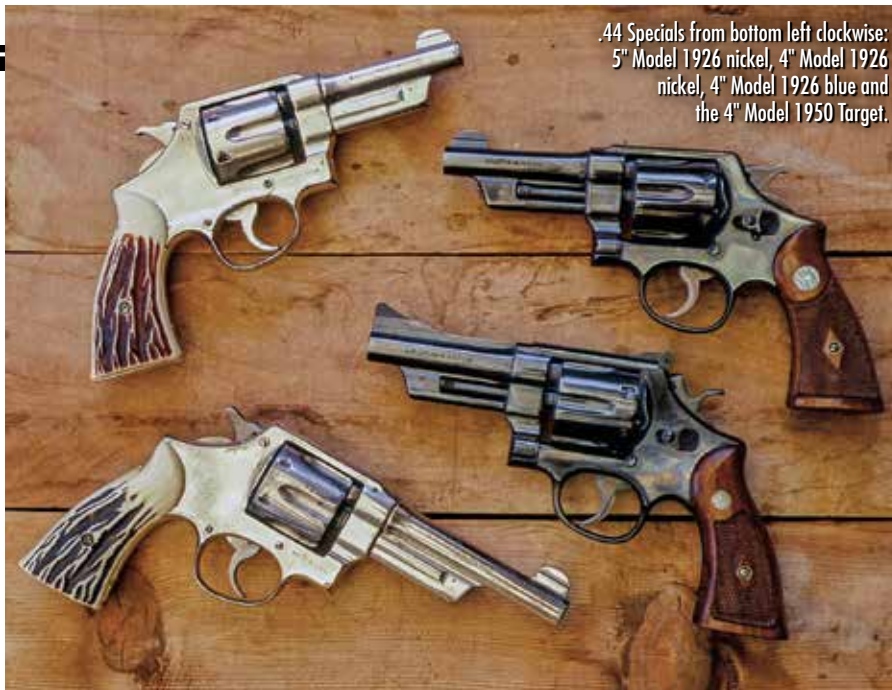
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.44 Specials from bottom left clockwise:
5" Model 1926 nickel, 4" Model 1926
nickel, 4" Model 1926 blue and
the 4" Model 1950 Target.

shot double-action in serious situations. S&W had the best and smoothest double-action ever offered. However, because of the demands of target shooters, that "perfect" action was shortened in 1950.

Model 1926 Production

Wolf & Klar placed an order for 3,500 .44 Specials with enclosed ejector rod housings. However, only 1,000 of the new 1926 Models were ever shipped, and even though it was a special-order, non-catalog sixgun, nearly 5,000 were made before the start of WWII. The Model 1926 was offered in blue or nickel, adjustable or fixed sights, with barrel lengths of 4", 5" and 6½". The vast majority were chambered in .44 Special; however, a very few came out of Springfield in .44-40 and .45 Colt.

The Model 1926 was also such a great sixgun this basic revolver took two evolutionary paths. It was first

used to build the .38/44 Heavy Duty in 1930, becoming the .357 Magnum in 1935; then, with the new short action, becoming the 1950 Target Model. Five years later, the 1950 became the .44 Magnum.

The Search

I had searched for an affordable Model 1926 ever since I knew such a sixgun existed. I found most of those I encountered with a four-figure price tag. I may never have found one had it not been for a reader who while traveling in Oregon, spotted a like-new .44 Special, and immediately notified me. He put me in contact with Gunners Central Oregon Traders in Redmond and talked with an enthusiastic shooter (and *Handgunner* reader) who described what was a 4" Model 1926 .44 Special, blue, with fixed sights and Magna stocks — exactly what I wanted. I finally had my Model 1926 and could experience firsthand why pre-War Southwest peace

officers had such high regard for the 1926 Model. Once started, the double-action almost seems to operate itself; recoil with pre-War .44 Special type loads is very mild; and as an extra bonus, a check of the serial number revealed this .44 Special was made the same year I was.

Since that time, I came up with three more 3rd Model Hand Ejectors. Two are nickel-plated, with one being a 4" version and the other wearing a 5" barrel. They are not in the pristine shape of my first Model 1926; however, they are good shootin' sixguns. One had a tendency to throw fliers until we examined the end of the muzzle and realized it had a ding. In fact, it appeared someone had dropped it on its muzzle so hard the end of the rifling was even bent. Mike Rainey, then my gunsmith at Chapel's, removed 1/8" off the end of the barrel, re-crowned it, and corrected the flier problem. The latest 1926 Model I have acquired is another 4" blued version in excellent shape except the front sight has been altered. It still shoots great, and it would embarrass me to say how little it cost. Bargains are out there if one is patient and observant.

