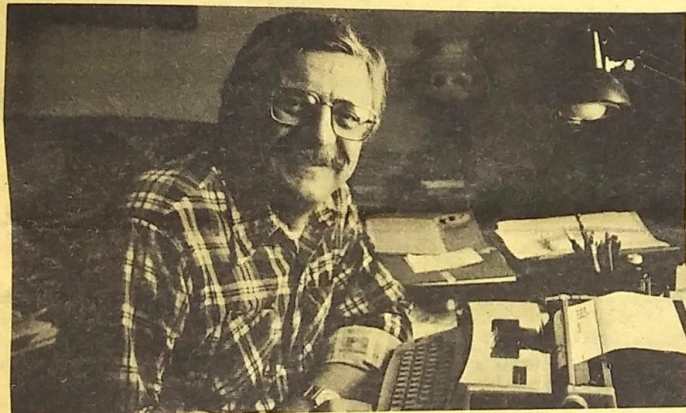




THE SIXGUNNER



MY CORNER

By J. D. Jones

First, I'd like to thank the hundreds of friends for their notes and calls of congratulations regarding the Outstanding American Handgunner Award.

I feel the OAHA Foundation is definitely worthwhile and deserves all the support it can get. Membership is \$15.00 annually. (OAHA, P. O. Box 153, Station C, Buffalo, NY 14209).

HHI AFRICA . . . We did it!

Karen and Mark Hampton, Larry Wise, John Rhinehart, Ray Guarisco and I had a terrific time in Zimbabwe with Don Price and his staff. We did encounter several problems. First and foremost, the trip was too short! Second, the trip was too short. Ditto. Ditto. Everything went slick as could be. Hunting was fantastic. I counted 75 Kudu bulls in eight days and quit counting. This is real hunting. Find the track of a good bull. Get on it. Stay on it till you kill him or lose him. Trackers are nothing short of phenomenal. We worked primarily with one professional hunter and a three man tracker team. Sometimes that wasn't enough when it came to loading an animal into the truck.

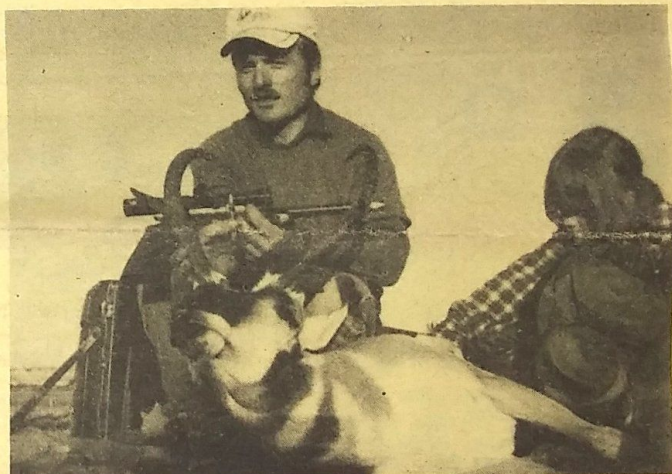
One African trip doesn't make anyone an expert, but it sure is an eye opener. It didn't take very long to

realize the .44 magnum revolver is not much of a gun for Africa. It's suitable for watching waterholes and that's about it with limited use as a weapon of opportunity and even less as a "back-up". We found the 315-320 grain cast bullet is definitely the only way to go in the .44 as nothing else gave the necessary penetration. Recovered FMJ bullets looked like misshapen pebbles and gave about half the penetration of the 320 grain .44 cast bullets.

I've always felt the stories of how tough African game is were pure rubbish. Logically, there is no reason an African animal of equal size should be tougher than an American animal. That's where logic fails. They are tougher and will go further with identical hits than equivalent American game. I'll give a quick example. Blue Wildebeest, 125 yard shot. Dead center through the lungs. 400 grain Speer at 1650 fps from a .45-70. Over a mile later, caught up with him and put him down. His track showed two blood drops and no other sign of a hit. He simply dropped back to become the last animal in the herd.

Next issue, will devote a lot of coverage to the hunt. Yes, there will be

(Continued On Page 2)



ANTELOPE

By Tom Shippy, Hudson, WY

Antelope hunting for me usually begins around 4:00 or 4:30 the morning of the hunt, with breakfast and then an hour's drive to my area located about 60 miles south of where I live. This varies slightly in that I sometimes elect to sleep in the van near where I plan to hunt. My wife, Bev, and our two daughters camped out with me early this season when I shot two does. In most areas in Wyoming for the past two years or so, additional doe fawn permits have been available. In fact, even if you are unsuccessful in the regular drawing, resident or non-resident, there are still approximately 14,000 permits, either sex, available on a first-come, first-served basis. Then there are 42,000 additional permits, usually doe or fawn only, after the regular drawing. According to the Wyoming Wildlife magazine, there are about 300,000 pronghorn antelope in Wyoming (just a few years ago, this was the human population of the state). There were an estimated 90,000 antelope harvested in Wyoming during

the 1982 season.

This weekend, my wife's sister, her husband and boys arrived on Friday and the plan was to drive out, look for a buck and then maybe settle for a doe if a good buck couldn't be found. Well, no one was really excited, including me, about an early start after staying up Friday night. I had just received a Ranging rangefinder, so by the time we calibrated it at the range, my usual 5:00 a.m. "charge" turned into an 11:00 "stumble". We looked over several promising locations, glassed some other places and managed to get a four-wheel drive stuck for an hour or so. After picnicing (this hunt was more low key than my usual hunts), we decided to drive to another spot before heading in. Four to five miles down the road, we spotted a buck that looked better than any I'd seen this season, about 400 yards off the highway with about 15 or 20 other antelope. This was private land, so I drove into the rancher's front yard and

(Continued On Page 2)

another next year. Probably June. Yes, we will fill it up early. Get your reservations in now.

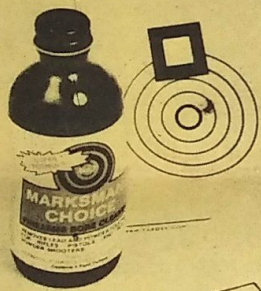
Ohio Shooters Supply (7532 Tyler Blvd., Mentor, OH 44060) has expanded their line of cast bullets considerably since their last coverage in THE SIXGUNNER. They have a new 120 grain 9mm, 180 grain .357, 240 grain .44 and 255 grain .45. Their flyer is free.

Before leaving on the African trip, I put several boxes of ammo through the stainless Dan Wesson .41. It handled everything from the 170 Sierra through 275 grain JDJ cast bullets very well. The D.W. .357 Maximums are being shipped now and have an extra barrel packaged with them.

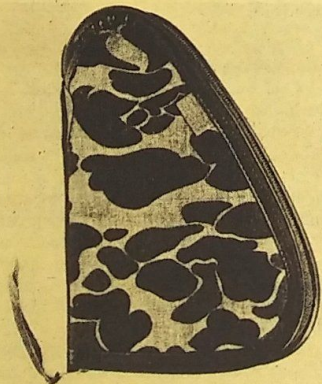
California's deer season opened July 9th and hunters may now use handguns chambered in .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum and .44 Magnum or other pistols and revolvers with a muzzle energy of at least 698 ft/lbs. in factory ammunition. No special permit is required. Anyone know what the situation is on wildcat calibers?

Indiana now has lifetime hunting and fishing licenses available at what appears to be a reasonable cost.

Bruno Shooters Supply, 10 Fifth St., Kelayres, PA 18231 has rifle and pistol brass brushes in just about any caliber at \$15.60 per dozen and will make any size you want for a minimum order of 200.



Marksman's Inc., P.O. Box 598, Chesterland, OH 44026 has a new Marksman's Choice fast acting bore cleaner and conditioner that removes powder and copper fouling and lifts carbon and lead deposits. It will remove rust and plastic wad residue and black powder fouling. A 4 ounce bottle is \$5.95 + shipping.



Weather Shield Sports Equipment, P. O. Box 277, Charlevoix, MI 49720 has Camo pistol cases in a canvas cover with a lining of natural acrylic shearing treated to resist moisture. Barrel length up to 7" are \$7.95.

Russ Maloni of Russwood Custom Pistol Grips (40 Sigman Lane, Elma, NY 14059. Phone (716) 652-7131) sent a copy of his new \$2.00 color brochure. Russ offers the finest in exotic wood grips at exceptionally low prices.

A few of his "normal" woods are Gaboon and Macassar Ebony, Zebra, Tulip, Padouck as well as orange, red, black and purple Coco Bolo. Prices start at about \$50.00 and if you want something really fancy, I'm sure Russ can handle it!

The new Stoeger Shooters Bible is out. 576 pages of info on most aspects of the shooting sports. It's a reference too good to miss.

The GUN DIGEST is also now available. It now boasts 472 pages and while it also has a comprehensive catalog section, it contains more articles than the BIBLE. The two books' formats are different as is the greatest part of the contents. Both should be included in any decent reference library as well as for entertainment reading.

Safari Club International will provide special recognition for sporting trophies taken with bow, handgun and muzzle loader in the upcoming Record Book of Trophy Animals. This book will list approximately 15,000 trophy animals. I hope this step is a help to the HHI Book of Trophy Animals. Even if it isn't, it will give recognition to the guys that did it in a more challenging manner.

The Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh has awarded a \$50,000 grant to the S.C.I. Conservation Fund for its American Wilderness Leadership School. The grant is for payment against the mortgage of the school which is located near Jackson, WY.



During 1983, sportsmen will have another opportunity to obtain a high quality replica of a famous Remington "Bullet" knife.

This year, as part of a special promotion, a guaranteed supply of the "Baby Bullet" knives has been set aside for sale at one-half price to anyone purchasing a new Remington shotgun or centerfire rifle before the end of the year. Here's how outdoorsmen and collectors can be assured of obtaining one of these knives at attractive savings.

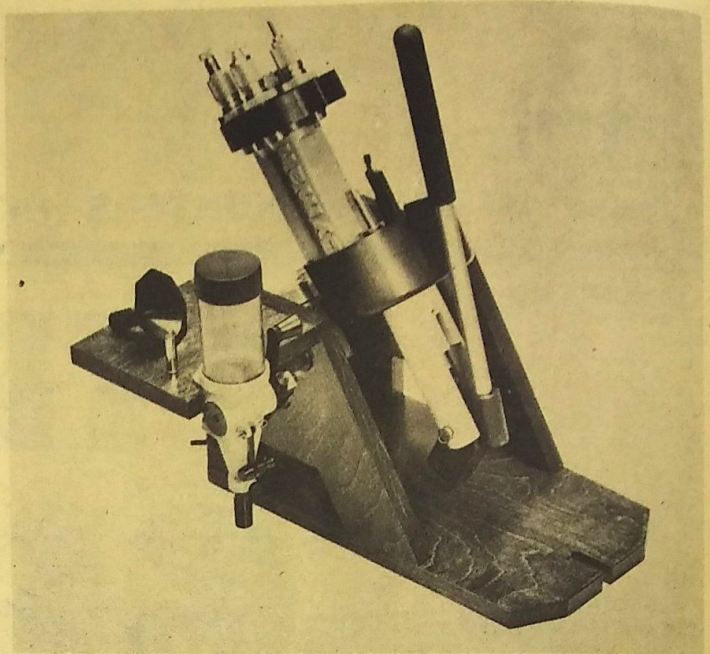
Anyone purchasing a Remington shotgun or centerfire rifle from a participating dealer before December 31, 1983, should obtain a dated sales receipt and special coupon filled out by the dealer. He then sends the sales receipt, signed coupon and a check for \$19.95, payable to Remington Arms Company, to Remington, P. O. Box 9705, Bridgeport, CT 06699.

Other individuals not purchasing a Remington shotgun or centerfire rifle can still obtain a "Baby Bullet" knife by sending a check for the full price of \$39.95 to the same address.

(Continued from Page 1)

in what turned out to be the hardest part of the hunt, battled my way through four dogs to his door step. He seemed tickled that I would be willing to rid him of one of the "goats" feeding on his meadow. Actually, he normally has very few antelope — these were driven from his neighbors by hunters.

My brother-in-law, with the rangefinder in hand, followed me around behind the barn. I tried to lie down and



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The ORGANIZER from Lyman Products Corporation is both a compact reloading station and a useful accessory. It can be mounted on any work table or bench with bolts or C-clamps.

It will be particularly appreciated by reloaders working in restricted areas, those who load at the range, and those who want to keep one or more pieces of equipment permanently mounted for easy availability.

Because of its three-position tilt-top, the ORGANIZER can be used with ALL popular metallic presses. It is an ideal platform for a resizer-lubricator. The ORGANIZER can also be used as a rifle rest for sighting-in, chronographing loads, etc.

The ORGANIZER is available in either of two kits: finished or unfinished. All wood parts of the former are stained and varnished at the factory. Holes are pre-drilled and counter-sunk as appropriate. Assembly takes a few minutes and requires only a Phillips head screwdriver and wrench. Instructions are included.

Unfinished ORGANIZER Kit, \$34.95.

Finished ORGANIZER Kit, \$49.95. Send today for FREE 40 page full color Lyman catalog.

For additional information, please contact: Mr. C. Kenneth Ramage, Lyman Products Corporation, Route 147, Middlefield, CT 06455. Phone (203) 349-3421.

found the grass and weeds to be too high, so I eased up by a fence post. Calvin said that the rangefinder showed a little over 200 yards, so I was trying to hold the Contender steady over the fence post top and keep the crosshairs about 4" to 6" wobbly under the rib cage. I was carrying a 14" T/C chambered to 30-40 Ackley. The load, 54 grains of IMR 4350 with 165 grain Hornady boattail, was sighted in to hit dead on at 300 meters. This put it about 10" high at 100 and 200 yards.

I was taking far too long. Calvin was whispering, "Shoot! Shoot!" My sister-in-law came driving up in the van, and the antelope were getting real nervous. I began the squeeze and thought my last sight picture looked good. I was trying to hold the fore-end over the post with my left hand, my right arm was bent, my legs were tiring fast as the post was about a foot too short, and I had the scope mounted too far back. I must have looked like a constipated crab with all the contortions I was going through. The bullet caught the buck high and right of my aiming point, breaking the spine/pelvis. He immediately went down but was trying to drag his hind legs. Not a good clean kill by any means. I ran up and not knowing that I planned to have this one mounted, blasted a large hole through his neck from about 50 feet. Antelope usually look smaller to me up close than from

(Continued on Page 3)

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Caution: all technical data presented herein reflects only the experience of the author using specific equipment under specific circumstances. Such information is intended only as a guide and should be used with caution. Other material may be totally experimental and treated as such. HHI accepts no responsibility for results obtained using data published herein.

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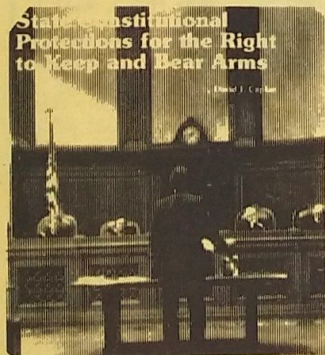
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a distance, but this one still looked pretty good. Hoping that the taxidermist would be a good seamstress, I decided to be careful how I dressed this one out and take him in for mounting.

Measuring his horns in the field, we came up with 15" in length. Later, measuring the horns after they had been off the head for a week showed one horn at 15" and the other closer to 14 3/4". When the SCI scorer officially measured the horns almost seven weeks later, I believe one was 14 3/4" and the other was 14-5/8". I've heard different stories on how much shrinkage occurs with antelope horns. The SCI scorer said that antelope horns shrink more than any others. Another taxidermist said that the game warden told him that antelope horns shrink the least. The SCI score tallied 76. Good enough for the record book.

I've since speculated that during recoil, the fore-end bounced off the top of the post, throwing the shot off. A reply to a reader's question in the *American Rifleman* indicated that this is a possibility with a rifle rested over a hard surface. Their recommendation was to place on hand under the gun. Whether this could have been a factor in my near "rear" miss, I don't know, but of course, I like to think that it was.

Previously this season, I lung shot two does, one a little closer and one about 40 yards further than this buck was. (We stepped off 224 yards to this buck). I used the same sight picture: 4 to 6" under the rib cage. Admittedly, these shots were from steadier positions. One was shot prone with the gun over my backpack and the other from a sitting position with the gun between the knees. Both does took off like they hadn't been hit, ran about 30 yards and fell over dead. That's been my experience with lung shot animals I've shot or seen others shoot over the past several years. The only ones that I've seen drop immediately were hit in the spine. Brain shots would undoubtedly give the same result. Brain and spine shots allow too little room for distance errors. The accelerated heart beat and wobble that seem to appear in the field as opposed to sighting in at the range also make those shots real difficult. I have just about convinced myself to imagine there's a basketball close behind the front shoulder and aim for it. Trouble is, once in a while, it bounces.



'RIGHT TO KEEP ARMS'

Noted pro-gun author and attorney David Caplan has written a new monograph that takes an in-depth look at recent state judicial considerations of the right of private citizens to own and use firearms as it is expressed in state constitutional guarantees.

In *State Constitutional Protections for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms*, Caplan reports that during 1981, courts in both Oregon and In-

diana re-asserted their 1980 decisions holding that their respective state constitutional provisions for a right of the people to bear arms guaranteed an individual right to the private citizen.

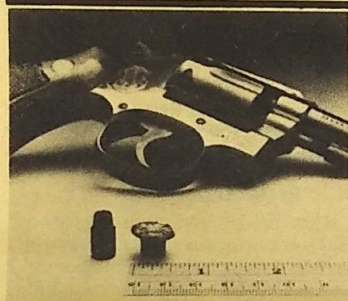
Caplan noted that both the Indiana Schubert decision and the Oregon Kessler decision contained detailed discussions of the scope and policy of the right of the people to keep and bear arms as a private, individual right. Caplan's monograph reviews the historical background of that right and the highlights of those decisions. He discusses the consequent judicial trend toward rejecting the exclusively collective-right theory of the right of the people to keep and bear arms.

The exclusively collective-right theory stands for the proposition that the "right of the people to keep and bear arms" — as expressed in the Second Amendment, or as specified in various ways in thirty-nine state constitutions — is a constitutional provision whose scope is strictly limited to guaranteeing solely a collective right of the organized militia or National Guard.

However, in both the Oregon and Indiana decisions the exclusively collective-right theory was rejected in favor of considering it a private individual constitutional right, as well as a collective right.

These recent individual-right interpretations signal a judicial trend in favor of the individual right of the private citizen to keep and carry arms.

State Constitutional Protections for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms is available for \$2.75 (price includes postage) from the Second Amendment Foundation, James Madison Bldg., 12500 NE Tenth Place, Bellevue, WA 98005.



CHIEF'S SPECIAL

Federal Cartridge Corporation is now offering the "Chief's Special", a .38 Special cartridge with the 125 grain Nyclud semi-wadcutter hollow point bullet. By virtue of the nylon coating on the lead bullet, this cartridge achieves the necessary velocity for maximum expansion without being in the +P pressure category. The 125 grain nylon-coated semi-wadcutter bullet incorporates a large tapered hollow point.

Muzzle velocity from a two-inch revolver barrel is 820 feet per second, and muzzle energy is 190 foot-pounds. Typical bullet expansion in ordnance gelatin at 10 yards is .60 inches. Thus the "Chief's Special" provides a suitable performance alternative to +P ammunition in short barreled handguns.

This cartridge was previously offered by Smith and Wesson which transferred production rights to Federal Cartridge. Designated by the Federal number N38M, this unique load is packed 50 per box in Federal's Benchmark™ tray and is available immediately.

HHI SAFARI

By John Reinhart

Handgun Hunters Int. 1983 Safari to Zimbabwe will soon be history. As I write this brief report, on board my return flight, two HHI hunters should have arrived home, two are enroute home, and J. D. is still in Zimbabwe dusting game.

Five HHI members made the trip, J. D., Larry Wise, Ray Guarisco, Mark Hampton, and myself. Mark's

BRITISH COLUMBIA GUIDES WIN GREENPEACE BATTLE

Thanks in part to assistance from Safari Club International, three British Columbia hunting guides have been granted absolute discharges or acquittal on 18 assault charges filed against them by the anti-hunting Greenpeace organization.

Greenpeace is conducting a campaign to stop sport hunting in the Spatsizi Wilderness Park in north-central B.C., according to Greenpeace President Patrick Moore. Hunting is permitted within this large and remote provincial park, and Ray Collingwood of Skeena Air Guides operates there as an outfitter.

Assault charges were brought following a widely reported incident in August, 1981, when Greenpeace members harassing Collingwood's hunting clients came to blows with guides in a spike camp. Greenpeace has claimed publicly that "to engage in confrontation" is the only way "to end

trophy hunting in B.C." Collingwood and employees Tom Britton and Shawn Boot were jointly charged. Boot was acquitted and Collingwood and Britton given absolute discharges by provincial court judge Ken Scherling in Smithers, B.C.

"It is through the cooperation of SCI that we have been able to sustain our defense financially — and it is the defense of all sportsmen," said Collingwood.

Don Caldwell, Executive Director of the Guide-Outfitters Association in B.C., confirmed that it had been a long, expensive battle, "but hunters came out unquestionably the winners." Collingwood has filed a civil action against Greenpeace, which in turn has counter-sued. The next trial is scheduled for December in Vancouver. Safari Club International will continue to monitor developments and to support Collingwood's defense of the sportsman's cause.

lovely wife, Karen, also accompanied us.

Though a more comprehensive account of the trip will be featured in upcoming issues of *THE SIX-GUNNER*, here is a brief account of the hunt.

In 10 days of hunting, 67 head of game was taken, many of record book proportion. Kudu, sable, cape buffalo, eland, wart hog, bush pig, zebra, wild-beest, bushbuck, impala, baboon, grysbok, steenbuck, duiker, and other game were taken with handguns. Each animal taken by each respective hunter provided a story in itself. J. D. will have a detailed report on a rare breed of jackass, possibly the first such taken with a Hand Cannon. Our hosts, Don and Litty Price, along with their most capable staff, provided us with excellent facilities, food, hunting, and many fond memories to be treasured for a lifetime.

As mentioned earlier, each of us will be submitting more detailed accounts of the hunting once we have had time to get home, have pictures developed, and have gathered our wits together long enough to remember all that we have seen and accomplished.

Several head of game was taken with the new T/C Jaguar rifle in .30-06. Details on this will be forthcoming.

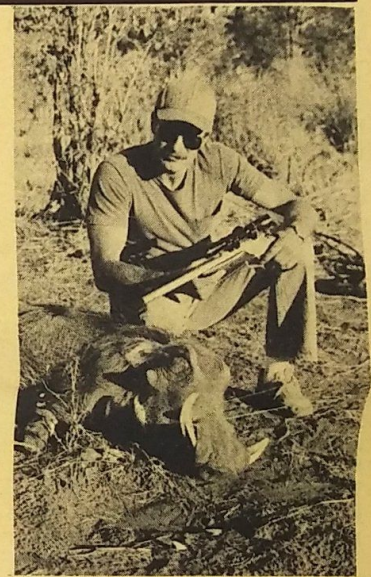
Hunting African game is exciting and hard work. I have the cuts and blisters to prove it!

AFRICA OVERVIEW

By Mark Hampton, Summersville, MO

After spending 13 days with Don and Litty Price, my wife, Karen, and I had a dream come true. We both enjoyed their warm hospitality, clean accommodations and great food, along with the sensational hunting experience. I personally took 14 head of game ranging from a 15 pound grysbok to a 1700 pound eland. Experiencing the thrill of victory from eight 1-shot kills, I also would have tasted the agony of defeat had it not been for Don's super trackers. I honestly felt they deserved some of my trophies more than I did. Karen enjoyed a perfect hunt, scoring two for two. She shot a nice impala with T/C's new rifle, and a bush pig with my Super Blackhawk from 50 yards.

Of all the 67 trophies taken by the



Mark and a good warthog taken with his .358 JDJ.

HHI group, quite a few will be eligible for the record book. For a bunch of guys that had never hunted together, we got along great, and the hunt could be classified as a success. After this kind of first impression of African hunting, I'll be going back for seconds.

BLACKPOWDER BLACKHAWK

By Tom Atkinson, Honesdale, PA

After several years of waiting for the right opportunity to try the big Ruger Old Army black powder revolver on a whitetail deer, my moment of truth had at last arrived. Now the questions began running through my head. Had I loaded the chambers properly? Had I molded my bullets properly and of the right lead mixture to do the job? Did I practice enough with the gun to be able to place my shot, or shots, well enough to make the kill cleanly and quickly? These, and probably a dozen more questions ran through my mind during the 30 to 40 seconds it took for the doe to come out of the brush, into the opening I had selected to make my shot in. Now I would answer all those questions with the squeeze of my right index finger.

(Continued on Page 4)

The beginnings of all my self-questions, had begun about four years ago, when I made one of the best gun buying decisions I'll ever make. When my wife asked what I would like for Christmas that year, I told her I'd like to own the Ruger .44 Old Army black powder revolver I had seen and looked over at a local gun shop that week. That request put the Ruger black powder under the tree, and saved me in the vicinity of two hundred bucks. The Old Army was purchased for \$90.00 plus tax . . . these smokepoles are retailing today, in blue model, for close to \$200.00 for the gun alone. I got the gun, and Lee double cavity mold, 2 pounds of black powder, 500 percussion caps and a black powder cleaning kit for just under \$130.00, a good buy in any man's lingo.

As I said, in my previous SIX-GUNNER article, "Love Affair With A Wallhanger", my first black powder shooting was done with an original Colt 1860 Army in the days when you had to shoot originals because there were few replicas of any available. At that time, I bought a Lyman mold (.451 RB), a single cavity job with steel round balls that cast .451 diameter round balls if you took your time.

That Lyman mold would also throw round balls of up to .461 diameter if you allowed the temperature of the blocks of the mold to get too hot. When I tried the new Lee aluminum block mold of .456 diameter, I found that it will throw conical bullets that remain relatively constant at 219.3 to 219.5 grains. The old Lyman mold will give consistent weights of 130 grains, plus or minus not more than 3/10ths of a grain, if you do not mold more than one ball every 30 to 40 seconds. When molding for the original Colt 1860 some years ago, I saved about 20 round balls that had come out at 459 diameter when I had allowed the mold to get too hot. Surprisingly, when I used these round balls with lanolin grease over each cylinder chamber, they gave good groups at 25 yards, even though being .008 of an inch smaller than Ruger called for in the Old Army. However, at 50 yards, these loads were too erratic in grouping to serve as any serious bullet for going after deer.

While I have never made any effort to find out why the Lee Company made their aluminum block mold for the Old Army at .456 diameter instead of the .457 that Ruger recommends, I'm sure there is a reason. Me? I don't mess with success, and the Lee molded conical bullets have given me consistent good groups at both 25 yards and 50 yards, as well as good enough accuracy at 75 yards that I have taken a few standing woodchucks at this range with the Ruger. I missed a hell of a lot more than I got out there, so the majority of my practice shooting has been concentrated at the 50 yard distance. The fully adjustable rear sight on the Ruger works well, and the only flaw I can find in this smoky version of the Blackhaws, is that the rear sight notch is not square. I'd change this machining error, but it shoots so damned good the way it is, I'm reluctant to touch it.

As with any black powder gun, I began my testing and sighting in with a light load. In this case, 20 grains of FFFg powder made by Goex Company at their plant in Moosic, PA, gave poor groups and even poorer penetration in tests on wet cardboard. The loading that gives me the best accuracy and

penetration to date, has been 28 grains of Goex BP with Remington #11 percussion caps for detonation. The Remington caps have proven to give reliable ignition and also stay on the damn nipples. I've used the #11 Hotshot percussion caps from Richland Arms, and have had them fall off the nipples and also break apart when fired, which occasionally will cause the cylinder to temporarily jam on pieces of these caps. The so-called bargain brands of percussion caps have been found to be very unreliable in all respects. The Remington #11 caps have been the most reliable, not only for ignition. They also stay on the nipples and do not break apart when fired.

Now, on the closing day of the Pennsylvania deer season, I was about to find out if all my practice shooting and efforts to come up with a molded bullet that would give good penetration and expansion on a deer, were worthwhile.

As the doe walked full into view, I settled the ramp front sight blade into the notch of the rear sight until the top of the blade was level with the top of the notch, then laid both sights on a spot immediately behind the deer's right front shoulder and began to squeeze. At the "pop/boom" so familiar to percussion rifle and handgun shooters, the big Ruger recoiled slightly upward, taking both of my hands up out of their position between my knees. The deer did not "drop in her tracks" as I'm accustomed to having with my usual deer rifle. In fact, she didn't do a daddled thing! After a rapid mental tirade of #%*!&, I thumbed the hammer back again and using the same sight hold, touched off a second shot. As I made my recovery from recoil this time and began to take another hold for the third shot, if necessary, the deer took two short hops forward and went down.

In order to keep from spooking the deer, if it wasn't dead, I walked slowly toward where I had seen the deer fall, pistol at the ready. Stepping into the small clearing, I immediately saw my deer laying about 30 feet from where she had been when I shot the second time. Closer inspection showed that I had hit with both shots.

I have not been able to determine which of the two entrance wounds was from the first shot, nor can I figure out why the deer didn't even flinch from my first hit, since both bullets hit the deer less than 3" behind the right front shoulder in a normally good kill area. One bullet had hit the deer about 8" below the back and 3" behind the front shoulder, while the other had gone in just about the same distance behind the shoulder as the other one had, only 3/2" lower. While field dressing the deer, I carefully examined both entrance channels, and noted that each bullet had made an entrance hole that indicated they were beginning to expand already. The lower hit had gone through a rib, and left a hole of about 1 1/2" diameter as it emerged from the inner side of that rib. It then continued on into the chest cavity, going completely through the lungs and stopping partially through a rib on the far side. The recovered bullet had expanded and flattened so that it looked similar to a half dollar with the base of a bullet sticking out of it. When weighed, this bullet came in at only 213.3 grains, a lead loss of some 6 grains. This missing piece I believe fragmented off and accounts for the small laceration in the bottom of the

liver. The other bullet, the high hit, had not hit rib or bone going in, and had only expanded slightly to leave an entrance hole of about .50 caliber size on the inner side of the membrane and flesh between two front ribs. This bullet, however, had gone completely through the heart almost dead center, and had then lodged in the thin part of the front shoulder blade on the side opposite where it entered, causing the bone to fracture. None of this examination showed me why the deer had not even given a slight indication of being hit with the first shot, did not tell me which was the first hit, only that both bullets had penetrated moderately and had apparently lost velocity quite rapidly after entering the deer, since both bullets had stayed inside the deer.

I am not completely satisfied with the performance of this black powder handgun with the present lead mixture in my bullets, nor with penetration with velocities achieved from 28 grains of FFFg powder. Before next season, I'll be doing some more testing, both with different lead mixtures and with more powder behind 'em. But since I estimate the maximum powder capacity of a chamber to be not much more than 30 grains and still be able to fully seat the bullet, I don't think that much higher velocity is attainable. I think the answer lies in just a bit harder lead for the bullets.

Well . . . back to the melting pot!

SHOOT BLACK!

By Joe Gurrado, L.I., NY


The time rolled around again for my two week winter vacation. This year, my hunting partner, Pete Papia and I planned to return to Shawnee Ridge Hunting Preserve in Ohio. This trip was going to be a handgun hunting trip for me only. I brought along my model 629 Smith & Wesson .44 magnum six inch and my Ruger Old Army, Black Powder .44. I was in search of an Angora goat.

Pete and I left New York City directly from work. It would be a two-day scenic ride in my van to get to Shawnee Ridge. Pete had along his T/C Hawkin Rifle .45 caliber and his 1858 Remington Black Power Revolver. I refused to bring a rifle of any type along. Handguns only for me.

We arrived mid-afternoon and were greeted by the owner of Shawnee Ridge and our friend Paul Richter. After putting our gear away, we sat around the fire, talked about our upcoming handgun hunt. Later that afternoon, Paul invited us to the practice range to make sure we were on the money. After target practice, we sat down to a home cooked dinner typical of Shawnee Ridge. We had moose meatloaf and all the fixins. The dinner set us up right for the hunt, which would start early the next morning. We went to bed early, Paul would be back for us at 6:30 a.m. Before we knew it there was that knock at the door. We had a home cooked breakfast, consisting of scrambled eggs and wild boar patties and hot coffee. After breakfast, I strapped on my Old Army and we were off. I spent the whole day walking up and down mountains without seeing one animal. When I got back to the lodge, I found Pete smiling from ear to ear. He led me to the hanging rack and pointed to a very strange looking critter. He bagged a Persian ram with a single shot from his Remington .44 caliber black powder pistol. The shot entered behind the shoulder. The round ball went clear through and

lodged in the hide on the far side. He used a .451 round ball and 30 grains of Pyrodex. That was Pete's first big game animal with a handgun and a cap and ball to boot! That was it for our first day out. 6:30 a.m. rolled around mighty fast and we were on our way again. I still carried my Old Army, but Pete toted his Thompson Center Hawkin Rifle .45 caliber (percussion). We all went together and figured we would split up after a couple of hours. About one hour out we spotted a Sika buck about 130 yards up on a ridge. Pete laid his rifle across a tree stump took aim and let it rip. That buck dropped like a bag of cement. A beautiful shot through the shoulders. The score was Pete 2 and me 0. Paul and I split from Pete and went in search of my Angora goat. We went all afternoon and didn't see anything. We decided to start heading back slowly. We topped a ridge and down in a hollow we spotted what we thought was a goat so we started a stalk. We had about 300 yards to the ram. We made our stalk very slowly. The mountains were muddy and slick which made the going tough, so we took it real slow. Finally, I got to about 30 yards, there were alot of trees in my firing line, so I just waited. I had my Ruger ready. I guess the ram started to get nervous and he made a fatal mistake. He moved a few feet and I let a round rip. He dropped right away, but started to get up when I let the second round go. The Ruger roared and the ram dropped. When the smoke cleared there, I bagged a beautiful full size long-haired curled horned Angora ram with my Ruger Old Army with a .457 round ball and forty grains of Pyrodex.

After capping the ram, we discovered my first round entered the rib cage and busted his lungs the second shot busted his left shoulder. The first shot would have been enough, but I didn't want to take any chances. Well my .44 Magnum stayed in my gun case the whole trip, but I wasn't disappointed the .44 cap and ball did a mean job on my ram. This year's trip to Shawnee Ridge will always be a Black Power handgun hunt to remember.



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OLD ARMY WITH NEW AMMO

By Floyd Coleman, Tallahassee, FL

I would like to tell you about my experiences preparing a Ruger Old Army revolver for hunting.

When I started the black powder bit, I purchased two Ruger Old Army revolvers, one blue steel and one stainless. My thinking was that most gun makers know little about using guns and make them only to sell. I figured that I could probably take two revolvers and come up with one good one. I found that I had used good judgement by doing this.

I selected the stainless model to build around due to several features such as its removable front sight blade and wider trigger. The first "out of the box" firing test showed that with the rear sight in its lowest position, bullets were grouping one foot high at 25 yards.

Not being a round ball fancier, I was using the Lee conical bullet over 35 grains of three F powder and was able to place nine shots into a two and one-eighth inch group at 25 yards, shooting one hand off-hand. While some feel that test firing should be made from a rest, I have found that I get more reliable over-all results by practicing the same way that I hunt.

I then made a patridge type front sight blade of sufficient height for the groups to print within the adjustment range of the rear sight.

In my experience, all Ruger ramp front sights have only one thing going for them, and that is that they might not catch on a holster or whatever. They are very poor in the woods, or in poor light. I was once shooting at 100 yards with a Super Blackhawk without color or blacking the front sight. I then painted the front sight with fluorescent red paint. I then had to elevate the rear sight nine clicks to set back on target. (Editor's Note: Paint of any kind on the front sight usually makes drastic changes in point of impact.) The next change I made was the grip frame. I ordered a brass frame for an old model Super Blackhawk from some back yard manufacturer who is no longer in business. This took care of two problems. First, the larger grip fit my hand better. Second, by having a square back trigger guard, it allowed space to straighten the trigger which gave a much better feel and trigger control. I then purchased some imitation stag grips. After filing the sharp edges off and fitting them, they were nice. After performing a trigger job, things began to shape up.

The Lee bullet was very accurate, but I didn't like the shape of it for hunting, nor the small lubrication grooves.

While searching for a better hunting bullet, I discovered that the Thompson/Center 45 caliber Maxiball would fit the Old Army perfectly. I also discovered that I had to drop my powder charge from 35 grains to 30 grains. I wouldn't have had to drop the charges as much if the chambers had all been drilled to the same depth, but they were not. This load would shoot through three three-fourths of an inch plywood boards spaced one inch apart at 25 yards.

Accuracy of the load wasn't as good as it was with the Lee bullet (approximately three to four inch groups at 25 yards.) I realized the rifling pitch in the Old Army was designed for round balls that weighed much less than the Maxi-

ball. I made a holding fixture to be used in a lathe to hollow point the Maxiball. This reduced the bullet weight to 220 grains.

I then loaded the cylinder with three solid Maxiballs and three hollow pointed Maxiballs. When fired at 25 yards, the three solids made a four inch triangle. The three hollow points made a one and three-fourths inch triangle inside of the first group slightly below center. I now had the accuracy that I wanted for deer hunting.

I decided to continue to use the Maxiball, so I removed the loading ram from the Ruger and machined the pocket to fit the shape of the Maxiball nose. Then I machined a small groove around and near the end of the ram to indicate when the bullet was into the chamber sufficiently to clear the rear end of the barrel when the cylinder was being rotated by hand. This uniformity of bullet seating also seemed to contribute to accuracy.

Being too lazy to grease the bullets by hand with special goop put out by Thompson/Center, I made a two diameter die for my Lyman Number 45 sizer and lubricator. This die didn't change the size of the bullet, but it did make it rounder. I now use the machine to lubricate the bullets with regular alox bullet lube which doesn't run off and provides what I think is better lubrication.

Hollow pointing the bullets with a lathe became a drag, so I bored a set of mold blocks so a regular hollow pointing pin could be used.

I started thinking about what I would have to do to get more powder space in the chambers. I was thinking of sending the cylinder back to the factory to have the chambers drilled to a uniform depth when I remembered that I had another Old Army. I measured its cylinder and found the chambers were deeper than those in the stainless cylinder. I put the chrome moly steel cylinder into the stainless revolver and found that it fit better than the original. The barrel to cylinder gap was reduced from seven thousandths of an inch to five thousandths of an inch. All of the chambers were now of uniform depth. I was now able to load 35 grains of powder with the Maxiball bullet. This arrangement gave good groups and penetration went from three three-fourths inch boards at 25 yards to four boards. To prevent the barrel from shining in the sun, I wrapped it with camo tape.

Some of my more successful deer hunting friends seemed to think after seeing my penetration tests that I should be able to take a deer at 75 yards with a goot hit. Knowing how windy most deer hunters are, I think I will limit my shots to not more than 35 yards.

To finish up my outfit, I purchased a Bianchi Model 1873 Old West holster which fits the Old Army perfectly.