My search for the Model 1926 has not ended. Just as I was finishing this article, Don, a reader from Northern Idaho, stopped in to visit and show me a couple of sixguns. When he unwrapped them, my heart soared and sighed at the same time. What he had were two 6½" pre-War Smiths, a .38-44 and a 1926 Model, both of which had been fitted with a full ramp King sight. That was the soaring part; however, they had been in a fire. The chemicals from fire extinguishers got on both and ate the bluing and produced some pitting. They are still beautiful sixguns and could easily be restored. It's not an original Target Model but oh so close!



Two King-sighted 6½" pre-War
S&Ws. The top sixgun is a
.38/44 while the bottom sixgun
is a .44 Special Model 1926.

GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



WHY ARE WE ARMED?

Forget about why we Americans are armed for a moment. Don't give any thought to the reasoning of the Founding Fathers and what they were doing when they drafted, then passed, the Second Amendment. Disregard the court cases, arguments, myths and fears — push all that aside. You care about these, sure, and see it as essential. You latch your Second Amendment hopes on those sorts of things. But surprise — none of that matters. It simply doesn't matter to society's adversaries — criminals who arm themselves.

They Walk Among Us

It's already well-established gun control doesn't work. Criminals the world over are already armed. The cause? It's because the Chinese invented gunpowder in the 9th century. Add centuries of human ingenuity and here we are. The Founders are in no way responsible for armed villains around the world and they're certainly not responsible for it here. The criminals are responsible solely and completely. They choose and acquire weapons then stand outside of control. If gunpowder ceased to exist villains would remain. They would switch to edged weapons or clubs. It's not the guns.

We have criminals on some streets (but not all); they're in our schools; they run black ops to provide drugs, sex and anything else a demanding public wants that government forbids. A lapel pin famously says, "Disarm Criminals First." But evidence shows this doesn't work. Splashy public efforts to disarm affect only the good guys, the innocent, the protectors of peace, safety, law, order — essentially you and me. The pretzel gun in front of the U.N. isn't a statement against the armed thugs and tyrants running that place. It's aimed at innocent civilians, us.

Just for the record, the endless delightful global world peace

the pretzel-gun worshippers seek is of course utopian. It exists nowhere. *While the human condition contains what I call the Four Horsemen of Human Havoc — angry, hungry, stupid and wicked — we are doomed to a turbulent world.* Your options are limited, but you do have some. Hungry we might be able to solve, angry only in your dreams with endless psychiatry and soma in the water. But stupid and especially wicked, are part and parcel of this existence. This begins to answer the question I posed when we started. It's about the villains.

It Ain't The Crime ...

Many gun enthusiasts and Second Amendment supporters make the mistaken assumption we are armed to protect ourselves from them ... "the criminal element." While true, it's short-sighted and incomplete. Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison and the rest were well aware of the self-defense values of firearms. They faced dangers in a new land, wild animals on four and two legs, criminal activity in a largely lawless land, often with too much distance between them to simply call for help. Self-reliance and independence required the ability to police your own surroundings. It was simply understood. That right and reality of self-defense harkens all the way back to the Bible. But self-defense was not the main driver of their desire for an armed public.

The fundamental reason the Founders wanted us armed is for balance of power. *Self-governance had never been tried.* Worldwide, rulers were armed. In classic time-honored style, they use that capability, that monopoly of force, against the people they supposedly serve. Power corrupts — and possession of power frees those with it to act as they please — a two-way street! *By spreading power around, freeing everyone, we achieved a level of liberty unimagined.*

Democidal Tendencies

If you're reading this, you likely know genocides of the past were pre-

ceded by disarmament campaigns, orchestrated by "officials," who then go on to commit atrocities and democide once the population is de-fanged. Democide — murder by government — claims the very top mass-murder statistic. Street thugs and police don't hold a candle. Last century it cost 262 million lives by the best estimates available (U.S. historian Rudolph Rummel). The slaughtered were generally defenseless. That right there is why we're armed. And that right there is why America is and remains the land of the free: because we're armed. Thoughts of messing with us gives villains pause.

Now this isn't to say even this system is perfect, far from it, and we all know it. While anti-rights monsters will insist our unique right to arms — exceedingly well-implemented — has something to do with the fact criminals exist, we know better. Malfeasants are active and sometimes horrific but being armed and being evil are unrelated concepts. America's 100 million gun owners basically never shoot anything but targets and food. The anti-rights bigots may holler guns kill people. We know guns protect people. Guns are good. *If guns disappeared, we would have to re-invent them.*

Guns keep the peace. Action-at-a-distance from a firearm far exceeds the value of a broadsword. Sam Colt's great equalizer works on the person-to-person scale, and writ large, against the entire artifice of civilization. Villains will conduct their villainy. Accept it. Guns, and people who bear them righteously, watch over and protect all of us. And that's why we're armed.