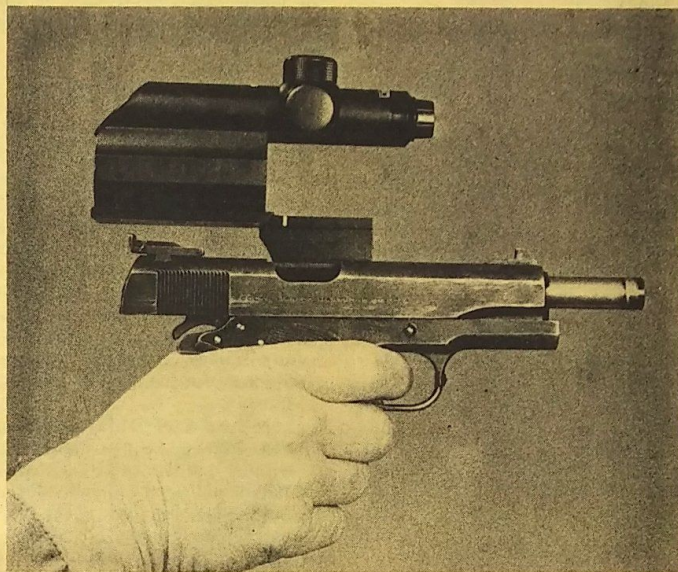
Like Mr. Atkinson, who wrote of his black powder experiences, I'm having problems getting a shot at a deer. One thing that I was doing wrong was having a loud ticking watch in my pocket. Some of my coarser friends said that I smelled bad, too . . .

My one hunting episode using this gun gave me quite a thrill. I was sitting in a hollow tree, watching a doe

approach to within about 20 feet. I had placed a camo net over the opening in the tree. I guess the deer heard my watch ticking as she turned and ran. As it was getting late, I decided to leave, too. I heard a rustling noise under the camo net and looked down to see a snake's head about the size of a large egg and six inches of neck. I thought, "Oh, hell, I've had it now!" I clapped my hands and yelled. This was a mistake as the head and neck pulled back into a striking position with the snake's tongue flicking in and out. I had the Old Army cocked and laying across my left leg. I went into slow motion and brought the gun into firing position. I was thinking where in the hell do I aim at two feet? I settled on

the good old six o'clock hold? put the snake's head on top of the front sight and squeezed off the shot. At the shot, the inside of the tree filled with smoke and my ears rang for five minutes. I had no trouble diving out of the hollow tree. After I was able to stand up and get my pants shook out, I pulled my snake from under the camo net. The bullet had taken his head off like it had been cut off with an axe. The snake was a three and one-half foot copperhead. Needless to say, this Old Army now holds a very favored spot in my affections.

I am looking forward to next deer season and feel that I have a gun-ammo combination that will do the job if I do my part.



Cal Grip mount with the Tascorama sight on a 1911 Colt.

THE CAL GRIP

By David L. Sherman, Clovis, CA

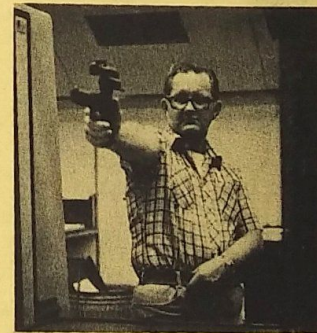
Looking back on the period of time since I have been a member of HHI, I have found it to be a time of interest and pleasure. I look forward to receiving each and every paper with articles written by the members with their comments and experiences.

The two exciting times were when I received my .44 HHI Six Gun (#9). It resides in a custom holster by John Taffin (who did a first class job) and my boar hunt at Tellico Junction with Steve Winn. The boar was taken with a Ruger .45 Colt (load — 200 grain cast, size .456, 25 grain H110-CCI Standard). The head hangs on my living room wall and is proudly shown to my visitors.

However, as much as I like to hunt with handguns, the bulk of my shooting is Bullseye, in association with the California National Guard Pistol Team. As with all shooting, the focus must be on the front sight and as my shooting buddy and I could not focus at that distance without special optical loops, we started experimenting with the Weaver Quickpoint, the Tascorama, and the Aimpoint.

The Quickpoint worked ok, but the dot more than covered the black at 50 yards, then Tasco came out with a battery powered scope similar in shape to the Quickpoint. Although the dot was smaller, it still was too large. The general design, however, seems to be the best for our purpose. The Aimpoint gave some problems with the dot and it is too heavy for me. The

variable Tascorama seems to have the best dot of the three, and it is somewhat lighter than the Aimpoint.



Dave on the line.

Along with deciding which scope to use, a way must be found that will place the scope at the proper balance point. The available mounts placed the scope too far forward to properly balance the gun. I, for one, do not like a muzzle heavy gun, as it requires too much effort to maintain sight alignment.

The mount shown in the pictures are the result of a couple of years experimenting and place the scope at the right balance point and still allow clearance for case ejection. Using the Tasco with the red dot eliminates the problem of eye focus and has increased our scores considerably. We have found that it is easier to know and call

(Continued on Page 16)

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CUSTOM CONTENDERS

By J. B. Wright, Northboro, MA

After several discussions with various members of the Contender Collectors Association, I felt it might be worthwhile to air some of the considerations in custom conversions of the Contender.

The simplest form of custom work on the T/C Contender involves any one or more of the following changes to a basically stock frame and barrel combination:

- 1) accessory grips or slings
- 2) improved sights or scope mounting
- 3) metal refinishing such as Armoloy or SSK chrome

With the possible exception of the metal refinishing, none of these modifications should affect structural integrity of the Contender. The refinishing process could conceivably influence the soundness of the Contender if the refinisher either causes hydrogen embrittlement of the steel during the plating process, or if the refinisher improperly assembles the firearm after plating. Both of these can be avoided by selecting a refinisher who is experienced in firearms rather than the local bumper plating shop.

The next level of sophistication in customizing the Contender does start to affect the basic design. This would include:

- 1) trigger jobs
- 2) barrel length modifications
- 3) recoil reduction modifications
- 4) barrel pivot pin changes
- 5) locking bolt changes

The subject of trigger jobs on the Contender is a highly emotional one where unfortunately everyone is an expert. Compared to other handguns, the Contender leaves the factory with a design which provides exceptionally good adjustment capability coupled with reliability. In an effort to improve on this, trigger rework can lead to a dangerous situation if done by an inexperienced gunsmith. The most common trigger modifications involve lightening the trigger return spring by cutting coils or changing to an aftermarket spring such as provided by SSK Industries. In addition, the sear surfaces between the trigger and striker are often stoned. (Editor's Note: **Discontinued — Unnecessary!**) If either of these are overdone, the reliability of the assembly will be severely compromised, setting the stage for a potential accident. The bottom line is that should you have the trigger reworked, you need to check it for reliability and keep checking it as its reliability may be degraded through rust or wear.

Barrel length modifications are usually a rather straightforward proposition. I have seen several cut down barrels where the cut is at an angle to the bore which surely does wonders for the point of impact. I guess that it boils down to the fact that you get what you pay for.

There are at least four different manufacturers offering recoil reduction modifications for the Contender. These four are:

- a) Mag-Na-Port — Consists of electro-discharge machining of trapezoidal gas ports in the barrel.
- b) SSK's muzzle brake — This uses about 1-1/8" of the barrel to

form a multi-ported expansion chamber.

- c) Vern Juenke offers a screw-on muzzle brake requiring threading of the barrel.

No doubt there are other recoil reducing devices that I am not aware of. Assuming this to be the case, I'd like to hear from their manufacturers. As far as those that I mentioned, all will reduce recoil. The approach that you might want to take should be based on your personal review of these devices.

The barrel pivot pin and its fit in both the barrel lug and the frame is thought by some to have significant effects on the accuracy of the Contender. I've seen three approaches to this.

- A. The Shur-Loc pin is an expansible collet type of pivot pin which does take up some of the slop that results from manufacturing tolerance on these parts. Early models of this pin were subject to fatigue failures. This has been corrected in the design manufactured for the past three or four years. This pin can be used with any frames or barrels without the need for matching barrel to frame.

- B. Lew Schafer of Triple-K Industries will make up a hardened stepped pin to exactly fit an individual barrel to an individual frame when he does either his 444 Schafer Magnum conversion to the Contender. Obviously this pin is only useful for one barrel to one frame.

- C. Vern Juenke as part of his accurizing of the Contender reams both the barrel and frame holes and supplies a slightly oversize ground and hardened pin. This approach renders both frame and barrel unusable with standard factory barrels. Should you wish to have several barrels accurized this way, Vern suggests that all be done at once.

Decreasing the amount of tolerance slop between the barrel and frame through modifications like these will improve accuracy by varying amounts. This depends mainly on how bad this was to start. As a caution: reaming the frame and barrel can seriously affect both safety and performance if improperly done. I would not trust my Contenders to anyone who hasn't been deeply involved in this for a long time.

Locking bolt changes offer a great potential for improving the accuracy of the Contender. The serious student will recognize that the factory has evolved the design of this device from a pretty sloppy beginning to its present accurate state. Barrels with the old one-piece locking bolt can be significantly upgraded merely by switching to the current two-piece design. The factory has also put a stronger bolt spring into the latter designs. SSK Industries, and perhaps others, offers a monster spring to aid in lock-up. I offer one caution: don't attempt to improve lock-up by stoning the locking bolt. Although I have heard of this being done successfully, I believe in some designs of the locking bolt, the case hardening may be modified sufficiently so as to increase the potential for a fatigue

failure. If you aren't satisfied with the lock-up, order half a dozen locking bolt sets from T/C and try them until you can get a tight lock-up. (Editor's Note: **Filing or stoning a T/C bolt can lead to your untimely death.**)

Obviously, the most complex and also the most appealing form of customizing the Contender lies in additional chamberings beyond those offered by T/C. Over the years, a variety of gunsmiths have offered caliber conversions which range from superb to downright garbage.

Before looking at the types of conversions, I'd like to examine the cartridges involved. The Contender is a well thought out design with rather superb quality control. However, it is limited in strength if you compare it to a bolt action pistol like the XP-100. I am frankly shocked at some of the calibers offered by past and present T/C customizers.

Like any design, the Contender has limits as to how much stress it will withstand before accuracy starts to fail due either to frame, or barrel, or underlug distortion. Those of us who shot metallic silhouette in the early days of soft-steel, full-footed rams wore out the accuracy of our Contenders in 30 Herrett and 30-30 simply through continual use of heavy loads in a large head diameter case. T/C has made a number of changes both in free-boring barrels and adding additional meat to the frame to help alleviate this problem. Nonetheless, there still are limits as to how much case head thrust the Contender will withstand.

Case head thrust at first would seem to simply be the product of the case pressure multiplied by the area of the cartridge head. Unfortunately, as anyone who has done much with the 25-35 Winchester in the Contender knows, it isn't quite that simple. There appear to be a number of other factors including case body taper, bullet-land clearance, chamber roughness, powder burning rate, brass hardness, shoulder angle, body-neck ratio, and no doubt others which affect thrust. Despite all these unknowns, it can be said that some common sense is definitely required in this area. You can have long, safe, accurate life using the 223 Remington at maximum SAMMI pressures in the Contender, but try those same pressures in the 30-30 or 35 Remington head sizes and watch out! Maybe it will survive the first round or two; after that, you may be in the market for a new Contender, a doctor, or both.

All this leads up to the fact that some custom gunsmiths are offering pure poison in the Contender. When I see someone offer to provide a T/C barrel in 308 Winchester, or, unbelievably, 350 Remington Magnum, I want to be somewhere else when that is fired. Incidentally, look at the depth of the sight holes in the barrel and think about the web of metal that remains after a 35 Remington is rechambered to 350 Remington Magnum. Sure hope the sight goes toward the muzzle when it blows off.

This is not intended to condemn all big cartridges in the Contender. Remember, what we are worried about is the thrust that comes from pressure multiplied by the cartridge head area. As long as pressure is kept low, big cartridges like the 45-70, the JDJ series based on the 444 Marlin, Schafer's 444 Magnum will be quite safe. Talk to the cartridge designer, find out if he is

competent, and act accordingly.

One last thought on this subject. Once I was tempted to have a Contender barrel chambered for a factory cartridge which clearly exceeded the Contender's limits when factory ammo was used. My intention was to significantly download this cartridge to a level which would have been acceptable in the Contender. J. D. Jones talked me out of this by pointing out that someday that barrel might end up in the hands of some unknowing person who would use factory ammo! Being involved in product liability work in my job, I immediately saw of number of implications to this and put that project aside. Perhaps you may wish to think about this when you consider custom barrels in hot factory chamberings. I might close this section by saying that J. D. Jones is extremely knowledgeable in this subject and has always taken the time to give freely of this knowledge. Thanks, J. D.!

The last area that deserves consideration in customizing the Contender involves the barrel underlug. Once you get beyond rechambering factory barrels into the realm of fabrication of complete barrels by a custom gunsmith, there are some areas for concern. Before discussing the underlug attachment, it is worth mentioning that T/C has in the past few years evolved a complex selective heat-treatment of the barrel lug. I'm not familiar with the details of this but since it prolongs accuracy life and safety, it may be an important consideration when you select a custom barrel.

As far as the attachment of the barrel lug, I had good fortune a number of years ago to meet an individual involved in developing the T/C lug attachment. As I am a metallurgist by education, he and I had some in-depth discussions about this process.

Basically, there are four acceptable ways to create a custom barrel with its underlug.

- 1) Cut off a factory barrel; drill and tap it, and thread the custom barrel into this lug-bearing stub.
- 2) Heli-arc weld a lug to the barrel.
- 3) Electron beam weld the lug as the factory does.
- 4) Machine barrel and lug from one piece of metal.

Others may offer processes like brazing or silver soldering. However, in my opinion, these other methods do not possess adequate strength or fatigue resistance to hold up to the combination of forces resulting from shooting as well as opening and closing.

Cutting of a factory barrel and threading in a new barrel is a very acceptable approach to the underlug problem. Vern Juenke of the Accuracy Den uses this method very successfully. Consideration to available thread size and cartridge diameter tend to limit this method to relatively small diameter cases. In addition, the necessity to start with a factory barrel does add to total cost.

Heli-arc welding of the underlug is a very controversial subject and rightfully so. Improperly done, arc blow during welding start or particularly stop can leave a small star-shaped crack or fissure in the weld metal. As the barrel is used, this crack can grow ultimately causing the barrel to separate from the lug. In addition, unless the weld is properly examined, it may not be sound in other areas such

(Continued on Page 7)

as cracking in the heat-affected zone (HAZ) setting the stage for future failures. Weld failure in a Heli-arc barrel is sometimes preceded by a marked loss of accuracy. I have examined several Ingram barrels using the Heli-arc process which exhibited a loss of accuracy. When their owners brought them to me, I observed both arc-blow and underbead cracks were beginning to spread. (Editor's Note: I have seen numerous ones completely separated from the barrel.)

However, possibly not all Heli-arced lugs should be condemned.

Without a doubt, the best way to attach the barrel lug is to use Electron Beam Welding (EBW). This process is capable of creating a large linear weld to maximize the area subject to shear forces. Since this fusion is produced by a very thin beam of electrons in a manner similar to generating the picture on your T.V., the heat effects in both the barrel and lug are minimal.

As a metallurgist, I would caution that even EBW will not be satisfactory unless properly controlled and checked after welding. Thus, it is important that a knowledgeable company of good reputation manage this process.

As far as I know, SSK Industries is the only custom barrel manufacturer using EBW for underlug attachment. I have several of their barrels and can attest that they appear to control their quality. I've shot my 338 CJMK quite a lot and believe the accuracy has remained constant despite my use of fairly hot loads.

Machining barrel and lug from one piece has so far not been successful.

In summary, there are a lot of options available for customizing the Contender. I urge you to get literature from those whose services you are considering and to study it carefully. Where possible, I suggest you talk to the people you intend to have do the work so you understand what you will be getting. Last of all, be patient. It seems as if good work requires plenty of time as those people who are good are much in demand.

Editor's Note: In addition to the lug attachment method, the lug itself may be considered suspect if not heat treated. Brazing, silver soldering and several other forms of welding also produce heat distortion — warping of the bore or barrel itself. This article is not intended to be a comprehensive treatment of the subject; only an informative primer. . . . JDJ

A DEER FOR DAD

By Bob Good

It was frustrating, totally frustrating. Pausing for one last fleeting look at me, the buck stopped his headlong run, hesitated, turned sideways just enticingly enough for me to almost settle the handgun sights on his shoulder, then spinning around, he leaped the fence and was gone, taking the same path as the doe that had preceded him. From his actions, it was apparent that this buck was not carrying any lead. But how could I have missed? Shooting a whitetail with a handgun is never a simple task, but I would have bet a substantial sum that everything had been perfect when I squeezed off on this buck a quarter mile down the trail. But when he stopped and looked back before jumping the fence, it was obvious to me this deer hadn't been hit, and when I checked the spot where he had

jumped the fence, it confirmed my suspicions. No hair, no blood, just solid imprints of his hooves where he'd cleared the wire.

As I walked back to the jeep, I went over and over the shot in my mind. I had only gone a few hundred yards from the vehicle when I spotted the buck the first time. I had been walking into the wind, and fortunately, the rising sun just tipping the horizon was blazing right over my shoulder and obscuring the vision of any deer that heard or sensed my approach. That brilliant glare also caught the movement of the buck's head, flashing off his antlers like a mirror. I froze in my tracks and eased the little eight-power Leitz binoculars to my eyes. The buck was just an eye, an ear, and a right antler framed in a solid mass of cedar and cactus. He was staring right at me through the hole in the brush, but with the sun in his eyes and the wind drift carrying my scent away from him, he was content to remain motionless, letting the dense cover conceal his presence.

Carefully, I studied the brush and what little of the buck I could see, even in the binoculars. The one antler had five tines and a heavy gnarled base. This was a buck worth having, but a 120-yard head shot with a handgun is beyond my capabilities. By easing slightly to my left, I detected a curved outline of hair approximately where I guessed the buck's shoulder should be. Sliding the handgun to a rest position across a cedar branch, I tried to align the sights just to the left of that curve of hair. Impossible!

No matter how hard I stared, what was so obvious in the binoculars just wasn't there in the handgun's sights. The buck was certainly patient with me. Content with the security of his concealment and distance, he let me shift from binoculars to handgun sights several times while I tried desperately to sort out his shoulder from the cactus and cedar. No way!

About the time my frustration was about to peak, I realized that every time I lined up the binoculars on the buck's shoulder, the tip of sotol cactus leaf, halfway between the whitetail and me, pointed to the target area as precisely as if it were a classroom pointer at a seminar on "Where to Shoot Deer." If I could put a bullet exactly across the tip of that cactus leaf, 60 yards further on, it would strike about an inch to the left of the buck's shoulder.

Ever so precisely, I aligned the sights with the cactus, squeezed the trigger and touched off the 220 grain flat-nose bullet. At the moment of recoil, I saw the cactus leaf jump and thought I saw a momentary flash of white hair where the buck had stood. Almost before I could react, I spotted a deer running uphill and around the corner to my right. I ran hard around the base of the slope, arriving in time to see a doe clear the fence. Twenty yards behind her, the buck was running along the same sheep path. Just at the fence, he paused, looked back, and before I could get off another shot, leaped the fence and was gone. No hair, no blood, just gone.

I glanced at my watch. I'd been gone from the jeep less than 20 minutes, but it was almost time to drive back to the trailer to pick up Robert, my 12-year-old son. I really didn't want to tell him his dad had just blown a chance at a good buck. He was waiting at the trailer door when I got there. Quickly

he piled into the jeep and we headed for our assigned pasture. As we drove past the hill where I had missed my chance earlier, I told Robert the story of my miss. When I finished, he reached across the cab and touched my arm. "Don't worry, Dad. You'll get another chance," he reassured me. Why does he always make me feel like I'm the child and he's the adult?

My plan was to drive to the far end of our assigned area, on the assumption my earlier shot had spooked the game on the east side. We had driven about halfway to where I intended to park, when a doe plunged across the road just ahead of us. Two small six-points were hot on her heels. We both laughed at their antics as the doe led them on a merry zigzag across the canyon floor and up the far side.

I was watching the two bucks in the binoculars when it struck me . . . Suppose there had been two bucks with that doe earlier? Suppose the first buck had dropped instantly and my attention had been drawn quickly to the other buck which I had seen running after the doe? When the rut is on, it's not unusual to find more than one buck near a doe.

I had checked for blood at the fence, assuming that that buck was *my* buck. But suppose it wasn't? Suppose there had been two bucks? Quickly, I explained my hypothesis to Robert. He got more excited than I did. As soon as I found a place in the narrow trail to turn the jeep around, we headed back. Within minutes, we were meticulously searching the area.

Finding the exact spot where either the deer or I had stood proved impossible, but I could pinpoint the general area within 50 or 60 yards in either direction. I had cautioned Robert to examine the ground between the cedars very carefully, looking for an overturned stone, or a scuff mark, and most of all, for a skiff of hair or a drop of blood.

For a half an hour, we combed the area, walking about 10 yards apart in a specific pattern designed to thoroughly crisscross the area. My initial excitement for the idea had ebbed, when step after step revealed not a sign of the deer. We were making the last pass we were going to make when above me, I saw Robert stop, study the ground carefully, reach down and pick up a quarter-sized stone. He studied the stone intently, then broke into a broad grin.

"Dad, I've found it! I've found it! There's one drop of blood on this stone."

He was so excited he was almost jumping up and down, but it was almost a match for the excitement I felt.

"Don't move," I instructed him, "until I get there. From where you're standing, see if there's any other sign."

Getting to Robert through the cactus spines proved a chore. As I was picking my way to him, I could see him bent over, studying the ground around him. Before I reached him, he stood up and shouted.

"Dad, here's his *feet!*"

His feet?

"What do you mean his *feet!*"

Pause,

"Dad, here's the whole damn deer!"

Now Robert isn't prone to use strong language, but under the circumstances, I decided to hold the chastisement for later.

He was right. When I walked up to him, he pointed two feet away. There was the whole damn deer!

Examination of the area showed the buck had died instantly. None of the grass around his feet was disturbed, indicating he had been dead before he hit the ground.

Robert and I took turns dancing around my handgunned buck when Robert suddenly stopped, reached across the deer and shook my hand.

"Happy birthday, Dad."

In the events of the morning, I had completely forgotten.

WHITETAIL

By Larry DeBret
Virginia, MN

This is only the 3rd year of legalized handgun hunting here in Minnesota. I had waited for many years to be able to bust a buck with my .44 and as it turned out, I had to wait for a few more years. I started out hunting the 1980 deer season with a Smith & Wesson Mod. 29 6½". I never saw so much as a "flag". In the summer of 1981 my long awaited Ruger Redhawk came in at the local gun shop. To this day, it's only the second Redhawk that he's gotten in. We can't understand why there aren't more Redhawks available. It's too bad, he has a long waiting list for that gun. My pet load for the Mod. 29 had been 24.5 grs. of WW 296 behind Speers 240 gr. JSW Keith style bullet. I don't know why, but the Redhawk would always kick out at least one flyer in a group of six — and I mean off of the target at 25 yards. I switched to Speer Magnum JSP & JHP and Sierra JHP bullets and have experienced no further problems. As usual, the gun could shoot better than me, but at least I could keep all of my shots in the black when shooting from a rest at 50 yards at an NRA 25 yard slow fire target. In the kind of stuff I hunt in, 50 yards would be the longest shot that I would get. Incidentally, I use a Bianchi Cyclone crossdraw holster and belt, and it surely is comfortable either when walking through brush or when sitting down.

Anyway, deer hunting 1981 was somewhat more productive. At least I saw deer. But, alas, try as I might I couldn't will those does to grow horns. Minnesota is a buck only state unless you get lucky enough to draw an antlerless permit — no luck for the kid. No luck again for the kid for a permit in 1982, but I had higher hopes than ever before. I found an area that held several scrapes and rubs and a spot that was a natural for a deer stand. I was ready. Apparently, so was Mother Nature. Three days before season, what started off as a fairly steady rain changed to a very steady snow. We ended up with between 12 and 18 inches of snow, depending upon where you were. The trees and bushes that were still standing were bent over so badly that their tops were frozen to the ground. Visibility was poor at best, and walking through that — expletive deleted — was next to impossible. Day 1 of deer season was a disaster. Very few shots were heard and even fewer deer were taken in our area that day. Day 2 of the season started out just like day 1. But, the weatherman promised a warming trend for day 2, and thankfully he was right. By early afternoon most of the trees and bushes were upright again. It was unbelievably wet and noisy in the woods for awhile there. Even the squirrels were staying under cover. I was hunting elsewhere

(Continued on Page 8)

.357 MAXIMUM

By John Taffin, Boise, ID

The .357 Maximum is now more or less a reality. Although Ruger has temporarily discontinued shipping the SRM, Dan Wesson is now supplying test revolvers to writers and they are starting to show on the market. DW sent me an 8" Model 40V8 .357 Maximum for testing for THE SIX-GUNNER recently. The D.W. as the Ruger Maximum, is built on an elongated .44 frame. Along with the D.W., I also acquired a 10-1/2" Ruger .357 Maximum for evaluation.

As mentioned the Ruger has been pulled from the market for two reasons: (1) Throat erosion; and (2) Gas cutting on the top strap at the barrel juncture. After 1000 rounds apiece, both the D.W. and the Ruger I have exhibit barrel erosion and minor gas cutting. D.W. supplies an extra barrel with their Super Mag. because of the erosion problems and barrels can easily be replaced. The D.W. is called the Super Mag. model. Ruger reports the 'cutting' of the top strap doesn't go deeper than .020". (Editor's Note: Ditto for D.W.) My 4" Model 29 exhibits the same cutting effect.

Problems also arise with reloading for the .357 Maximum. Many bullets designed for the .357 Magnum have jackets too lightly constructed to stand the pressures of top loadings in the Maximum. Some cores may shoot out of the jackets, leaving a jacket lodged in the barrel. It can also happen in a standard .357 Mag, but it's not nearly as likely. This could be a dangerous **Whitetail . . . (Con't. from Page 7)**

during the morning since my pet area had looked pretty desolate the day before. With the trials opening up I thought I would give my stand another shot. I very noisily got to my stand at about 2:15 p.m. Not 20 minutes later a big doe magically appeared off to my left along the side of a small ridge. Just for practice and on the hope that a buck would be right behind, I drew, cocked, and aimed. She looked right at me and I froze. She was more interested in nibbling on some cedar branches though. She did make a short, casual detour around me, however, and continued on her way. That's when I heard that strange guttural, throaty, almost indescribable noise that a buck makes when he's hot after a doe. Once you have heard that sound, I doubt if you would ever forget it. The doe knew that I was there, but that buck could have cared less. He came out on top of that small ridge about 40yards away — broadside. It's the kind of shot a guy dreams about. When I first saw the rack on that buck I thought it was palmated. Of course, I could have been just a little bit excited. But, at least I had plenty of time, a good sight picture, and a good rest. The shot felt good, and I saw him hunch up. He turned and ran and I shot again, which turned out to be not only a missed shot, but also a needless shot. That deer left a blood trail that a blind man could follow. I found him about 30 yards away — very dead.

I was using the Speer Jacketed Magnum Soft Points. The bullet went through the heart and out the other side. Both the entrance and the exit holes appeared to be the same size, which was expected. That buck only had an 8 point rack, but it truly was a massive, heavy rack. I hope that it at least makes the top 20 in J.D.'s big buck contest.

situation if a second bullet is fired. Because of this situation, I avoided reloading of lightweight bullets and used heavier bullets at moderate velocities.

Since both sixguns are modifications of existing revolvers and not new designs, I will not go into a lot of detail about them. The Ruger is simply a Super Blackhawk with a longer cylinder while the Super Mag is built on the D.W. .44 frame. The 10.5" Ruger Maximum differs from the standard Super Blackhawk by having a longer ejector rod and an excellent under cut front post. Both of these features have now been incorporated into the Stainless Bull Barrel .44 Super Blackhawk.

Aside from the obviously longer frame and cylinder, the D.W. has one major change — a new rear sight with 140 windage clicks and 135 elevation clicks possible. My Ruger was dead on windage wise, but the D.W. had to go 36 clicks to the right to be on. Both were easy to sight in and using a 200 grain gas check at 1500 fps, the D.W. starts at 4 clicks up on chickens, progressing to 15 up for rams while the Ruger starts at 6 and ends at 18 clicks up for rams. The Maximum shoots flat enough to necessitate very little sight adjustment.

The Ruger 10-1/2" was equipped with Pachmayrs weighing in at around 1/3 ounce less than four pounds while the D.W. 8" with standard walnut stocks was overweight for silhouettes at 4.04#. A special silhouette shroud with special slots is available that brings the weight down to 3.91#. D.W. plans to offer 6", 8", and 10" barrels.

Shooting the Maximum in these two heavy revolvers is pleasant as long as eye and ear protection is worn. This is critical! The muzzle blast is horrendous and shooting from a padded rest often results in particles coming back to the shooter. Repeat . . . Do NOT shoot without both eye and ear protection which, of course, is common sense for all shooting except hunting situations. I put 650 rounds through these two sixguns in one session and didn't feel any ill effects.

One change was made on the D.W., the red ramp front sight was quickly replaced with a high narrow black post. One of the best facets of the D.W. is the variety of front sights available all of which install quickly and easily.

Why the .357 Maximum? Elgin Gates designed the cartridge in 1975 to be 1.600" in length because the .357 Magnum in then available revolvers was not enough power for rams. Silhouette shooters have since been supplied with 10" .357 Dan Wessons and most shooters combine these with 180-200 grain bullets. When conditions are perfect, that is to say, no bent targets, or poor weather conditions, the .357 Magnum 200 grainer at 1100 fps is adequate.

I have long hoped that some manufacturer would supply a long cylindered .357 Magnum and many shooters are now using .357 Maximum Rugers with standard .357 cases and long 200 grain bullets successfully.

Both .357's Maximums show excellent accuracy with either .357 Magnum or .357 Maximum ammo. My highest silhouette AAA revolver score to date was recorded with a Ruger .357 Maximum during its first competition.

Ruger and Remington were the first out with guns and ammunition with two major mistakes — the Ruger cylinder at 1.935" is too short for

No. Bullet	Load	Dan Wesson 8" Super Mag.		Ruger 10-1/2" Maximum		
		25 Yards	50 Yards	25 Yards	50 Yards	MV
1 RCBS 200 Gr.	12.4 WW296	7/8"		5/8"		1090'
2 #358156 GC	15.0 #2400	1-1/2"		1"		1470'
3 #358156 GC	16.0 WW296	1-3/8"		1-1/4"		1275'
4 180 Horn. FMJ	13.5 WW296	7/8"		7/8"		1050'
5 180 Horn. FMJ	16.0 WW680	3/4"		1-1/4"		1255'
6 180 Speer FMJ	15.5 WW680	1-1/4"		3/4"		1050'
7 158 Speer JSP	17.5 WW296	3/4"		1"		1265'
8 180 Speer FMJ	17.0 WW680	7/8"	1200	3/4"		1410'
9 180 Speer FP	16.0 WW296	1-1/2"	1275	1-1/2"		1510'
10 200 Sierra RN	16.0 H110	1-1/2"	1175	1-3/4"		1505'
11 RCBS 35-200 FN	17.7 WW680	3/4"	1430	3/4"		1540'
12 358156 GC	23.0 H4227	2"	1725	1"		1815'
13 358156 GC	20.0 #2400	1-3/4"	1725	1-1/2"		1765'
14 RCBS 35-200 FN	19.0 #296	1-1/4"	1510	1-3/8"	1-1/2"	1525'
15 RCBS 35-200 FN	22.0 #680	7/8"	1470	NA		
16 210 JDJ	21.0 #680	1-1/4"	1525	1"	2"	1585'
17 158 Speer JSP	22.5 #296	1"	1535	3/8"	2"	1575'
18 158 Speer JSP	25.0 #680	5/8"	1425	3/4"	2"	1505'
19 180 Horn. FMJ	20.5 #296	5/8"	1340	1-3/8"	1-3/8"	1455'
20 180 Speer FMJ	20.5 #296	1-1/4"	1380	3/4"	1-3/4"	
21 180 Speer FN	21.0 #296	1-1/4"	1425	3/4"	2"	
22 200 Sierra RN	19.5 #296	3/4"	1255	1"	1-1/2"	

All velocities rounded to nearest 5FPS.

¹Chronographed in 10" D.W. .357 Magnum.

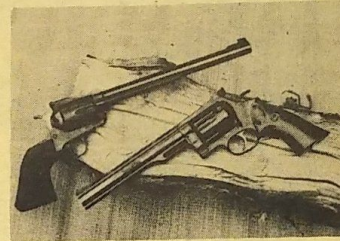
²Chronographed in 10" TC .357 Magnum.

Load #1, .38 Special cases.

Loads #2 through #7, .357 Magnum cases.

Loads #8 through #11, my normal TC loads.

Loads #12 through #22, loaded in .357 Maximum Brass.



Ruger and Dan Wesson .357 Maximums.

seating some of the 180-200 grain bullets out where they belong, and the Remington 158 JHP at 1600 is not an ideal silhouette load. Dan Wesson wisely went to a longer 2.075" cylinder and Federal ammo is better for silhouettes with a 180 grainer at 1250 fps. (Editor's Note: Anyone that designed factory ammo for silhouette shooting would go broke in a hurry!)

Can the .357 Maximum equal the .44 Magnum? Let's look at a few statistics.

The 250 grain .44 Magnum bullet at 1500 fps churns up 1250 fp of energy.

In the same .44 Magnum, a 320 grain SSK bullet can safely be driven at 1400 fps for 1392 fp of energy. So .44 Magnum looks like this:

250 grains @ 1500 = 1250 fp.

320 grains @ 1400 = 1392 fp.

For the .357 Maximum to equal the .44 Magnum, and then only on paper, the following would be necessary:

158 @ 1900 = 1266 fp.

158 @ 2000 = 1403 fp.

180 @ 1800 = 1294 fp.

180 @ 1900 = 1442 fp.

200 @ 1700 = 1282 fp.

200 @ 1800 = 1438 fp.

None of these velocities can be SAFELY achieved in the .357 Maximum.

With careful reloading with the end result being an accurate long range load, the .357 Maximum should be a better silhouette revolver than either the .357 Magnum or .44 Magnum. I would expect the ideal silhouette load to be a 180-200 grain bullet at 1300-1400 fps. The .44 Magnum still gets the nod for hunting other than small game or varmints.

In testing both revolvers, I used my favorite .357 revolver loads, along with my TC loads plus new loads assembled with Federal brass. All .357 Magnum loads were assembled with WW brass and CCI Mag Primers while the



RCBS 200 grain G.C. over 19.0 WW296 at 1500 fps shoots very accurately.

Federal Maximum brass utilized CCI small rifle primers. All loads shown extracted easily from both sixguns. You will note I did not push loads to the maximum in the Maximums. Both revolvers show excellent long range accuracy and one session saw 15 straight hits on a bolted down ram at 200 meters.

The best powders for the Maximum seem to be WW296 and WW680. Special dies are not needed as I used Lyman Deluxe Carbide .357 Magnum Dies with no problems. This set has the decapper in the full length sizing die and expanding of the case is done separately. Problems could possibly arise with die sets that have the expander on the decapping pin if the pin is not long enough to punch out primers with excessive bellling of the case mouth.

The .357 Maximum is a welcome addition, both revolvers are excellent performers. Perhaps this will open the doors to larger caliber "Maximums". Dan Wesson .44 barrels are threaded differently than their Super Mag so the thought of chambering a .357 Super Mag to .44 and attaching a .44 D.W. barrel will not work.

(Editor's Note: The .357 Maximum in the T/C does not have any problems and is selling very well.)

**YOUR
STORIES
WANTED**

RAW POWER

By Paco Kelly, Tucson, AZ

The breeze was going from me to the chubby looking wild horses heading towards the waterhole I was hiding near. Normally, a hunter would worry about his smell alerting the game, but not this time. I knew I was well covered. As the little herd of six or seven animals came to drink, two held back as if they were sentinels, both females. In fact, except for a few young males, the stallion in the group who drank first, was the only grown male among them. The females were protecting him.

That was one of the reasons I was covered with the black waterhole mud, plastered into the small ridge on the other side of the small waterhole. For days, I was trying to get a good shot at a male Zebra, but the females would always run tight around him like they were covering a quarterback. I could have nailed one with a rifle several times. But it was 1958, I was in Africa and I was using a Colt SAA with the short tube. This was before the big push to use handguns in hunting. Handgun hunters were scarce and far between. Handgun hunters that wrote about it were even farther apart. I could count them on one hand . . . Keith, Hagel, Eimar, and a few others . . . real thin soup.

I knew a hot loaded 44 Special would do the job. My Colt had two barrels, and two cylinders . . . 44 Special (which was a Cristy set) and the original 45 Colt. I had grown up on Keith and the 44 Associates. My 44 barrel and cylinder had taken big whitetail and two black bears. It was all done before the mighty 44 Magnum came on the scene. I was trying this because my Grandfather had told me once that he had shot a horse at point blank range, that was stomping his rider. The 45 Colt broke both shoulders according to the Old Man. (My Grandfather lived to be 96, and was always referred to as the Old Man, with respect).

So I was there in that stinking mud that smelled like 10,000 years of animal dung, to prove my Grandfather right. Because at the tender age of 19, and owning that Colt from age 14 . . . I never hunted with the 45 Colt setup, always the 44 Special, with Keith's prescription, 240 grain semi-wadcutter over 18/2400.

I fired that shot that day not knowing that it would start a love match for me and the damn 45 Colt for

over 26 years. Yes, the Zebra fell like a ton of bricks, and even more surprised than him were the two black guides I had with me. They had been watching the crazy white man through binoculars. Handguns were rare in Africa in those days outside of a Webely or two, you didn't see them. The ones you did see were on policemen. Since I was part of a party of advisors training Police and Military forces that had commingled responsibility, my funny 'cow-boy' gun was overlooked officially.

My two guides who had hunted on and off with me for almost two and a half years total, always expected the unusual from Mau'dib, my African name, and no, I'm not going to tell you what it means. They saw me handload my 44 Special and a rifle that shot a 9.3mm on a 30-06 case, with cast bullets. Handloading then was like black magic, and indeed, they thought that old Mauser had some kind of magic in it. And after they saw that big Zebra fall to one shot of the Colt, they suspected it was in the same league as the rifle. Africans were terrible superstitious anyway. Actually, I was also very surprised at how well that factory round had done, myself.

I only had 50 cases of 45 Colt brass as I remember, from the one box I brought over with the gun. I had 250/44 Special cases and hand loading tools, and a Lyman mold. I had them for the rifle, also. So I had an Arab gunsmith make me some handloading tools for the 45 Colt. I used 45 ACP ammo broken down for the components. The 230 grain full jacketed bullet over the powder from a 45 ACP case plus a third more. From drop tests, I was getting about 1000 fps, and thank goodness that Colt had been made in the '30s. Surprisingly, the 452 ACP full patch bullet shot very well in the 454 caliber barrel.

In late 1959, another member of our team and I stopped in an African village for water for our truck. We were horrified . . . The people were dying of starvation . . . I should say women and children were dying, because there were no men anywhere. And we never found out why or where the men were . . . and believe me, we raised a hell of an official ruckus. But the point of the story is I shot one of the largest 'buck' animals of antelope thin skin creatures in Africa. They will go almost 1800 to 2000 pounds. Not as tall as a moose, but plenty big and blocky . . . and as gentle as a house cat with no claws. I hit this large bag of meat right behind the shoulder at a good 50 yards with my Colt and the

handload with the 230 grain full jacket. I had fired the second shot as soon as I could without looking for any affect the first might have made, I was out to stop this railroad car size animal without losing it. It was moving at the first shot, but sat like a pup at the second. One in the back of the head at 10 feet finished it. And the village had meat until relief could reach them. Most likely the largest animal ever taken with a Colt 45.

The first bullet broke a rib going in, and stopped in a rib on the other side! The second hit the spine over the legs, I wish I could say I planned it that way. The bullet was lodged in the spinal column, which was three inches of bone and cartilage across, and it was shattered! The third was lost in the brain. Needless to say, my respect for the 45 Colt was growing very strong.