Award-winning author Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for nearly three decades. See his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.

GUNNYSACK

QUICKLOAD
REVOLVER
SPEEDLOADERS

The folks at QuickLoad have brought some new ideas to an old challenge — reloading DA revolvers. The RoundLoader has just one moving part and requires minimal dexterity to release its cartridges into the cylinder. When you stuff cartridges into the unit, they “lock” into place as the three-bladed base unit pops up to make room. To release them into your revolver ... just push. That’s it. The expanded base “pops” and leaves the cartridges right where you want them — fully seated in the cylinder. The neat thing is there is no turning or gravity required.

The StripLoader uses a staggered approach, kind of like double-stack magazines. Present each segment of two cartridges to the cylinder and load both at once. Neat-o.

Both units come with protective covers. I leave those at home as I don’t want to mess with other things, but they’re handy for longer-term storage. QuickLoadSpeedLoader.com

WARCAT
TACTICAL
APPENDIX
HOLSTER

There’s a new holster brand on the market — Warcat Tactical — and they’re breaking cost barriers in the most desirable direction. The company has invested in streamlined manufacturing processes to offer an appendix carry rig with all the options for just \$17.76. Yup, you heard that right.

The polymer material is ultra-thin yet durable and molded to your specific pistol type. When ordering, you’ll see the current fits available. Also, you specify whether you want an optic-ready version. Those included a molded optic cover protecting your glass and minimizing dust. The holster is ride-height and cant adjustable, features adjustable retention pressure and is available for 1.5" and 1.75" belts.

A removable concealment claw and a foam wedge are included to make appendix carry more comfortable. Usually, these two options cost almost as much as a basic holster. Warcat.com



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EYEPAL PEEP SIGHTING SYSTEM

I'm blind. Well, not entirely, but things have been getting fuzzier ever since 12:01 a.m. on the day of my 40th birthday. Important things, like front sights and targets. The human eye is designed to focus at one distance at a time, but youthful eyeballs can compensate and switch back and forth better.

If you want to see your rear sight, front sight and target clearly, check out a time-tested solution — a small aperture. The EyePal is a vinyl-like “sticker” but without gooey stuff. It adheres to your shooting glasses and presents a tiny hole through which you view sights and targets. Optical magic brings your sights and target into much sharper focus. It's similar to a small aperture on a camera — the in-focus depth of field is much deeper, thus capturing a larger area.

Versions are available for rifle and pistol sighting, and take it from me; these are indispensable for precision shooting over iron sights. I use them for all accuracy testing. EyePalUSA.com



DILLON PRECISION SEATING DIES

The first thing you'll notice is the rounded taper cut into the mouth of the die. It presents a massive target to a rising cartridge case with a bullet on top. More importantly, for those occasions where you have to create a bit extra case mouth belling (lead bullets, progressive setups, etc.), this funnel starts the process of closing the case mouth as the bullet is seated. If you've ever heard the “clunk” of a case mouth catching on the base of a seating die or a similar effect from a slightly crooked bullet, those days are over. This die gently guides everything into place.



It also uses a quick-release system freeing the guts of the seating plug without any change to your depth setting. You can clean the interior of the die, getting