About this time, the President of the United States, the one before Kennedy, was swayed by advisors around him that South Vietnam needed technical help, aid, and military training. The French just a short five years before had their asses kicked right out of the entire region . . . all of Southeast Asia. I was young and believed sitting in that C47, heading for a country I couldn't pronounce, that we were going to train the men who would become the trainers of South Vietnam's forces. Forces that would keep the Communist Northern Armies from swallowing up the south and the rest of Southeast Asia. Good against Evil . . . a simple ideal that could have been true. Certainly we all believed it, including the President . . . and a few after him.

A bitterness set in quickly . . . I think the grunt level soldier, advisor, and technician knew from the early beginning, the U.S. was going to get its ass kicked, also. But real losers in that whole war were the people. What difference does it make what flag you carry, if your boots are trampling the village's rice paddies? You save the village to starve through a rough winter. You vaccinate 25 children in a village so they won't get the flu and other diseases. And Charlie comes back two days later and cuts off each child's arm you vaccinated . . . Let me tell you that 45 Colt saw a lot of action. And it absolutely kept my hide in almost one whole piece.

I was able to buy 45 Colt cartridges in South Vietnam! They were cast loads in boxes labeled in Chinese, and shot very well. They were balloon headed cases, nicked and had Remington markings . . . I still have some. They Rockwell test at the same strength as modern brass. And I have no problem using them in strong loads in my Ruger . . . except I want to save them in my collection. Of course 30-06 ammo was available, but so was 30-30, 38 Special, and a few more unexpected calibers.

Southeast Asia was game rich when I was there. I don't know what it was like 5 or 10 years later (the U.S. was there almost 15 years). Outside of water buffalo that were nasty if you made them dislike you, which was real easy to do . . . I don't think there was anything really dangerous. I never saw a tiger there, or heard one . . . I don't doubt that they were around, but very shy. Snakes, of course, and the real problem was the insects . . . ugh.

But the birds I think were never hunted, maybe at one time by the French. Because you could buy 12

gauge shotgun shells. I used squib loads out of the 45 Colt and wadcutters out of a S & W 5-shot stainless snubby. We ate a lot of birds. I never shot a buffalo, since the ones I ever got close to were semi-tame. I say that because you always heard of some farmer getting stomped by one that was supposed to be tame.

I found out the Factory load out of the Colt was very effective. Or I should say re-discovered its power. Our forces up to at least 1920 were very familiar with the big Colt round.

When I was sent home, I went to college and my guns kind of got laid off for a while. The first to go back to full time action was the Colt. I moved to wilderness property, and almost lived off the land for a few years. The Colt took an unknown amount of game. I carried it everywhere. I carried a rifle also, and the majority of my game shots were done with that. But . . . and it is a big BUT . . . the 45 Colt cartridge loaded to about 900 fps with a 260 grain cast bullet took everything the rifle ever took. And within 20 yards the Colt acted as powerful as any brush rifle I owned. After hundreds and hundreds (I want to say thousands but you wouldn't believe it) of animals all over the world, taken with Colt . . . with what sounds like an enemy load compared to the 44 Mags ballistics. I'm sure one of the reasons the 45 Colt is so effective is that big almost half inch slug cutting a long wound channel right through.

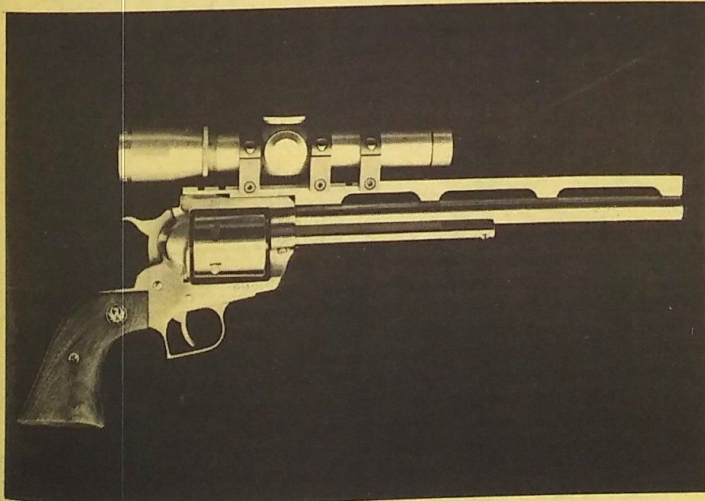
Also I'm like most shooters. I can handle the hot 44 Mag loads, and even enjoy shooting them often . . . but I like less recoil, in a smaller gun than the big mags. A nice neat compact 45 Colt single action is easy to carry, easy to shoot a lot. And is very powerful.

In my older age, I think I know a little more now than I did when I was a crazy kid, running around Africa, giving the Africans a fit. And one of the changes I've made is I have two 45 Colt cartridge guns I use. During hunting trips, I take a Ruger old style, which is smaller than the new style, with good stout loads. I push a 280 grain NEI cast semi-wadcutter at about 1200 fps. That is over what I consider comfortable, but not much, and it will kill anything I run into. The second gun and load is a new Colt single action, short tube and an NEI 300 grain cast blunt nose at 1000 fps. I once put one of these down into an auto's hood. The car died . . . the crook felt the better part of valor was to get under the front seat!

That blunt round nose drops badly past 100 yards, but I rarely try to hit anything alive past that mark, and probably a lot closer on the average. I like the 45 Colt round so much I had a Marlin 44 Mag lever action barreled to the Colt round. It is a shame there was never a mass produced rifle in 45 Colt.

The state of Virginia has a number of feral pigs running around free. These beauties are the offspring of the pigs let go in the Depression years of the '30s when the farmers couldn't afford to feed them, and let them go free. Pigs have the highest I.Q. of the animal population of the world. Don't write and tell me how smart your dog is, or how dumb pigs are for laying around in the mud, and other less wholesome stuff.

The wild pig is another creature altogether. Dangerous at over several hundred pounds, with tusks for teeth and a gristle plate over the ribs (that's



SSK's T'SOB full length vent rib scope base for the Ruger Silhouette (untapered) barrel guns, only \$140.00 installed.

(Continued on Page 16)

SPIKE — THE HARD WAY

By Gregory Smith, Ontosagon, MI

Thought I'd sit down and try to put together a little something for HHI. There's so much I'd like to talk about, but I have trouble putting it into words. I guess I could just tell how I got started with handguns, and eventually into HHI.

I bought my first handgun in 1973. It was an H & R nine shot .22 caliber revolver. I never really shot it too much until 1975 when I moved to my present house and had a lot of time on my hands.

The first couple boxes of shells were a disaster. I was ready to throw the thing away and go back to rifles. I happened to pick up a magazine on handguns and started reading about good groups, lots of game, etc. Well, I decided right then and there if someone else could do it, so could I.

The next day found me in town, buying a brick of .22 shells. I came home and burned them up in about four or five days. By golly, I was even starting to hit something once in a while! Must have got 10 or 12 beer cans out of that first brick.

I decided there must be a quicker way to learn how to master this damn thing. I went to the library and went through all they had on shooting. Finally, I found what I wanted, and it turned out to be what I'd known since starting with my first .22 rifle when I was eight years old: Sight picture, breath control and squeeze the trigger.

Well, I returned home and started over from scratch with my new brick of .22's.

Things went much better the second time around. I even managed to get my revolver correctly sighted in. I never could before, because I always had shots sprayed all over a two-foot target. My groups weren't very good yet, on the order of 4" at 25 yards. But I was determined to lick this thing if it took forever.

By the end of the summer (I started in May) I was shooting 1" groups at 25 yards. Not too bad for a beginner. I kept shooting daily, and by the next spring, I felt I was getting fairly good.

Now was the time to move on to bigger and better things. The starlings were flocking around quite heavily by this time. I figured I was ready with my H & R. After many misses, I sat down on a hill with starlings swarming all around me and asked myself, "What the hell am I doing wrong?" Then it came to me — sight picture, breath control and squeeze. Just because you're good on targets, you can't throw it all away when you switch to live game. So while still sitting on the hill, I rested my arms across my knees and squeezed off on a starling about 10 yards away. The feathers flew — and he dropped like a rock. Damn, my first live game with a handgun!

I repeated that performance many more times that day — and many more times since. The next winter, that handgun was my constant companion on rabbit hunts. All my friends thought I was nuts. But after a while, they started saying things like maybe I should try that, how do you learn to shoot so good, and no BB's to pick out of a head shot. A lot of them have tried it with varying success. One friend (whom I have to work on to join HHI) is a firm believer, and a better shot than I am.

I got started on bigger bores in the fall of 1977 when I started working as a forester for the county. My boss thought I should carry a weapon to protect their valuable equipment from bears. Well, their valuable equipment wasn't worth protecting, and coming across a bear in the woods is like finding a rare gemstone. When you did see one, he was always movin' out for parts unknown. But when he said it would be tax deductible, being a necessity for the job, I jumped at the chance. I scrounged all the gun shops around, but all I could find was a 6" .357 Colt Trooper. I took it and shot it a lot, and liked it. I never did think to try it on deer or bear. I don't know why, but I always carried a rifle when hunting.

I eventually got laid off and traded that Trooper and my (by then, worn out) H & R for a Colt Woodsman and some cash which I needed.

It wasn't until two years ago that I ever had another big bore or hunted anything except rabbit and ruffled grouse with a handgun.

Two years ago, my crippled up right leg (mine injury from Viet Nam) finally died on me. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't get it to hold me up any more. I wound up going to the V.A. to see what could be done. Well, the doctor said he could put a new hip in for me, but I would have to take it easy. Well, his easy WAS easy — no more nothing, including hunting! When I asked why, he said they are made to walk on, and not to fool around on. No running, no jumping, no lifting, and no hunting. I said that hunting was just like walking. And he said when you are carrying a gun in your hands, you can't catch yourself if you start to fall. So I said, "What about hunting with a handgun?" He didn't quite know what to say to that, but finally agreed that it would be OK.

Right after I got out of the hospital, I started looking for a new deer gun. I wound up with a Dan Wesson .44 six inch VH. A little heavy, but a damned good shooter. Well, all that summer, I practiced with that gun and my new leg, both. By bear season, I was ready. It turned out that I was, but the bears weren't! Never even saw one. Well, there was still deer season. And it was a deer season I'll never forget.

It was the third day of the season, and so far, nothing. It had been pouring all morning, and my brother and I were soaked to the bones. Finally about 1 p.m., he came over to my stand from his and said "Let's get the hell out of here and dry off for a while — we'll try it again this evening!" I said OK, and we headed back to the house. Well, about halfway back, out of a patch of tag alders, a deer took off. My brother hollered to get him before he jumped the river. When the deer heard him crashing through the brush towards the river, he turned and headed back my way and had to cross a small clearing. I didn't know what to do at first. I didn't want to shoot at a running deer, and I didn't want to let him get away, either. I pulled the Dan Wesson up and just as he hit the edge of the clearing, I whistled real loud. He slammed on his brakes and in an instant, the sights were on him and I touched it off. My brother hollered, "Did you get him?" I said I was pretty

sure I did, but at the shot, he bolted out of sight into another patch of tag alders. We went up to where he was when I shot and found hair and a chunk of lung. I smiled and said he wouldn't go too far. We followed his trail about 30 feet into the next patch of alders and found him, piled up. The most beautiful spike horn I've ever seen. All my brother could say was, "You and your damned handguns!"

I can't think of a better way to end this piece, except with my reply, "Thank God for handguns!"

SOMETIMES I GET LUCKY

By Wayne Randall, Lake City, MN

"Let's take a trip to Nashville," I said to my wife. Immediately she was suspicious! "What do you want to hunt in Tennessee?" After a dry run to Wyoming for whitetails, I thought a boar hunt was in order. Why not combine the hunting trip with a vacation? It was decided to leave the hunting part until last.

After spending several days in Nashville, taking in all the sights and attending the Grand Ole Opry, we headed for Crossville. I had booked a hunt with Ben Burton of the Renegade Range for boar and turkey. Ben had access to over 6,000 acres in the Cumberland Mountains of central Tennessee.

Ben and one of his guides picked me up early the first morning. It was a beautiful morning to be hunting as we arrived at the cabin headquarters. After the usual small talk, we got serious. Ben was interested in what I had brought to hunt with. When I pulled out my S & W M29, a funny look came over his face. "We'd better see how well you shoot that thing," he said as he grabbed a couple of targets and headed for the range. Not being the best target shooter in the world, I gave my usual mediocre performance. Ben agreed it was good enough for boar, but doubted I could bag a gobbler. He insisted that I take along a shotgun for the turkey. (Editor's Note: Typical B.S. — When you are paying the bill, hunt your way. Instead of demonstrating your shooting ability — walk out! Anyone in professional hunting circles that has to see you shoot isn't a professional!)

As we headed into the woods, John described how the hunt would be conducted. The morning would be spent on stand with the afternoon reserved for hunting with the dogs, if needed. The turkey would be taken whenever and wherever possible. I took a stand near a waterhole, while John headed out to try and drive a boar past me. After a couple of hours, I had seen nothing but a flock of

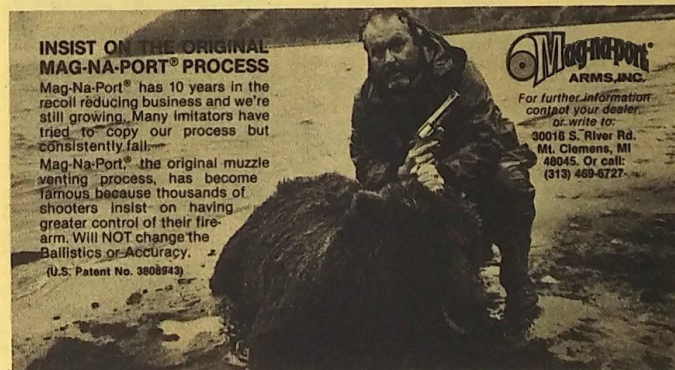
crows. Shortly, John returned, sweating like a pig. "What happened to you?" I asked. "I located a gobbler and was checking out the best way to stalk him when this damn boar put me up an old fence! Let's go kill that _____!" John's last few words left the boar's parentage in doubt! (Editor's Note: Typical low class preserve hype — I hear it 50 to 100 times a year from members.)

As we headed for the area of the boar, we heard a turkey gobble up on the ridge. A short distance from the top, John spotted the pig down below us. Now what to do? I decided on the turkey, hoping it was easier to find another boar than another turkey. Near the top of the ridge, I spotted the gobbler. Using brush to cover my movements, I crept to within 20 yards. My first shot broke both wings, causing the bird to take off running. Another shot and more feathers flew, but the turkey was still running. At my third shot, the bird dropped. The turkey weighed about 20 pounds, but showed little damage from the three shots. As I had hoped, the 255 grain cast bullets punched through with no expansion.

Next, we took off after the boar. I again took a stand, this time next to a tree in case I had a chance to use it for a rest. John's whistle put me on full alert. Suddenly the pig appeared, trotting towards me. At 30 yards, he stopped, partially hidden by a tree. I tried a spine shot that resulted in a hit too low to be very effective. The boar turned towards me, as if looking for the cause of his pain. Not being blessed with great eyesight, he couldn't pick me out, standing behind the tree. Off and running again, he presented me with a broadside shot. The next one pierced his heart and he dropped like a sack of rocks. Down and out in less than 10 yards. The autopsy revealed both shots had penetrated completely.

Later, back at the cabin, I asked Ben if he felt better about handgun hunters. He admitted that he did. Too many people come here with both a rifle and a handgun. They don't practice with their sidearm and as a result, can't hit anything. Only one other person has taken a turkey with a handgun here at Renegade. It was with a .45 automatic and it took three to four clips to finally hit the bird. Hopefully, I left Ben Burton with a higher regard for handgunners than when I arrived.

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.44 HANDLOADS FOR WHITETAILS

By Tom Atkinson
Hornesdale, PA

When I bought the Model 29 S&W .44 magnum, my ultimate goal was to become proficient enough with it to hunt for whitetail deer. Having taken deer with both my Ruger Blackhawks, a .357 and a .41 magnum, I must admit to perhaps having paid too much attention to the awesome tales of almost uncontrollable recoil in the big .44's, and of how average handgun shooters might not be able to cope with it. Of course, such yarns also served to whet my appetite to own and master such a handgun to the extent that I felt confident enough to hunt with it.

After buying the 29, I first tried wringing it out with factory fodder on targets. This gave me the opinion that the factory ammo gave more recoil than was acceptable for the kind of accuracy I was getting with it. So, I immediately headed for my favorite gunshop and bought a set of dies to reload for the .44.

I scrounged around in that abysmal mess I call my reloading closet and found some IMR 4227 powder left over from when I was loading for an M-1 Carbine. While not my favorite handgun powder, it did suffice to get me started since loading manuals showed that with a bit heavier load, 4227 would give me almost the same velocities as Hercules 2400 powder, which is the one I have had great success with in my .357 and .41 magnums.

Beginning with a 240 grain Speer hollow point bullet, 23 grains of IMR 4227 and Max-Fire Alcan large pistol primers, I found that accuracy at 25 yards was fair and recoil most acceptable, but the accuracy and grouping was not good enough that I would have felt comfortable afield for whitetails with it. With this load, shooting in groups of five, a holdover from being a single action shooter, I was able to get 25 yd. groups that averaged out at slightly less than five inches. Too many flyers and increasing/decreasing groups convinced me that it was the load, not the shooter, since even I don't shoot that bad.

I decided to stay with the 4227 for a while, and if it developed into decent loads and groups before I ran out of it, stay with it. However, subsequent loadings of 23.5 gr., 24 gr., 24.5 gr., 25 gr., 25.5 gr., and a maximum load of 26 grains gave only fair to good groups. Recoil increased from acceptable to quite heavy. A few measured groups told me that while the heavier powder loads gave the best accuracy and groups, none were satisfactory to me for hunting. I wanted the best I could get. Being fair to IMR 4227, I must admit that it may just be that loads from this powder do not digest well in my particular revolver, and that what I consider uncomfortable recoil, may be perfectly okay for another shooter. But, since I am writing about my search for a .44 handload that I felt adequate for whitetail hunting, I decided to switch to Hercules 2400 powder.

Returning to my messy old loading bench, I cranked out 50 rounds in bunches of ten rounds of each of several powder weights, making one major change in my loadings. Noticing that I was nearly out of Alcan primers, and not knowing where to get any more in my area, I switched to Remington 2 1/2 large pistol primers.

My first ten rounds were deliberately

held below the Speer manual's low listing of 21 grs. of 2400, at 20 grains. Bullet still the 240 gr. h.p. Speer jacketed and the Remington 2 1/2 primer. I did this because I personally feel that the 2400 powder gives higher velocities and pressures than what most manuals show. This load gave moderate recoil, but also tended to give a grouping that had too many flyers. The balance of the fifty rounds I had loaded, in lots of ten, with 21 grs., 21.5 grs., 22 grs., and 22.5 grs. Since this article is an effort to relay my most successful .44 magnum hunting load, I will skip results from the poorest loadings.

From the bench, at 25 yards, I found my 22.5 gr. load the best, with the 22 gr. load a close second. The heavier load gave me 3 1/2 inch groups and the 22 gr. load crowding 3 3/4 inches. Playing one of my sometimes brilliant hunches, actually a sure wild assed guess, I decided to split the difference and load at 22.3 grains of the 2400. Old T.R. finally did something right. For whatever reason, this merest of powder load changes gave me consistent groups of three inches, with an occasional group inside of three inches. These groups were fired from a good rest and very slow. . . I never said I was Wyatt Earp! Even though I've watched some police combat shooters shoot faster and better groups at the same range, I don't, and hope I never have to, rely on fast, efficient hits to stay alive.

After a few days during which I had enjoyed the pastime of emptying out a few Genessee beer cans, I went to a private range where we keep one sandpit open strictly for tin cans and bottle shooting. Refilling a few empty beer cans with, if you'll pardon the expression, water, I proceeded to test my handloaded .44's on these targets. The aquatic display that resulted from a hit on one of these water filled cans, showed me that I was getting hitting power equivalent to factory loads that I had given this same test. Since my quarry was to be considerably larger and tougher than a water filled can, I moved to a local farm for testing on some woodchucks, one tough little critter.