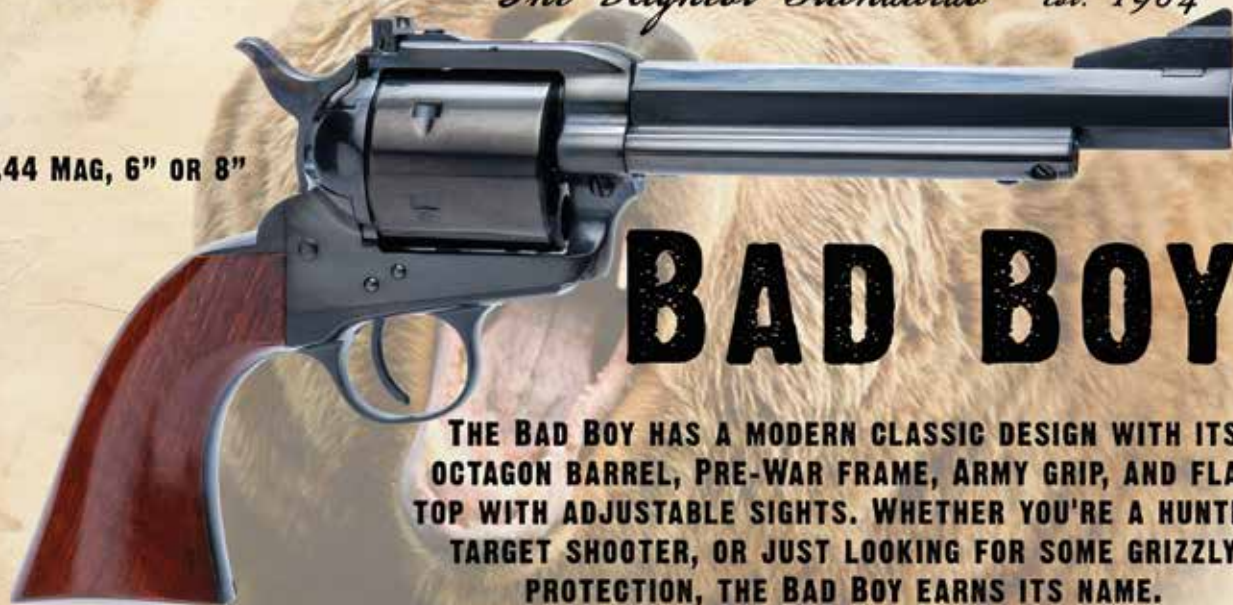
lead shavings or lube out, without the need for readjustment of seating depth. The seating plug is also reversible. DillonPrecision.com



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DANIEL BOONE'S SHOOTINGS

SITUATION: A famed American frontiersman is seen as the slayer of many and perhaps a racist. Actual history suggests otherwise.

LESSON: Sometimes, there is no choice but to kill in defense of self or other innocent persons and the most righteous killing can still leave emotional scars.

Daniel Boone (1734–1820) was one of America's most iconic heroes when my generation grew up. A skilled frontiersman and explorer, he was credited (among other things) as having opened the Cumberland Gap area to settlement and (as seen by many) the founder of Kentucky.

The Native Americans of that place and time did not take kindly to the appropriation of their lands, and Boone became a pivotal figure in the Indian Wars. *Over time, legends can distort history.* Through the 19th century and deep into the 20th, those buckskin-wearing riflemen were lionized as the heroes who built the foundation of the country — killing many enemies. Dan'l Boone was portrayed as a victorious leader in battle, leaving behind him a long trail of dead “savages.”

Beginning as a hunter, using primitive weapons on small game as a little boy and with his first musket at approximately age 12, Boone was indisputably a professional hunter most of his life, killing huge numbers of animals for meat to feed many, as well as their skins. Just as indisputably, he was one of the great marksmen of his time, winning the shooting matches that were perhaps the dominant sport of the period. Boone biographer Lyman Cooper Draper wrote, Boone called his favorite rifle “Tick-Licker” because the frontiersman claimed it could “flick a tick off a bear's snout at a hundred yards.”

Robert Morgan wrote in *Boone: A Biography*: “In his late teens Daniel Boone became widely known in the Yadkin Valley as an expert trapper and hunter, a deadly marksman. When he brought his furs into the county seat at Salisbury to trade for lead and powder, a new gun or new horse, he liked to take part in shooting matches, which were very popular. Boone seemed to always win and was so sure of his prowess he demonstrated trick shots, such as holding out his rifle with one hand only and hitting the target.” (1)

This skill made him an invaluable member of the militias that fought the indigenous tribes, and over the decades, Boone was part of many such organizations. Yet, it appears, he was more of a strategist than a killer of men.

Fiction depicted him stacking corpses like cordwood. History shows otherwise. In his own time, he was much more a diplomat than a warrior, and for this very reason, seen by some of his contemporary whites as a traitor.

Moreover, a collective review of his history indicates Boone killed no more than three of his enemies, and perhaps as few as one.

Rescue by Lethal Force

Your daughter is kidnapped by people with evil intent. With no recourse to police or any other government entity, you follow the kidnappers, track them down, and kill them in righteous combat to rescue your child.

This theme has stirred American hearts for centuries. Consider the popular movie *Taken* starring rabidly anti-gun actor Liam Neeson. Long before that, novelist James Fenimore Cooper made the plot a cornerstone of *Last of the Mohicans* in 1826.

Cooper took the plot from real life, specifically, the real life of Daniel Boone. Here's how it happened.

It began on July 14, 1776, near the settlement of Boonesborough, so named for a reason. Elizabeth Callaway, 16, had gone in a canoe to pick flowers with two 14-year-old girls, her sister Frances and Daniel Boone's daughter Jemima. They drifted to shore near a quintet of Native Americans, two Cherokee and three Shawnee. The latter dove into the water and seized the canoe.

Continued on next page

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AYOOB FILES

Recounts Morgan, “Fanny Callaway beat (one) over the head with the paddle until it broke. Betsy joined her in hitting the brave, and the other Indians waded in and threatened to overturn the canoe unless the girls got out.

Once the girls were led ashore the canoe was pushed back into the stream so they couldn’t use it to escape. The three girls began screaming, hoping to be heard at Boonesborough, a quarter of a mile upstream on the other side of the river. One of the Indians grabbed Betsy Callaway by the hair and indicated he would scalp her if the girls did not shut up.” (2)

Boone himself, and others, did hear the distant screams, but by the time he could grab his rifle and reconnoiter, the kidnappers and their victims were already disappearing out of sight. Boone assembled a small number of men as an impromptu posse.

They pursued. The Indians, led by a low-ranking Shawnee chief named Hanging Maw, knew they would. Tensions rose.

The kidnappers crossed rivers to break off their tracks and repeatedly changed their route. The girls had let slip the word about Dad, and Hanging Maw triumphantly claimed, “We have done pretty well for old Boone this time.”

These young daughters of the American Frontier *were no delicate flowers*. In the days that followed, they did all they could to slow down their captors. Jemima, who had suffered a cut on her foot, exaggerated her injury to decelerate the group’s travel. Put on horseback, though all were experienced riders, the girls surreptitiously caused pain to the horse to make the animal buck them off, forcing the group to travel primarily on foot. When the Indians weren’t looking, the captives broke twigs and branches to signal the way they had gone, and one of them tore strips off her clothing to mark a trail for their rescuers to follow. Led by Boone, the pursuers unerringly picked up on those little clues and remained relentlessly on the track.

By the third day of the ordeal, the perpetrators’ food was running low, and the quintet of kidnappers risked a gunshot to kill a buffalo and take its hump, considered a delicacy in that time and place. They set up camp and began to cook the meat.

It was then the rescuers arrived. Morgan quotes a source from the period: “One in particular, big indn: (sic) called Big Jimmy was spitting up meat on the side opposite to them. Fanny looked at him to see how he fixed his meat. She saw the blood burst out of his breast before she heard the gun.” (3)

One of the posse, William Smith,

had fired sooner than he should — some historians believe it was an unintended discharge, others simply a bad shot that missed — but an instant later one John Floyd unleashed the well-aimed bullet that struck the improbably-named Big Jimmy.

Historians Bob Drury and Tom Clavin describe the scene in their new book *Blood and Treasure: Daniel Boone and the Fight for America’s First Frontier*: “The Indian camp was pandemonium in an instant. One of the Shawnees lunged at the girls with his war club. It narrowly missed Jemima’s head. As he drew it back a second time he fell, shot through the chest by either Boone or the surveyor (John) Floyd, who had fired simultaneously. Another Shawnee was hit and toppled backward into the flames but somehow recovered and lurched into the thick brush. By now Boone’s entire party was descending on the camp shouting their war cries. The two remaining Indians scattered into the cane.” (4)

Writes Morgan, “After they had calmed down Boone remembered that he had shot an Indian and pointed to the place. A rifle was found and drops of blood led into the woods. Two bodies of Shawnees were discovered, one shot by Floyd and one, possibly, by Boone.” (5)

All three of the young women had been successfully rescued, unharmed.

Shoot The Moon

In 1778, during the Siege of Boonesborough, Boone apparently took particular umbrage at a Shawnee brave who continually “mooned” him and the other defenders of the fortified complex. Drury and Clavin describe it thus:

“... a Shawnee — recognizable from his bear-greased topknot — climbed to the fork of a tree atop the ridgeline on the opposite side of the Kentucky River 260 yards from the fort. He proceeded to repeatedly arc musket balls over the walls. Given the distance and the dwindling gunpowder stores forcing the Indians to under-charge their muskets, his shots were more nuisance than a mortal threat. What most riled the defenders, however, was the warrior’s habit of firing off a round and then turning and lifting his breechclout to waggle and pat his bare ass at the pioneers. Boone was summoned.

“After surveying the situation from the fort’s rear parapet, Boone sent for a rifle of a slightly larger caliber than his own ‘widdier maker.’ *He packed it with an extra charge of black powder and loaded it with a 1-oz., .66-caliber ball, a bit heavier than usual.* His shot was sublime and sent the Indian tumbling from his perch.” (6)

And More

Drury and Clavin describe, “On another occasion, Boone was hunting

by himself near the Blue Licks when a musket ball cracked a tree branch above his head. He dived into a thicket, worked himself down a small stream, cocked his rifle, and waited. Soon enough he spotted two painted braves making their way down the middle of the creek. For a brief instant, both Indians lined up in his sights, and he fired. His ball passed through the head of the first and ricocheted into the shoulder of the second, who crawled away." (7)

In another skirmish, reports Morgan, "As Boone led his men on foot up the flank of the hill, an Indian rose from behind a stump and Boone raised his gun. Boone was carrying a special fowling piece that he had loaded with extra powder and several bullets as well as buckshot, appropriate for fighting at close range. Before he pulled the trigger he said to the gun, 'You be there!' as though giving an order, and after the blast the Indian fell dead. He later told his son Nathan that 'he was only positive of having killed this one' Indian in his long life." (8), (9)

Crunching the Numbers

Wait a second ... Did he claim he only killed one?