This field test gave me four woodchucks to make Hassenpfeffer out of, and some very satisfying results from my handloads. All four chucks were taken with one shot kills, and tissue destruction showed that the big 240 grain hollow point bullets were expanding properly with one exception. The third chuck was hit just back of the left front shoulder, and for some unknown reason, the bullet did not open up hardly at all. Entrance hole was almost the same as exit hole. I believe this could have been caused by one hard bullet or from a jacket that was slightly thicker than others, a problem that seldom occurs when I'm using Speer bullets. The chuck was still a clean kill, since the bullet hit vital organs on its way through. A comparative hit on a deer would probably result in the same effect on the bigger animal.

I would have liked to have this part of my handload test be a report that I took a prize eight or ten point whitetail deer this past season with the 29 and my own reloads. Unfortunately, this did not happen. . . at least not this

year anyway. I did, however, manage to connect with a doe during Pennsylvania's antlerless season, and the .44 did its job right well.

The deer weighed approximately 110 to 120 lbs, and my hit was almost exactly where I had pointed it. Knicking the left front leg and entering through a forward rib just behind the shoulder. The 240 h.p. bullet mushroomed well, leaving part of the jacket just inside the entrance point. It then continued on through the chest cavity, heavily damaging lungs, and then deflecting backward off of a right side rib and coming to rest in the right hind quarter. Expansion perhaps should be better for larger game, but since my intent was to develop a good .44 magnum load for whitetails, and my results were meat on the table. . . why mess with success?

GO BALL!

By Paco Kelly, Tucson, AZ

The sport of handgun hunting has grown faster than most realize. The splinter sports like handgun silhouette and the many combat type matches have made handgunners multiply faster than anyone involved ten years ago would have dreamed possible.

Increased consumer interest has brought about a demand and market for new products such as powerful new handguns chambered for rifle and rifle-type cartridges, powders, bullets, primers and accessory items. As with most things in life, the full potential of today's possible handgun loads are not being utilized by the "average" shooter.

Winchester-Western has been into ball powder since circa 1933. The Western Cartridge Company revolutionized the powder market with cooler burning powder, less pressure and more velocity than conventional powders of the day in many applications. Up until 1974, ball powder was good, but it had some problems.

If the primer wasn't hot enough and the crimp tight enough, you had a good chance at inadequate ignition and a squib load, or worse, a slug in the forcing cone and the cylinder mouth. Even when you properly loaded them, ball powders fouled, and not just a little bit, either. Black gop!

But the hallmark 1973-74 winter passed and Winchester-Western revised their 1968 line of ball powders. Not just worked over old formulas, but honest to goodness new stuff. Up to this time, 2400 was "the" powder for magnum handgun loads. It was THE powder in the .44 magnum. 22 grains of 2400 under a 240 grain semi-wadcutter, made the Keith legend. But WW-296 slipped quietly on store shelves.

Occasionally, a powder company will introduce a new shotgun powder. Then the handgun reloaders will work with it out of their short barrels, and make it do things the manufacture never thought possible. Red Dot and Green Dot are two early examples. Blue Dot, which was developed for shotshells, is now finding space in reloading manuals in the handgun sphere. In fact, the 41 magnum and Blue Dot were made for each other, in medium warm every-day hunting loads.

When it comes to raw power, when heavy handloads are wanted, needed, or when you know your favorite handgun is going up against large game and you want a load to match. . . When you want power without

excessively high pressure. . . When you want your cake and want to eat it, too, you want WW-296, or Hodgdon's H110.

The giant of the handguns for hunting is the Ruger Super Blackhawk in the king of calibers, the .44 magnum. The S & W Model 29 and several others are fine handguns, but will become as loose as a red light lady of the night, if subjected to the heavy loads the Super Ruger takes in stride.

For example, 26 grains of IMR 4227 gives approximately 1480 feet per second out of my Ruger for 973 foot pounds of muzzle energy, from a 200 grain hardcast SWC. This load breathes heavily on 41,000 CUD chamber pressure (that's 21-1/2 tons). That's a top pressure for even the Super Ruger. It's useable in it for at least 3,000 rounds before a tuning is needed, but I wouldn't put 50 of these loads through a S & W 29, or some others. Blow the guns up? No, but it would likely begin to slightly stretch topstraps and induce other problems.

Yet 25 grains of WW-296 behind a 240 grain SWC, (40 grains of lead heavier than the bullet in the above load) gives 1580 feet per second for 1330 pounds of muzzle energy. Yet the cost in chamber pressure is over 4000 pounds less than the IMR 4227 load. I fire loads with 36,000 to 37,000 pounds of pressure in my S & W 29's and Cattleman handguns often.

Let me say it again, though you have read it many times. . . All handguns are different. You must work up to heavy loads from 10% to 15% less than listed, in 1/2 to 1 grain increments. I place a premium value, not only on your guns, but on your hands, as well. If you have ever had a handgun come apart in your hands as I have, you would realize how sincere I am about taking care not to hurt yourself. Not just with the loads I write about, but any you read about.

Even everyday practice loads can give higher velocity with less pressure and recoil with WW-296 or H110 than with many other powders.

A 225 grain lead bullet propelled by 22 grains of 2400 will give you about 1460 feet per second. That translates to one thousand sixty-five pounds of muzzle energy, with about 38000 pounds of chamber pressure. A darned good load. . . I used it for years and thousands of rounds! With the SWC shaped bullet, it was a consistent killer of deer-sized critters out to over 100 yards. Now 20 grains of Winchester-Western 630, a good ball powder, gives 1460 feet per second. Yup! The same all around velocity, but at a cost of only 34,500 CUP chamber pressure. Seventeen grains of Blue Dot is also in this velocity ballpark, but with pressure going above the 2400 load. So why subject your valuable guns to un-needed strain?

An easy load with 296 and the SWC 225 grain lead bullet is 24 grains for 1500 fps and over 1100 pounds muzzle energy at a low 3500 CUP pressure. That semi-wadcutter shaped bullet at these speeds will kill consistently on big game. I have taken two big mule deer with that load with four shots.

Now remember, if you use jacketed bullets, you increase friction and pressure, and decrease muzzle velocity. I use C.C.I. pistol primers with my ball powder loads. They are hot without being magnum. Not only do I roll crimp, I also run all the brass through a sizer that squeezes it so a hardly visible shoulder appears behind the seated

(Continued on Page 12)

Go Ball . . . (Con't. from Page 11)
slug. I've had no failures to ignite properly so far with that drill. I did it at Elmer Keith's suggestion, when I complained to him about ignition problems, several years ago. He also told me to watch magnum primers as they escalate pressures . . . and he's right!

By the way, I do not like the ball powders in the Auto Mag. Some of the unburned powder always builds up where it's needed least, in the action. Eventually, that causes action and cycling problems. That's unfortunate, too, because I've gone safely to 28 grains of 296 behind 200 grain jacketed hollow points, in 44 Auto Mag CDM Mexican brass. Using 308 match military brass, I had to stay at 25.5 grains of 296. Military brass is much thicker and though 296 can be slightly compressed safely, excessive pressure does become a problem.

The big reason I don't hunt with the Auto Mag, or plink, or practice, is its bad habit of tossing brass helter skelter. Like the 45 auto, it usually spits it where I can never recover it. In any given shooting day in the field, I will lose 30% of the brass fired out of autos and waste a lot of time looking for the ones I do find!

For those who don't mind or are better at finding brass than I, more power to you. Using the Auto Mag Model 100, 6-1/2" barrel, I averaged several hundred pounds more muzzle energy than from my same length S & W 29. If it weren't for its case chucking problems, I would use it extensively in the hunting field. It is a fine pistol!

Experimentally, I achieved 1690 F.P.S. with Hornady's 265 grain bullet and mention this load, a definitely over maximum 44 magnum load, only to show that the handgun today is on the brink of rifle velocities. The handgun today with the powders and other components on the modern market have more power potential than some rifles had 80 to 100 years ago.

In fact, Winchester-Western's 1977 Sporting Arms Ammunition and Re-loading Components Booklet lists 99 rifle cartridges and their velocities and muzzle energy today. This experimental Ruger handload is more powerful or almost equal to the same power as 43 of those rifle loads. That includes MORE power than the factory 45-70 with the 405 grain bullet. When this hot load is reduced 2 to 4 grains for much more safety, its only 120 pounds of muzzle energy below that factory 45-70 load. I've fired over 7000 rounds of the reduced load in my Super Rugers over the last three years without a problem.

Try a can of WW-296, using WW or other reliable data. I think you will be impressed. Just remember, mag spark plugs, and tight piston rings are the name of the game, for good ignition.

WW-296 or H110 is more efficient, gives more velocity, more muzzle energy, less pressure, and less wear and recoil. Remember also that hot pressure gases in rapidly fired handguns wears out the barrel, not thousands of rounds of heavy loads fired sensibly.

H110 does everything 296 does. How about these loads: 1873 fps out of the Super Ruger with a 180 grain bullet. That's over 1400 lbs. energy with only 33,000 CUP. Or a 210 grain slug at 1848 fps and almost 1600 lbs. muzzle energy and at only 35,500 CUP. How would you like a load of a 250 grain bullet, giving 1602 fps and 1425

pounds of muzzle energy? Some more of my heavy loads, right? No! These are the recommended loads in the 1977 'Hodgdon Basic Loading Data' pamphlet. You can get one by writing the Hodgdon Powder Company, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66202. The 1978 and 1979 pamphlets might be at your local gun store. The little pamphlets state to reduce "data 6% to start. Work up in 1/2 grain increments, watch closely for excessive pressure signs" . . . That's not a heavy warning, just a sensible one. W-W 296 and H110, tight crimps, and hot spark, and you will get a whole new set of velocity figures for your magnums, wildcats, and even the moderate calibers like the .38 Special, and the numerous loads in .45 Colt Long. A new age of handgun hunting is being born. And these new powders and more to come, with new steels and handgun designs, will bring even greater popularity to our sport over the next five years.

RUGER BUTCHERING

By Michael J. Slaback
Minneapolis, MN

Deer season, Minnesota 1982. Cold, expected; overcast, expected; virtually snowless, unexpected. The area I was in had a three day season (why did I ever leave Wisconsin?) bucks only, and I had never seen the area prior to hunting it. Needless to say, I came home empty handed. That left me unhappy and unsatisfied. I tried to alleviate those feelings by going snowshoe hare hunting in the Mille Lacs Wildlife Management Area.

Snowshoes turn white in winter to blend in with the snow. Now remember, I said virtually snowless a while back, and nothing had changed. Talk about sitting ducks (hares). Snow white against the forest brown, sitting still, assuming their camo is working. Mother Nature can be a dirty mother. We scored often enough to get a variety of hit locations, some (head shots primarily) put them down and out. However, a hit anywhere else with our 22's was just the beginning of the chase. After re-shooting a few that should have been goners with the first shot, it became apparent that either more power and/or a bigger hole were called for. Upon researching the options in .30 caliber, the Ruger Blackhawk emerged the only choice. So, along with some other toys I've wanted for ages, I bought a .30 carbine Ruger revolver.

I purchased three complete sets of SBH grip frames and hammers from Ruger and got very prompt service, plus a nice surprise. They sent a refund of 24% of the list price. They also state in their literature that the SBH grip frames come in the white so they can be match polished to the gun they are going on. Another nice surprise, all three grips came blued.

Disassembly and reassembly of Blackhawks is quite simple. Only one procedure requires ingenuity, the compression of the gate detent spring, which allows the trigger/cylinder latch pivot to be removed. To solve the problem of holding the gate detent spring down while drifting the pivot out of the frame, I used a small C clamp with the foot removed from the adjustable side. This left a metal pin about 1/8 inch long and the width of the spring. Simply fit the clamp to the frame with the pin end of the clamp on the spring. Tighten to compress the

spring and drift out the pivot. So simple even I got it right.

With hammers and frames installed, I went out to do some shooting. And found a problem. The .30 especially, and to a lesser extent, my .45 were misfiring. After some head scratching and a lot of advice on what the problem could be, I decided to compare carefully with my SBH which has never failed to go bang. On the .30 and .45, the firing pin wasn't protruding as far as on the .44. When the transfer bar was pushed in manually, the pin was long enough, when the hammer was dropped, the pin was almost non-existent. Problem, too much hammer face where it hit the frame; solution, very carefully take the excess off the hammer with a file. Soon the pin protruded as far as on the .44. Took maybe half an hour, worked like a charm.

In the process of working out the misfire problem, I decided to order fast hammer springs from J. D. Therein I developed a new challenge. How to compress and remove the hammer strut spring. Actually there is nothing to it, simply put the strut in a vice and compress the spring enough to put a nail through the strut hole.

I thought of replacing the rear sights with white outline custom sights but decided not to. Ruger provides the outline on their rear sights, but no paint in the outline. Bought a small bottle of auto touch up paint and filled in the outline. A lot less work and expense than buying sights and putting them in.

You know, it seems I have spent most of my summer waiting for parts and very little time shooting. What's worse, we lost access to the land we were using to keep in practice. I'd go silhouette shooting, but there's no unlimited revolver category and nothing I have save the .22 is stock. I'm getting so frustrated I want to go out and buy some land just to shoot on. This is getting to be a serious problem for urban shooters. Our local indoor range charges \$8.00 per hour. I like to take the afternoon and do my shooting leisurely, no way I can afford to shoot there! Plus there are no trees, no breeze, no relaxation. It's not fun when you have to do it inside. The outside gun club ranges around here charge by the gun, usually \$2.00 per gun. That's \$10.00 alone in Rugers, add in the Contenders, and I'm spending more for shooting time than is possible on my budget.

Now a little commentary. I have found the articles in THE SIX-GUNNER to be the most versatile and reliable source of reloading information available anywhere. All the loads I end up using are products of fellow HHI members research. And wouldn't you know, just as I start getting interested in the .30 carbine, Kelly's treatise on the cartridge and the gun shows up! Thanks, fellas, great timing! For my money, there is no better source of info on guns and loads in circulation. I have long since given up on the gunzines. If I read one more article on how the Ruger Single Action works, I'll throw a fit. (I do exempt RIFLE and HANDLOADER. They cover material as if the reader knew which end of the gun to pick up.)

Hope my experience butchering Rugers is of some value. Anyone who is interested in the parts can call (612) 825-6608. Right now, I'm home most of the time.

I want to comment on the Thompson/Center people, I sent in a frame

from 1975 manufacture and a .35 Remington barrel to have a functioning problem checked out. In the course of fixing the problem, they completely up-dated all the internal frame parts, brand new everything. FREE! I have never in my life encountered such service. My deepest thanks to everyone at T/C . . . if only they made cars.

TEST MEDIA

By Paco Kelly, Tucson, AZ

"Hell, Paco! When you've seen one water filled bottle hit with a bullet, you've seen them all!"

My friend's words echoed in my mind, two days later, as I tested another batch of loads . . . on water filled plastic bottles. Sure, they all burst open with a dramatic splash, but the question was, did they burst exactly the same with different loads? No, they didn't, any more than any number of deer hit in the same spot die all the same way. How many times have we gone varmint hunting, and watched a number of varmints die from a number of loads and calibers, and out of habit, say something like . . . "Hell, you should have seen them vaporize" . . . or . . . "We blew them into a red mist."

But if we stopped and thought about what we really saw, we would have to admit not only was there a lot of similar destruction . . . but . . . and it's a big but . . . there was a lot of different damage, also. One varmint may really be blown to small hunks of meat and tissue, just like a plastic bottle with the same load. The next varmint with a different load and caliber, may be ripped wide open and spread over a few years. And hunters tend to say of both . . . "We blew them up and . . ." And as true as that statement is, there is evidence of different bullet performance, and we should take note of it. We surely pay enough for that performance, we should know not only what the manufacturer states it does . . . but what it actually does, at the target.

(Continued on Page 13)

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There are obvious answers, like a bullet just zipping right through a plastic half-gallon of water, that bullet's not good for varmints. But on the other hand, a bullet that shatters a bottle into total destruction at 100 yards, should never be used on big game. Close inspection of test bottles, will show many recognizable damage trends by bullets made for more middle-of-the-road performance. Putting three or four bottles in a row will give you wound channel damage and bullet performance through much resistance. Shooting the same bullet at various distances into water bottles will show its performance at reduced velocities with rotational speed intact. Reduced loads to mimic distant target hits up close sacrifice rotational speed, and affect expansion.

Bullet expansion or the lack of it becomes very obvious, when you start examining a string of bottles hit at 50, 100, 150 or 200 yards or more. Just for fun, those that own SSK's .375 JDJ T/C or the Winchester .375 Big Bore, try hitting a string of half-gallon water bottles at 50 yards. First with the 270 grain bullets on the market, Winchester, Remington, Hornady, etc. . . . Then try another string at the same distance with the Speer 235 grain SP as fast as you can push it. The first thing the comparison will show us, is the 270 grain SP opened up a lot more than the 235 grain SP. Just backwards to what I thought they should do. That 235 grain .375 spirepoint is one tough cookie. It is designed for .375 H & H rifle velocities (minimum).

Four or five bottles in a row hit with either of those two bullets, visually act the same. In other words, two big splashes. The damage on close inspection though, will show the bottles hit by the 270 grain .375, especially the first and second hit, is much greater than the first two or three hit by the 235 grain .375. Looking close you can even make out the difference in water damage as a secondary missile, and bullet expansion. In this test, the bottles tell you the 270 grain bullet is fine for lower velocity out of the T/C or Winchester. But the 235 grain slug, is not for use on deer, or small animals, from these two guns. But if you are hunting moose, elk, big bears, etc., it might be just the ticket . . . but test it at the largest, or longest range you think you might run into.

Another good test medium, most think is no good, is sand. Firing any bullet does two things. It stops the bullet fast, and it expands it to its largest possible potential. Again, that doesn't seem like much, and proves little. But on close inspection and observation, will give you some interesting comparisons. And answer some pertinent questions . . . Does the bullet lose its jacket? Did it mushroom all the way back to its heel, half way back, only at the nose? What is its retained weight? What is its retained weight in comparison to others of the same weight and caliber, but different manufacturers, fired into the same sand with the same load? Bullet construction or lack of it becomes obvious here. And believe me, if big game is your target, test the bullet you intend to use every way you can think of . . . a big bore heavy-weight bullet may look formidable, but lots of them are not up to big bears, moose, elk, and others. It is much better to have them smash and rivet, break-up, or come apart in the sand,

than it is coming apart on some grizzly's shoulder bone. . . and getting his angry attention focused on you. And of course, the reverse is true, a bullet that only mushrooms a little in the sand is no good for lightly built game. Cast bullets fired into sand show what your alloy and temper will do to the bullet's ability to hold together.

I'm very well known by my associates for either killing or trying to kill everything on earth with cast bullets. Because I have the factual idea that prior to about 1890, all the animals on earth were taken with cast bullets, all the wars were fought with them, all the target shooting, national and international, was done with them . . . and they were certainly not found second class by any of the above uses.

Jacketed bullets came along not because of performance needs in killing game, two legged or four. But because the new smokeless powders brought higher velocities, and cast alloys of the day couldn't perform well at those levels (they can today). The fantastic performance of jacketed bullets developed from 1900 through the 1970's. But the expense has, also. And in truth with new alloys, and heat treating, casting, and cooler burning powders . . . we can match anything jacketed can do . . . anything!

Cast bullets perform differently when they hit game than jacketed bullets do. And this difference is not understood by many who have not taken a deep interest in cast shooting and hunting. Rotational spinning is an important factor in killing power with cast bullets (referred to as CBs). As the CB hits and enters the animal and penetrates, it mushrooms like the jacketed, that's where the similar action stops. The CB spinning (rotational spin) shears off the outer edges of the mushrooming lead away from the bullet as it is passing through the animal. These lead particles shearing off have a good deal of velocity of their own, and become secondary missiles spreading out from the wound channel. I've found fragments as far away as four and five inches from the channel, many times in important organs like the heart and lungs not originally hit by the CB. Again, it's important that you give close observation of bullet performance, no matter what the media is . . . even flesh.