Some historians believe the "mooner" shot in the siege actually fell victim to another of the fort's defenders. In the rescue of the kidnapped young women, more than one man was firing when at least one of the slain perpetrators went down. Some believe Boone was presumed to be the one who scored the hit because of his famous marksmanship. But there's the fella who took that extra heavy load of whose death Boone said he was "positive." The mooner guy is a "possible," and the second slain Shawnee kidnapper a "probable." When two men shoot at the same perpetrator and only one hits, likelihood goes to the one who is famous for his marksmanship. There is also the brave who, at the creek, was shot through and through the head when Boone made his "two-in-one" shot. Even if the trajectory was only through the maxillo-facial structure and missed the brain, the poor state of medical care at that time and place militated against survival of such a wound.

Boone Wounded

Engage in enough fights and you'll get hit, whether the conflict involves fists or weapons. Daniel Boone felt the steel and the lead of his enemies multiple times.

The Siege of Boonesborough began after an aborted treaty attempt outside the walls of the fortified town. The treaty appeared to have been a done deal and bloodshed averted when the Indians approached the whites as

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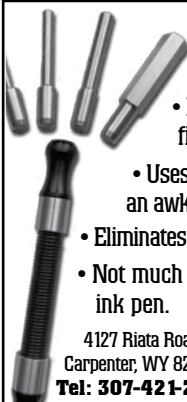
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if to shake hands, but then grabbed them in bear hugs. Weapons came out. Boone managed to break free from his own antagonist, the Indian chief Blackfish, but another warrior sank a tomahawk into his back. Fortunately for the pioneer, the blade sliced muscle but apparently did not penetrate the thoracic cavity. He made it back to safety, had his wound tended to and continued the fight.

In that same battle, shortly after having shot the Indian who had mooned him, Boone took a bullet himself. Details are sketchy, but the wound was apparently peripheral — his daughter patched him up and he returned to the fight yet again.

In 1777, Boone and a dozen friends were lured into an ambush by an estimated 100 Indians. Morgan explains, "The men fired into the Shawnees and then swung their rifles as clubs. The Boonesborough men fought with fury, but Boone himself was shot in the ankle and the bone was broken. As Boone fell, an Indian rushed to tomahawk him but was shot by (Simon) Kenton, who then used his rifle to club another warrior attempting to scalp Boone. The powerful Kenton picked up Boone and carried him to the fort ..." (8)

Boone clearly had tremendous recuperative powers and luck was on his side. Though some describe his ankle as "shattered," he recovered enough to remain ambulatory, productively walking the woods well into old age and until *his death at 86, at a time when average life expectancy was somewhere between 30 and 40 years.*

Lessons

Daniel Boone came early in a long line of American heroes who were deadly marksmen in mortal combat because they had started shooting at a young age and practiced competitive shooting. The first establishes and ingrains fundamentals and the second makes shooting accurately under pressure the norm.

Toward the end of his life, Boone told people he felt sad about having killed men — this despite having done so in righteous cause. He lost more than one loved one to the Indians, including a 16-year-old son who was tortured and then murdered by them. Still, he was troubled by having ended human life.

One way he handled it appears to have been through faith. The son of Quakers, he did not follow that exact belief system himself, but was never without his two favorite books: the Bible, and oddly enough, *Gulliver's Travels*. Daniel Boone was a forgiving man. Jemima was not his natural daughter; her biological father was one of Boone's brothers, who had taken up with Daniel's wife Rebecca during one

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of his long absences. He understood and accepted. Daniel Boone himself had reportedly taken an Indian woman as a temporary wife during a long period when he was a captive of Chief Blackfish. Though several of his loved ones had died horrible deaths at the hands of the Indians, Boone said near the end of his life, "The Indians have been kinder to me than the whites."

A diplomat who saved many lives on both sides by his promises to, and treaties with, the native Americans who were in league with the British during the War of Independence, Boone was falsely accused of treason over that. Though he was tried and exonerated, he considered it the greatest shame of his life. The lesson there? The pain of a false allegation remains, even when the lie is proven to be such. We see something similar today in another context. When someone goes through the ordeal of a murder trial after shooting in self-defense and is found not guilty. Fools say, "Well, he was acquitted, so it's no big thing." That is much like telling a cancer survivor, "Well, you're alive, so cancer is no big thing." Daniel Boone had bitter reason to understand this principle.

The first thing modern historians tell us about Boone these days is *he never wore a coonskin cap*. In life, he actually told people he hated the damn things, finding them both heavy and ugly. He preferred a cap of beaver felt, with no stupid tail hanging down the back of his neck. It was later depictions creating this image, perhaps most notably Fess Parker playing the title character in TV's *Daniel Boone* series wearing virtually the exact same costume he had worn in the Walt Disney stories in which he starred as Davy Crockett.

In similar fashion, his reputation for killing Indians was apparently greatly exaggerated. Read up on the man: He was a fascinating American personality and a man of his times. Daniel Boone took pride in being more a peacemaker than a maker of war.

Oh, and about the body count? Another biographer, John Mack Faragher, has Boone admitting to killing three men, all native Americans. (10)



Footnotes:(1) Morgan, Robert. Boone: A Biography, Chapel Hill, NC: Workman Publishing, 2007, p. 39. (2) *Ibid.*, p. 203. (3) *Ibid.*, p. 208. (4) Drury, Bob and Clavin, Tom. Blood and Treasure: Daniel Boone and the Fight for America's First Frontier, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2021, p. 218. (5) Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 209. (6) Drury and Clavin, *op. cit.* p. 207. (7) *Ibid.*, p. 317. (8) Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 219 (9) *Ibid.*, p. 321. (10) Faragher, John Mack. Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer, NY: Holt, 1992.

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The SA-35 is on the left. Note the sear lever (red arrow) is slender without the larger plate (yellow) on the older Hi-Power (right). The larger plate operates a firing pin block which moves out of the way as the trigger is pressed.

going to hurt some to understand.

To top things off, there's an additional small spring and plunger arrangement behind the trigger working with the magazine to allow the gun to fire if the mag is inserted, but not if it's out. Oh, and there's also a firing pin block tied into the top side of the sear lever on some models. When you press the trigger, moving the sear lever down, that moves the block allowing the firing pin to move forward when struck by the hammer. All of these bits rub and move against each other and any tiny glitch in fit, finish, polish, etc. causes a scratchy, gritty and heavy trigger pull. This is why Hi-Powers have always been known to have triggers more akin to dragging your boot across a gravel driveway than the "clean break" of a sear.

Springfield's SA-35 does away with the magazine safety and the firing pin block, helping to smooth things out right off the bat. They also take care, assuring the bearing surfaces are well attended to. In my tests with a stock SA-35, I found the trigger press to be about like those in my custom Hi-Powers — which are good. No gravel driveways present.

Barrel Locking

Another key difference is the 1911 uses the famous "swinging link" held by the slide release cross-pin. After firing, as the slide moves back the barrel remains locked for a short distance, allowing pressure to lower. Then the link "pulls" the barrel down and out of the locking recesses in the slide. The slide continues back ejecting the empty, then slams forward due to the recoil spring, picking up the next round. As the slide goes home, that same link forces the barrel up and back into the locking lug recesses.

On the Hi-Power, the swinging



link is gone. There's a metal camming surface built into the frame just above the trigger location. Note in the photo, there's a cam on the bottom of the barrel but the slide release cross-pin isn't involved with it. After firing, the slide moves back with the barrel captured as in the 1911; however, at meeting the camming surface in the frame, the barrel is pulled down out of the locking lug recesses. The slide does the eject-and-load thing, and as the slide moves forward, the barrel is cammed back up into the lugs. A touch of Browning here is the fact he got rid of two moving parts (the 1911 swinging link and link pin).

If you're having trouble getting a feel for this, jump onto YouTube and find one of those slow-motion animated videos of the innards of a 1911 and a Hi-Power. It'll really help put things in perspective. In the meantime, keep staring at the pics and holding imaginary guns up in the air in front of you while you talk to yourself and ponder on it all. You might also do it when you're alone in the garage so people don't point and stare.

Feel free to drop us a note at editor@americanhandgunner.com if you have questions or would like to see something specific in this series on understanding how things work.



For info: Springfield-Armory.com; Cylinder-Slide.com

A 1911 frame (lower) and barrel showing the swinging link (red arrow). The slide release cross pin (yellow) goes through the hole in the link, pulling (camming) the barrel out of the slide locking lugs after firing. It also forces the barrel back into those lugs as the slide returns to battery. Browning got rid of the swinging link and the link pin on the Hi-Power. Smart fellow.