So cast bullets do mushroom . . . and the portion left in the sand, the depth of its channel, and the length of CB left, gives you an idea how fast or how deep that CB will go before it is 'worn' down, for lack of a better term. And that gives you an important idea on how well your alloy, and tempering process, is working for you.

Just like with jacketed, you want cast bullets that can be used on varmints and pests to come apart as quickly as possible. And those CBs to be used on large game, to hold together longer — just 'wearooming' and giving deep penetration and a good wound channel. Sand will tell you how your bullets will act. Also point blank shots into sand at or near muzzle velocity distorts the bullet, cast or jacketed, much too fast. I try to always shoot at 50 or more yards into a sand pile.

If J. D. gets a lot of requests, I'll do an in-depth article on how to cast CBs for large game, small game, and varmints. It saves money, and it is fun. We have even worked out a system for making your own jacketed bullets with

SMITH & WESSON .44's

By John Taffin

It all really began in 1907. Smith & Wesson introduced a new revolver to fire an improved .44 which carried three grains more black powder than the 23 grain load used in the .44 Russian cartridge. The Russian was first chambered in the excellent series of Smith & Wesson top break single actions in 1870 and carried over to the functional, but homely, top break double actions brought out in 1881.

The new century brought a new cartridge, the Smith & Wesson .44 Special and a new revolver which departed from the top break design in that it was a solid frame. Innovative in two ways, the new revolver had a shroud under the barrel to enclose the ejector rod, and locked the cylinder in three places. In addition to locking the cylinder at the rear and at the front end of the ejector rod, the .44 Military Model of 1980 also locked the cylinder at the frame juncture in a magnificent piece of engineering that has never been equaled.

Shooters soon admiringly referred to the new big bore revolver as the "Triple Lock" because of its unique locking system. The big sixgun was available in both blue and nickle, fixed sight and target sighted models, plus barrel lengths of 4", 5", and 6-1/2", in .44 Special, .38-40, .44-40, or .45 Colt.

As so often happens, it was deemed necessary to bring the \$21 price tag down, so after less than 16,000 New Centurys were produced, the design was changed to eliminate the frame lock and the shrouded ejector and the Triple Lock was no more. Today, they bring premium prices from collectors.

The Triple Lock was replaced by the .44 Hand Ejector Second Model with the design changes to cut cost, and except for the firm of Wolf & Klar, the story would have ended. They convinced Smith & Wesson that shooters would buy a .44 Special with the shrouded ejector rod and they backed up their belief with an order for 3,500 revolvers, although subsequently only receiving about 1,000 of them.

Smith & Wesson listened and brought out the Third Model .44 Hand Ejector or Model of 1926. This model, basically a Triple Lock without the third lock, was produced, except for wartime interruption, until 1949.

Shortly after the war, Smith & Wesson decided to update the 1926 Model by adding a ribbed barrel, the now famous Smith & Wesson rear sight and the new post-war short action. The Fourth Model, or Model of 1950 was now a reality.

All of these sixguns were chambered for the accurate but anemic .44

Special. At 750 fps with a 246 grain bullet, the .44 Special factory load was well below what the brass and the Smith & Wesson revolvers could handle. A number of pioneer reloaders during the 1920's and '30's soon found the .44 Special was the cartridge for a combination of power and accuracy. Most notable of these early experimenters was Elmer Keith.

I have all of Keith's articles that he wrote for the "American Rifleman" during this time, and they make fascinating reading. His early experiments with the Colt Single Action .45 proved to him that both .45 brass and cylinder walls were too thin to provide the power he wanted.

Keith designed a new semi-wadcutter bullet in 1927 after experimenting with heavy blunt nosed 260 and 280 grain bullets in the .44 Special. His new bullet, which is still carried by Lyman, though somewhat modified, was the # 429421. This new bullet, which made "Keith style", a synonym for Semi-wadcutter, carried a flat point, a sharp shoulder, three bands of equal width, and a large square cornered grease groove.

Working with # 80 powder, Keith loaded 12 grains under his bullet in .44 Special balloon head cases and claimed velocities in excess of 1100 fps. When # 2400 powder came along, Keith dropped # 80 and worked up a load of 18.5 grains of # 2400 in the old balloon head cases, dropping to 17 grains when the modern solid .44 Special cases came along.

Keith claimed 1200 fps with his loads using # 2400 and duplicating his load using 17.5 grains # 2400 and his bullet cast hard and sized to .428 for my Colt New Frontier 7-1/2" barrel velocities of 1200 fps were attained. As usual, he was right.

Even though Keith and many others had used heavily loaded .44 Specials in Smith & Wesson Triple Locks, Colt SA's, and New Services for years without any problems, ammunition manufacturers refused to update the .44 Special, and to this day, except for one load with a 200 grain bullet at 950 fps, the only loading available is identical to the 1908 load.

The original .44 Magnum Smith & Wesson was a test gun built up, using a 1950 .44 Special Target with a specially heat treated and lengthened cylinder. When the new sixgun was made available to the public, a number of changes were made to the 1950 Target in addition to heat treating. The cylinder was lengthened, the barrel was made heavier, "target" trigger, hammer, and stocks were standard,

(Continued on Page 14)

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FIRST COLORADO ELK HUNT (cough)

By Bud McDonald, Lakewood, CO

and the best possible sights then available were put on the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum. The Smith & Wesson Micrometer rear sight with a white outline was (and still is) complimented by a ramp front sight with a red insert on a 6-1/2" barrel.

The first revolver was completed on December 29, 1955, with the 4" model being made available in the summer of 1956 followed by the introduction of the 8-3/8" length in 1958.

Having owned a pair of Smith & Wesson .44 Magnums since 1960, one 4" and the other 6-1/2", I'd never had the opportunity to fire the 8-3/8" barreled .44 Magnum. A request was made to Smith & Wesson for test guns in both blue and stainless. What seemed like an eternity, but in reality was only a few months passed, and I received word that I would receive both a blue and a stainless 8-3/8" .44 Magnum for testing purposes. Two months later, they arrived.

I felt like a kid at Christmas as I opened the packages containing the new Smiths. How would they compare to my 20 year old .44's? Does Smith & Wesson still maintain quality? Upon initial inspection, I was pleasantly surprised.

Both new revolvers are well finished, even though the blue is not quite as "deep" as my original '29's. The stainless is not finished flawlessly, but is better than most I have seen. Both guns lock up tight, are perfectly timed, with very tight barrel cylinder gaps, the blue at .003" and the stainless at .004". Both pairs of stocks are nicely figured Goncalves Olives wood and not the bland no-grain stocks I've encountered in the past years. The stocks fit the 29 perfectly, coming up even with the top of the backstrap while the 629 stocks just lack about 1/16" of coming perfectly to the top. All in all, they're a pair of beautiful revolvers.

Both Smiths had very good trigger pulls, weighing out at 3-1/4 # and 3-1/2 #, and I would like to be able to report that all Smiths are coming through as nicely as these two. But, two weeks after I received my pair, a friend brought over another 629 — 8-3/8" that he had just received. It was missing a sideplate screw and the hand was long enough that it was binding against the cylinder. You win some and you lose some!

Preliminary tests with these revolvers appeared in the report on gas check .44's in the April SIXGUNNER and since that time, I have tested them extensively both on paper and long range shooting including silhouettes. I made 10 straight hits on a clamped ram using the stainless .44, but alas, this was a practice session, not a match. Both revolvers shot very well with recoil being very noticeable after shooting the much heavier Dan Wesson and Redhawk .44's.

Here are some test results, all groups 5 shots at 25 yards from a padded rest.

Charge	Powder	Bullet	M629 8-3/8"	M29 8-3/8"
10 Gr.	Unique	#429421	1"	1"
22.5 Gr.	H110	#429421	1-1/2"	2"
21.8 Gr.	H4227	#429421	1"	1-1/4"
22.0 Gr.	#2400	Lee 214 SWC	1-1/4"	1-1/2"
21.0 Gr.	#2400	NEI Sierra FP	3/4"	1-1/4"
20.0 Gr.	#2400	NEI Keith	1-1/2"	1-1/2"
20.0 Gr.	#2400	JDJ 260	1-1/2"	3/4"
23.5 Gr.	H4227	OSS Copper	1-3/4"	1"
24.0 Gr.	H4227	#429244 GC	1-1/2"	1-1/2"
23.0 Gr.	H110	#429244 GC	1-1/4"	1-1/4"
27.7 Gr.	WW296	200 Speer HP	3/4"	5/8"
21.0 Gr.	WW296	220 Sierra FP	1-1/2"	1-1/2"
22.0 Gr.	#2400	240 Speer HP	3/4"	1-1/2"
22.5 Gr.	#2400	240 Horn HP	1"	1-1/2"

Even though these "brothers" won't stand the punishment of the DW's and Rugers, they still are the most demanded .44 Magnums by the public.

After a very successful Wyoming muley hunt, on which I bagged a very respectable muley with my .357 Herrett, I was looking forward to Colorado's combination muley/elk season. I had a bull tag and a muley tag. Cow tags are on a drawing, and I didn't draw. My cousin invited me to go with him as he has a very comfortable camper. I couldn't get off the first three days of the season, so we planned to meet "up on the mountain".

When Thursday arrived, I had everything loaded and ready to go. Leaving at 4:00 a.m., I got no further than Idaho Springs before hitting snow. It snowed the entire 3 1/2 hours it took me to get there. To make matters worse, I couldn't find my cousin. Well, hell, I thought, I got grub, a warm sleeping bag, and a cap on the back of my truck. I'm gonna hunt after coming all this way or else . . . or else freeze if I had known what I know now. I found a remote spot, backed the truck into a grove of spruce, set up my camp, including dragging in a big pile of quaking aspen for the night. Slipped into my "Tom Shippy" shoulder holster Tom had sent me plans on, put on my high gaiters as snow was up to my knees. Stomped around for the rest of the day, in a driving snow storm, seeing seven cow elk and two does before heading back to camp. It was still snowing and blowing! Wasn't really worried about getting out, as my 4x4 has traction lock on both axles, but as I prepared a meager dinner of bacon, beans 'n bread, I realized I was in for a night and a half. Snow blew in small cracks of my truck cap while I spent a good while stuffing 'em with anything I had. Had a big fire going out back but finally, at nightfall, had to hit the sack. Didn't fall asleep till after 3:00 a.m. The cold woke me up at 6:00 a.m. Cold . . . you ain't seen cold 'til you've stepped barefooted in -20° weather with a 25 mph wind blowing. Got the Coleman Stove going, but a bare foot stuck to the bed of the truck . . . that hurt! Tried making coffee. Everything I had was frozen. Water in the jug was solid as a rock. Wish I'd have put some in the coffee pot before it froze. Water, milk, potatoes, even eggs were frozen. (Ever try cooking a frozen egg, or dull your knife on a rock-hard 'tater?) Melted some snow which made a cup of coffee on par with what J. D. makes. Had a rough time choking it down. My bottle of jack black wasn't frozen, however, ole No. 7 doesn't make very good coffee.

Headed out, after a fashion, snow squeakin' under my boots. Never heard snow squeak like that. Hit a trail of four muleys. Crossed them hopin' to catch 'em off guard on down in the canyon. I was dry, lookin' for a creek or something lower down. Breakin' out of black timber, I glassed the bare mountain side, locating a small herd of elk, but didn't see a single bull. Would have taken me most of the day to get up where the elk were, so I stayed low, hoping for a loner bull or a decent muley. Long about 1:30, I came across another hunter. Had a strange lookin' rifle in his hands, plus he was lookin' at me as stupidly as I was lookin' at him. "Lose your rifle," he asks. "No," I said. "Just out for a stroll." "What kind of a rifle is that?" Used to

be a Remington 700, he said, but this morning as I loaded it, the bolt handle broke off. He had this hammer to open and close the bolt. I bowed out of there quickly. Was three miles or so from camp. Too cold to sit, headed back in the general direction of camp. Saw three more cows and four does a way off. At 4:30, I decided I'd had all the fun I could stand. I was so thirsty I thought about drinking my anti-freeze. Got the Ford warmed up, along with myself, busted through five miles of drifted snow (sweatin' it a few times due to snow up to midway on my door on the left side, with 1,000 foot-plus dropoff on the right side). Hitting the main road, I was 3 1/2 hours from my home, one hour to my friends, Steve Hockman's (HHI member) in Wyoming. With no second thoughts, I headed to Wyoming.

I gave Steve the ole sob story of the busted hunt (would have had tears, but couldn't cut frozen onions.) Somehow we got to talkin' 'bout a big rabbit BBQ we'd had during the Wyoming deer season. Decided to head down to the river in the morning with Steve's High Standard 9" 22 revolver and my Ruger MK I with a Leupold 4X scope.

Took ole Brown (Steve's F250) next morning down the North Platte to a place Steve could take you to half dozen times and you still wouldn't be able to find it again. Too damned many roads to take. Parking ole Brown, we rolled out, loaded up our 22's and lined up 35 to 40 yards apart. Slowly we started walking, handgrips held high as if we were using shotguns. Guess it's hard to break old habits. Steve yelled at me to slow down, 'cause those bunnies like to stick close. I'm all fired up and hard headed, as usual. I glanced over Steve's way, saw a bunny and yelled, "There's one, Steve!" At the same time, Steve looked my way . . . "There's one, Bud!" Mine ran into a hole. Steve threw that long barreled revolver up like it was a divining rod and blew the top off that bunny's head, running at 30 yards. I yelled at him, "That bunny is the unluckiest creature this side of the Mississippi." Saw a fat one sitting under a bush, but he up and beat feet for 50 yards. Grief for open sights . . . gravy for this 4X Leupold and MK I. Pop . . . and there's another head shot bunny.

We walked 75 yards and we could see bunnies loping out in front of us. Steve fired at one at 50 yards, missed to the right by 3". He chanted an old Indian proverb about the heritage of the sights on his pistol. (Fixed sights). A big jack rolled up under my feet, headed dead away, and nearly caused me to jump out of my skin. Jacks, if you've never seen one running, have a loping type leaping motion. I held on its head, but it appeared in my scope only on the up cycle, disappearing below the Duplex on the down cycle. Up cycle . . . pow . . . down cycle . . . up cycle . . . pow . . . down cycle . . . up cycle (I was getting the hang of it by then) . . . pow. Jack rolled ass over elbows. Just like a shooting gallery.

I located a couple burr cones and Steve gave 'em a go to find the aim point of his long barreled 22. It was shooting dead on at 25 feet, but 2" to the right. Hot damn, Steve said, let's go! I told him that he was from

Virginia, not Kentucky. That Kentucky windage is for the birds. We immediately jumped several more cottontails. I nailed one that stopped under a bush 20 yards off. Steve popped another in the head, running at 25 yards. He yelled that all he had to do was hold on 'em and the gun would take care of the lead. I wished I had a revolver with me. Any revolver. Especially my 3 screw 357 Ruger that had 5,000 rounds through it. I bought it new in '69 and it felt like an old pair of huntin' boots . . . comfortable! !

It started to blow snow, and it was getting colder. The bunnies headed for cover down along the famous North Platte River, very close to the overland stage trail. I spotted one in a 10' tall bush that was down over the bank a bit. All I could see was an eye and a part of an ear, due to the thickness of the bush. I showed him to Steve and told him that rabbit was home free. Steve said, "Hell, there's over a fourth inch hole to shoot through. I'm gonna try him." He steadied up with ole long Tim in both hands. The wind and snow was beating him about the head 'n shoulders. He was as rock steady as a long tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. SPLAT . . . it cracked as I saw the bunny flop over. Looking closer, we saw the little pill hit every twig it could have hit between the muzzle and that rabbit's head. (I think it even went out of its way on a couple of 'em). I went down under the bush, knocked my hat off a couple of times, scraped my elbows, jabbed branches in my eyes, but got the head shot rabbit. "That first rabbit you hit was unlucky, but this one's got him beat," I shouted up to Steve. We started to head back to the truck as a big fat bunny took off between our legs down along the ledge that we were on. We chased him as far as we could before the ledge gave way to . . . well . . . nothin'. Where in the hell that bunny went, we never found out. "That'll be our 'seed' rabbit," said Steve, as we walked back to the river bend.

I stopped Steve suddenly with my arms as I spotted a bunny right out in the open. Flipped the safety off Bill Ruger's finest as the Leupold 4X settled on an eye at 35 yards. Something between my brain and trigger finger happened, and the next thing I knew, the pistol went off and the bunny flipped over. Steve yelled (congratulations, I thought). I turned to thank him, but he was still yelling and jumping around. Was that shot that good? "No!" Steve shouted. "Hot shell case down my collar!" Thought he was gonna jump in the Platte for a second there, but a dropping of the drawers located the culprit, and Steve sent the spent 22 shell case towards heaven in the sky. I walked up to get the rabbit, but it was gone. Damn, where was it! He dropped like a rock. Steve found a hole which just happened to be in an old concrete culvert, and sure enough, down there was my dead bunny, 4 feet down. No sweat, jump down the bank, crawl on hands and knees into the tunnel with visions of 7 foot rattlers and 8 inch scorpions swimming before me. I grabbed the bunny, beat my feet fast back out, knocking my hat off on the way out. Damn . . . I hate this . . . that was a good hat, too. I crawled back in to get the hat . . . saw a bunny on the other end of the tunnel and yelled up to Steve through the hole. He plugged it with a well placed head shot.

(Continued on Page 15)

Elk Hunt . . . (Con't. from Page 14)

The wind was getting it by then, and the snow whipped into our eyes. We leaned into the wind and walked back to the truck, picking up rabbits as we went. Back in the truck, we had thoughts of a hot thermos of coffee, but had only cold potato chips. (Potato chips?) Steve said, "You ready to go get some bunnies now?" "I'm game," says I, as we burst through a big drift up to our bumper to some tall sage bush and delapidated buildings.

We carefully planned our strategy in two seconds, jumped into armpit-deep sage with both feet. A small knoll in front of us started growing bunnies. We both nailed one as they scampered here 'n there on the little hill. Over on top, a jack lit out. We both emptied our pistols on him, but I had the advantage. Slapping another clip into the handle while Steve fumbled with loose ammo, the jack stopped over 75 yards out as I sped another half clip his way before one thumped home. (Give me a break, guys! The wind was blowin' and I got snow in my eyes!) We swept back through the sage with bunnies rolling out in front. One ran right up to me. I couldn't find a likely lookin' rock, so I kicked dirt on him, but he only ran five yards or so. "Steve," I called. "Shoot that fat little sucker. He's too close for me!" Steve choked up as the bunny decided to high tail it.

We made a final sweep along an irrigation ditch, and the bunnies and jacks started rolling out. We had plenty of cottontails, so we started rolling the jacks. Downed two quick ones as they got in our range. Laid down for a better rest and zapped another before I found out I needed to load some clips. Fumbling with loose ammo myself, I watched Steve quickly dispatch two rabbits like an ole west gunfighter . . . pow . . . pow . . . pow . . . pow! And he began fumbling with loose ammo, also. With the driving snow and 30 mph winds in our faces, we decided we had had enough fun.

We found a gravel bar by the water and slowly cleaned all the rabbits. They were all nice fat rabbits, and not all torn up from shotgun blasts. No breaking a tooth on some No. 6's in these rabbits! As Steve was giving me most of the rabbits, I realized why some guys are friends and others are good friends. Here he was, with cold blue hands, helping me clean my portion of the cottontails. You look around. You'll find someone like him in a spell . . . a long spell.

I didn't have any elk steaks, or even a Colorado muley, but at least I got some white, sweet tasting bunnies for the cold months that were ahead.

As I sit here, munching on hot simmered rabbit (with a ton of fresh mushrooms put in at the last moment), I can't help but think about my first Colorado elk hunt. That, fellow HHI'ers, is what elk hunting is all about.

Test Media . . . (Con't. from Page 12)

out swaging tools. But I'm not sure how much interest HHI members have. Remember, I'm the fellow that hunted Africa with them, so I'm not a judge on reader interest. You have to tell us. Just drop a postcard to J. D. And the next time you are shooting into telephone books, water bottles, sand, or whatever, and some guy says, "Eah! What'cha doin'?" Take him by the sleeve, and tell him the facts of life.

SHIRT-SHOT GOAT

By Mike Mitchell, Munhall, PA

The Spanish Goat stopped in the middle of the dirt road, 50 yards away. The road took a turn between us, and as I began to aim, I found I could see only his head, legs and rear. His chest was behind a large cloth hanging on a low bush at the edge of the road. He was standing there, looking directly at me, and I knew if he took two steps, he would be out of sight. I decided to aim at the center of the cloth and as the .45 recoiled, the goat made a mad dash over the hill. He looked hard-hit.

As I walked up the road, our guide, Joe, asked if I hit him. Stopping in front of the cloth, which I saw was a shirt with a bullet hole in the center, and I told Joe I hit him.

Let's go back to the beginning. . . The previous night, the four of us had arrived at Keith Fox's Hocking Valley Hunting Preserve for the Second Annual Clairton Sportsmen's Club-Hocking Valley Late Winter Hunt. Clairton is a suburb of Pittsburgh and Keith's Preserve is a four-hour drive away in southeastern Ohio. Les Banya was with me again this year. The new additions were Chuck (App) McIntosh and Bill Greco.

The reservations for this three-day March 1983 hunt were made in November. Les wanted an Angora Goat, Bill and App wanted a Barbarioussa Ram, and I wanted a Spanish Goat. When we arrived Sunday evening, we found Keith and Joyce were out celebrating their anniversary. Their son showed us to our rooms and we were settled in when Keith showed up later in the evening. Joe, who was to be our guide, also showed up. I figured after last year, he and Jeff, the other guide, had flipped and Joe lost. While drinking a few pops, we found breakfast was still at 7:30.

Getting up at 7:00 Monday morning gave us enough time to wash and dress before the large breakfast we knew was coming. We had explained to Keith the previous night that Bill had a leg problem which prevented him from walking much. Keith said Jeff would drive Bill to the "tower" stand at the top of the hill.

We left the lodge about 8:15, and as we walked through the wild boar area to the section we would hunt, Joe explained we would still-hunt both sides of the road, with Les and I on the left, App and Joe on the right. The road follows the spine of the hill and the area is heavily wooded, except for a narrow field at the top of the hill.

I was closest to the road, and about a half an hour after starting and approaching the top of the hill, I saw a ram above me. A quick look through the binoculars showed it to be small and it looked like a Corsican to me. After getting Les' attention so he could see it, we began to move on. I looked up again and saw the first ram had been joined by a mature ram, which appeared to be another Corsican. It had a nice set of horns, and I debated on shooting. Then I reasoned that it was only a half an hour into the hunt, and I hadn't even seen a Spanish Goat yet. But I promised if I had no luck today and he was around tomorrow, I might change my mind.

We continued on until we reached the stand where Bill and Joe were. They were looking at the two rams which had basically followed us and were now 125 yards away; in the field.

I told Bill it was a nice ram and gave him my binoculars to see for himself. He agreed, but wasn't sure he wanted to try for it. It would mean a stalk since it was too far for a shot.

Les, App and I decided to continue on to the gate at the back-end of this section. When we met there about an hour later, Les and I had seen nothing. App had seen a Barbarioussa Ram, but it looked too small. We then decided to hunt back to Bill's stand. About halfway there, I heard two shots. We knew it had to be Bill, since we were the only hunters in the area.

As we approached the stand, I was down at the bottom of a small gully when two Spanish Goats suddenly appeared about 30 yards above me. Looking them over with the binoculars, the mostly black one in front had slightly longer horns than the other, which was primarily white. The problem was they were skylined and I thought the stand must be close behind them. When I started to climb out of the gully, the noise I made in the dry leaves spooked them toward Les. The black one then turned back and was below me. With the brush and trees, and the fact he wouldn't stop, I found I had no chance for a shot.

We continued on to the stand where App met us. The stand, however, was empty. We had no idea where Joe and Bill were. Les decided to see if he could find them while we stayed put. In about a half an hour, we saw Les, Bill and Joe coming toward us. We learned Joe had suggested Bill try for the ram. He left the stand and stalked to about 40 yards from the rams. This is when he fired the two shots I heard, from his Smith .44. Both shots turned out to be misses. The rams ran across the road and when Bill and Joe found them, they had been joined by the Barbarioussa App had seen. Bill had a hard time then since the ram would not separate from the other two. He finally did, and Bill made a fine shot at about 50 yards, hitting him low in the shoulder. The ram never moved. We congratulated Bill on his fine ram, then went back for lunch.

After lunch, we decided to use the same tactics as in the morning. When Les and I reached the gate at the far end an hour later, I had a glimpse of one or two whitetails. As I walked up the hill to the gate, App, who was about 50 yards above me, started firing his Ruger Super Blackhawk. The shots kept coming and I could see App running back down the road. I hurried after him, but couldn't see what he was firing at. When I caught up with him near the tower stand, he was looking at the Barbarioussa and small ram we had seen in the morning. He told me he had fired the seven shots at an Angora Goat, which at first he thought was a Barbarioussa. He didn't know whether any of the shots were hits. I also learned he had started with 10 rounds of ammo, leaving him with three remaining shots. When Les and Joe arrived, Joe decided we should hunt the side where the goat was last seen, going back toward the lodge. Les and I teamed up and came out near the bottom of the hill, having seen nothing. We weren't sure where Joe and App were, so decided to go back to the tower stand. As we walked down the road nearing the stand, we saw Joe about 30 yards away, coming up the

hill toward the road we were on. Twenty yards beyond him and also walking up the hill was a Spanish Goat. I started motioning to Joe to look behind him. He thought we were playing some sort of game. Finally, he got the idea, turned around and immediately dropped to the ground when he saw the goat. What happened next, I related at the beginning of this story.

The shot I took at the goat was with a Seville single-action that had been modified by John Linebaugh. The load consisted of NEI mold 260451, weighing 265 grains, leaving the 7-1/2" barrel at over 1600 fps. I won't tell the exact load since I do not recommend it for an ordinary .45LC, and J. D. wouldn't print it anyway.

We found the goat, which appeared to be the mostly black one I had seen that morning, dead about 50 yards down the hill. The bullet was a center chest hit, and may still be going, since I couldn't find where it hit after penetrating the goat.

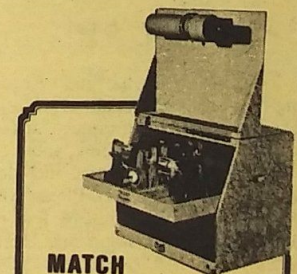
As we stood on the road with the goat, Joe retrieved his shirt which he had left on that bush the previous day. He found the bullet had made five holes in the shirt, since it was folded up. We then heard a shot from over the hill, where the goat had come from. We knew it was App, and also it was his last round, since he had fired 8 and 9 about an hour earlier. We went down the hill and found both App and his Angora about 75 yards down the hill. App had thought Les shot the Angora when he heard my shot, and wasn't paying much attention when he walked up on the goat. The last shot was a perfect low chest shot penetrating the heart and ending App's embarrassment. The Angora had long hair which hung straight down, and I believe some of App's shots were aimed at this hair.

(Continued on Page 16)

HUNT ANTELOPE!

Wyoming has plenty of antelope tags and some deer tags left and the greatest antelope population in history, due to four mild winters in a row.

If you want a hunt — with a 1982 statewide success ratio of 90% — write Wyoming Fish & Game Dept., Information Section, Cheyenne, WY 82002. They can tell you where the areas with permits and public land are available. Licenses are \$105.00 each for deer and antelope.



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Tuesday morning found Les, App, Joe and I out looking for Les' Angora. As you might guess, I ran into one not long after starting. As agreed, I fired a shot and then spooked the goat to the other side of the road where Les and Joe were. App and I waited on the road and about a half an hour later, Les appeared. He didn't know exactly where Joe was, so he went to find him while App and I continued to drive our side of the road. It began to rain about an hour later. Being hardy hunters, App and I went back to the tower stand, which is covered, to wait for Joe and Les. A half an hour passed before we saw Les and Joe 150 yards in front of us. Les was aiming his Smith .44 toward the edge of the field. He put the gun up and started running toward us. Once again he began aiming and I saw a small patch of white behind some small pines, Les fired and we went down to find Les standing over his Angora. It was a low center chest shot and the goat never moved. Thus ended the Second Annual etc.

My gun, as I stated, is a conversion by John Linebaugh. The standard Seville was superbly fitted with an oversize .45 LC cylinder, 7-1/2" slow-twist barrel and orange front sight insert. Not only is it strong, but it shoots all loads well that I have tried. John can do these conversions on most strong single-action frames. For more information, call John at (307) 587-6608, or write him at P. O. Box 1263, Cody, Wyoming 82414.

Keith Fox's Hocking Valley Hunting Preserve is located at 30680 Ilesboro Road, Logan, Ohio 43138. The terrain is hilly and you will have to work to get an animal. If you like a good hunt with fabulous food, call Keith at (614) 385-6473 for more information.

App and Bill used standard .44 Mag loads behind 240 grain jacketed bullets. Les used J. D.'s 310 grain cast .44 with the recommended amount of WW680.



HHI CAP

At long last! Just what you've been asking for! One size fits all. HHI logo in color on white background. Caps in four basic colors: red, yellow, green or black. \$8.00 Prepaid. (Price includes \$2.00+ for shipping costs). Please give second color choice. Quite a few in stock for immediate shipment. HHI, P.O. Box .357 MAG, Bloomingdale, OH 43910.

Write Your Story Today!

Cal Grip . . . (Con't. from Page 5) our shot with the dot than with iron sights, as where the dot is, is where the bullet goes.

My match 45 S & W Model 52 and High Standard Victor are all mounted with non-variable Tascorama red dot scopes and they effectively eliminate

eye focusing problems. The mounts are being developed for the Browning P-35 and S & W Models 39 and 59 also.

Enough about pistol mounts . . . Now that California has made handguns legal for deer this year, my Ruger Redhawk and I will try to get another story this season.

Raw Power . . . (Con't. from Page 9) right, no bacon, unless it's a female). They take a lot of killing. And I killed a lot of them, for food, and for trade of the meat. With very little fat in the meat, you could hardly tell it was pork, cooked right. The hide makes some of the strongest leather I've ever run into outside of a few African thin (?) skin animals. The point is, outside of the 41 and 44 Mags or any of the rifle handgun rounds . . . the 45 Colt is the only cartridge that will knock them down fast. The first time every time with any decent placed shot.

The 45 Colt is a good number of years over its 100th birthday. But modern guns, and new powders with heavy bullets make it just as much a killer round as you want. And all of that in some decent sized handguns! I surely hope it's still around when my grandchildren someday, sitting around an African safari campfire say . . . "The Old Man said he once killed a Zebra with one shot from a Colt 45! ! Do you believe that's possible?" . . . "Hell, I don't know . . . get his old Colt, let's try it!" . . .

FIRING LINE

Has anyone ever told the National Reloading Manufacturers Association that Omak Industries, Speer, CCI, RCBS is a discredit to them for manufacturing aluminum shell cases? Cases that cannot be reloaded and are littering the shooting areas. That encourages people to reload? That is disgraceful!

Why didn't Philip Briggs' article in the Feb. '83 issue on .38/45 give some loading data? Paco Kelly sure writes the greatest stories.

J. D., you had good insight on the .357 Max. I thought the .357 Max was all B.S. just like the .357 Mag was when it came out. Thank you for voting info about the NRA. Next year I am qualified to vote. . . . Danny Murphy, Sun Valley, CA

(Editor's Note: Phil's .38/45 was experimental and the cartridge has always been troublesome. I don't think I would print the loads due to the various .38/45 barrels and brass floating around. . . . JDJ)

I would like to thank you at this time for such a fine magazine. I would like to hear from any other PA resident hunters in my state. Also here is a load for anybody who has a 10 inch T/C .44 mag. A Hornady 265 grain JSP, backed by 21.5 WW296, CCI #350 primer. Accuracy is in the area of 1 inch at 50 yards. This was done with a 10 inch T/C with a Tasco 2X scope. Please pass the word on that Tasco pistol scope cannot take the recoil of a .44 mag pistol. I have broken the lens on this scope "three times". . . . Michael Gulas, Box 365-X, Lords Valley, Hanley, PA 18428.

I have enclosed a check for \$23.00 to cover my annual dues and the price an HHI cap. I've really enjoyed the SIXGUNNER and I am very happy to see this great paper expanded. A friend of mine recently joined HHI and I hope to get another friend signed up this year. My handgunning has been limited to the taking of a couple tree squirrels here in California. In the future, I hope to expand my handgun hunting as I now have a Redhawk.

Before closing, I must say the field editors are doing a terrific job. I really enjoy their articles. Larry Kelly, Phil Briggs, John Taffin and Bob Good, I wish to thank each of you for doing such a fine job. Also I'm still a Texan and the stories about hunting in Texas, particularly around West Texas, really turn me on — brings back a lot of good memories — huntin' 'flags', 'jacks', and what else we could for fun, meat and money. (Money-fur bearing animals.)

Congratulations J. D. Jones, you were my choice for the Outstanding American Handgunner Award. . . . John D. Valliant, Bakersfield, CA

I just finished reading my June issue of THE SIXGUNNER and, once more, it's great. While

reading the Memory Maker, it felt like I was the one in the stand. I will not be going hunting with my ".44 SBH" this year due to work. But will be there in '84". I was planning on buying a .357 Herrett T/C, but the more I read about the .375 JDJ, the harder I will save for one.

Keep up the good work, and congratulations on your Outstanding Handgunner Award. . . . Dennis Galan, Livonia, MI 48154.

Many thanks for your help on my missing issues. Still don't know what happened to the originals. (I got the June issue okay.) Don't know when my subscription runs out, but I believe that it is very soon, so I am sending in my check now. The extra eight dollars is for the HHI cap. About Paco Kelly's .30 carbine Ruger. I had an Old Model .30 Ruger with a 7-1/2" barrel that I had acquired in a trade. Unfortunately, some time I had run several cylinder loads of full-house factory loads through my 4" M29 without any ear protection (Ouch! ! !) Consequently, any L.W./ultra high velocity combo feels like an ice-pick is being driven through my right eardrum . . . with a sledgehammer! That includes the 180 grain Federal factory load through my 4" M29. That load isn't as bad in my Marlin M94 carbine, but that isn't a handgun and I can't see that load anyway . . . So I only ran one very painful (even with earmuffs) load through the Ruger and retired it until I traded it and some for an S & W M49 Bodyguard. (I am not that crazy about SA revolvers anyway) Lo Siento, Paco. . . . Larry Hunt, San Jose, TX.

Received the June issue of THE SIXGUNNER and probably like most other people, have read the entire thing several times at this point. Congratulations on selection as 1983's Outstanding American Handgunner. It is certainly more than justified. Noticed the comments about the January Hunt. I had spoken with you about this on April 13th when I called from New York, and again in my letter of April 17th when I ordered the HHI .44. To heck with my schedule, I want to go on this one. Still haven't thrown caution to the winds and cut the strap on the "Sixgun". That is one beautiful gun.

Think that I am going to be very happy with the .375 JDJ barrel and mount. The problem here is still in the location of brass. Bought a couple of boxes of .444 and am going to pull the slugs, dump the powder out and start over. That, however, is an expensive way to go. Realize that you will not read this for around a month since several of you are having a ball on the African hunt. Very much look forward to reading about it in THE SIXGUNNER and probably other publications as well. . . . John P. Klingstedt, Norman, OK.

Congratulations on your being selected as 1983's Outstanding American Handgunner! GREAT! JUST GREAT! Please put me on the information list for the HHI January Texas Hunt. I hope to get a story off to THE SIXGUNNER soon, but in the meantime, I've really been enjoying the articles the other members are sending in. . . . Tom Welsh, Brockway, PA.

Could I please get your advice on something? I would like to get a gun to use as a backup gun when using one of your Hand Cannons. I was thinking about a Super Blackhawk, Mag-Na-Ported with a 4-5/8" barrel. My hunting partner said this would be too short and not accurate. Would a 6" barrel be better? I would like to use it also for deer and bear in steep brushy country. I shot a 6" Bilene and like it very much, but think a 4-5/8" would be easier to carry. Could you please give me your opinion? Which caliber of Hand Cannons would you recommend for a 10" barrel for big game hunting? . . . Ray Price.

(Editor's Note: I think your hunting partner doesn't know what he is talking about. A 4-5/8" barrel is inherently as accurate as any other length. I've used a 5" as much as anything and have been perfectly satisfied with it. We made the HHI Sixgun in 6" because I felt the 6" would be more popular. I wouldn't recommend any Hand Cannon in a 10" barrel — 12.5"

minimum. Any Hand Cannon caliber is OK for any American big game. The .375 JDJ is the most versatile. . . . JDJ)

Congratulations on your selection as 1983's Outstanding American Handgunner. Good luck in Africa! I can't wait to read about it. In the current issue of THE SIXGUNNER, you had a note on next January's HHI. Please put my name on the list for information about this hunt. Although I could not make my sheep hunt because of illness, I lent my SSK .375 JDJ 12.5" Hand Cannon to my hunting partner. Dave shot a nice sheep at about 100 yards using a load supplied by Doc Rogers. Dave was quite impressed as were the guides at Wild Hill Preserve. Hopefully next year will be different and I can get something with my .375. I always seem to end my letters to you with the same request — how about a book on handgun hunting? I wrote to Jack Lewis of DBI and suggested that you would be a great choice if you decided to publish a handgun hunting digest book. Have a great time in Africa, and bring back some good stories. . . . Joe Picariello, Waltham, MA.

Anyone who belongs to HHI probably spends his vacations on big game hunts, or would like to. If you're like me, you've probably kept putting off that big, guided western hunt because of all the horror stories you've heard about rip-off outfitters. Maybe you've bugged every experienced hunter you know for advice and/or recommendations. The bottom line is references and the question is always the same: What good is a reference check when the outfitter tells you what references to check? Nobody in his right mind would give a dissatisfied client as a reference. Conversely, some people are so easily satisfied that a growing recommendation from them is meaningless.

Now suppose you found out that for a nominal fee, like twenty bucks a year, you could join an organization that aside from publishing a really fine hunting magazine, keeping trophy records and carrying out various conservation, legislative and social activities, also acts as a clearing-house for information on guides and outfitters? For twenty bucks a year, could you afford not to join? When one bad hunt can cost you at least two thousand, twenty bucks is pretty cheap.

The organization is Safari Club International, with which HHI just happens to be affiliated. I joined SCI as soon as J. D. told me about it. I think he was getting tired of me pestering him for outfitter recommendations. The way SCI's system works is simple: when an SCI member goes on a hunt with a guide or an outfitter, he files a report with SCI. SCI publishes a bi-monthly report summary in SAFARI magazine. When SCI gets enough information on an outfitter, they publish his name, address and species hunted in their annual "Guides and Outfitters Ratings". To stay on the list, outfitters have to annually submit to SCI a list of all their clients. The system is virtually foolproof. The outfitter has no real control over who rates him, but chronic cranks and complainers are weeded out as statistically insignificant. What you end up with is a true evaluation of the honesty and ability of an outfitter. If a member inquires about an outfitter, SCI will send him copies of all recent rating sheets, both good and bad, on that outfitter.

The only possible bitch that I have is that SCI only publishes a "good guys" list. The rags and rip-off artists really deserve a list of their own. I'm sure SCI doesn't publish the "others" list to avoid legal hassles. But, after all, when you have a list of first-rate outfitters, do you really care about the third-rate or less variety? I've already booked my fall bear hunt with an SCI listed outfitter and I promise J. D. a story for THE SIXGUNNER when I get back.

So the next time some hunter tells you the story about the moose "outfitter" who guided him away from the moose because he was too damned lazy to pack the sucker out of the bush, why not tell him the story about SCI? And be sure to show him your membership card. . . . Mike Grove, Akron, OH.

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