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HI-POWER HI-JINKS: IS IT LIKE A 1911?

When Springfield Armory introduced their SR-35 late in 2020 you'd have thought it was the second coming of something. Well, I guess it was actually. Browning had nixed the design some years before, and shooters were hungry for a high quality example of the same ever since. Smart marketers they are, Springfield delivered the goods and promptly sold out — and I'll assume they are pretty much still selling out.

But why do we care so much about this 80-odd-year-old design? One reason is because John Browning did the basic design work on it. I do wonder had he not been involved at all would the Hi-Power just be yet another in a long series of now defunct military pistols? Who knows? Nonetheless, if you peer at the design under a microscope and try to remain honestly objective, it does have a couple of interesting points.

First off, it's pretty much not like a 1911 at all. It's single action, has some of those barrel locking lug things, a thumb safety and loads with a magazine, but things pretty much stop there. Besides, hundreds of other designs have all those bits too. While



Springfield's new SA-35 (blue) and a custom Robar Hi-Power done for Roy about 30 years ago.

This Cylinder & Slide ambi-safety (about \$88) can be easily retro-fitted to Hi-Powers and is among many high-quality after-market parts offered by the C&S shop. Most "beater" Hi-Powers can be brought back to life!

Interestingly enough, the slide assembly from the Robar gun fit just fine on the SA-35 frame but wouldn't fire since the Robar gun has a firing pin block.

That stirrup then bears on the sear, ultimately. When the trigger is pressed, it moves this stirrup to the rear, tripping the sear. There's lots else going on too, but that's the gist.

In the Hi-Power's case, it gets more complicated. Put your thinking cap on and stare at the photos while we talk.

The Hi-Power's Action

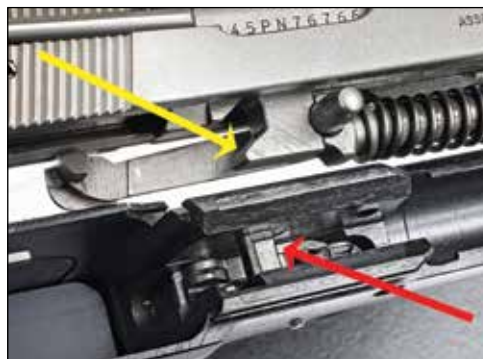
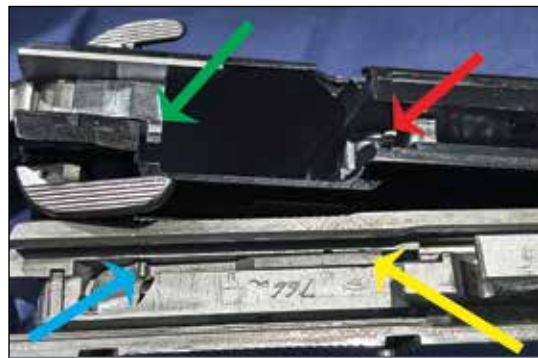
There's no grip safety on an HP, so there's no way a trigger stirrup can slide out the rear. Nix that idea. So when you press the trigger (which, by the way, pivots on a pin at the top, also different from a 1911), that action raises a small bar (trigger lever) up, eventually pushing against the sear lever (which is in the underside of the slide). The sear lever pivots upward, causing the other end (toward the rear of the slide) to push down back toward the frame. A little nub on the lever presses against a corresponding spot on the sear (holding the hammer back), and if you keep pressing the trigger, it will eventually push the sear "off" allowing the gun to fire. It's all a bit like a "knee bone is connected to the thigh bone" situation. I warned you this was

people dearly love the Hi-Power, I think many (most?) of those who also shoot 1911-style guns just sort of leave their minds blank when it comes to honestly understanding how a Hi-Power functions. You load it, aim it, pull the trigger, "then a miracle occurs" and the gun fires and loads another. Repeat as needed.

But what's really occurring as you pull that trigger?

Right off the bat, the trigger system is entirely different from a 1911. The 1911 uses a trigger connected to a stirrup wrapping around the magazine.

We're looking at the frame (top) and the underside of the slide. To fire, you press the trigger, moving the trigger lever (red arrow) up, pressing against the end of the sear lever (yellow) in the underside of the slide. The lever pivots pushing the opposite end (blue) against the nub on the sear (green) pushing it out of engagement with the hammer — firing the gun. Lots going on there!



Frame (lower) and slide (above). The fixed cam in the frame (red arrow) forces the barrel down, out of the locking lugs in the slide top by camming on the lug on the bottom of the barrel (yellow). The frame cam also pushes the barrel back into place as the slide moves back into battery.

Continued on page 80

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