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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

## Volume Four, 1996

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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Vol. 4, No. 1

January, 1996

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## Happy New Year!

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So here we go into 1996. I suppose 1995 could have been much worse than it was, but still it included fully as much that was scruffy as that which was elegant. Its very scruffiness leads to some hope at the polls, at least here in the US, but the democratic process has not proved to be a guarantee of either liberty or justice. As Churchill opined, it may be a very poor system, but remains better than any alternative we have thought up so far.

Be that as it may, we look forward to '96 with cautious optimism. Many excellent things may turn up, so here is to good cheer for the New Year!

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Have you noticed the frequency with which journalists employ the term "a hail of bullets"? This is the wrong term, since hail comes down from above, not from the side. The proper term should be "blizzard," as anyone can attest to who has been out in one. However, I have never seen an author use the term "a blizzard of bullets," whereas I hear about "a hail of bullets" with every second copy of the newspaper.

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One of the things that we look forward to in the New Year is the chance to confront an angry bull hippo on dry land. Arrangements have been made.

The question will arise as to why the hunter should choose a hippo, especially since over the great hunting days of Africa this beast was never considered to be a game animal. He does, however, offer some interesting possibilities. Shooting him in the water is not exciting. While he has been known to attack and destroy a boat, he usually simply sinks and dies under water. On the other hand, if you can insert yourself between a night-grazing hippo and his river, he may afford you as much excitement as you desire – perhaps more. His bulk is enormous and the problem of proper bullet placement is daunting. In his rush for water he is all but unstoppable, and his bite can easily cut a man in two. (We know of two outfitters who will not undertake this operation, believing it to be too dangerous.)

If and when you get your hippo down, various positive features appear. His hide is supposed to make the best leather in the world. His meat is highly prized by the local people, and his rendered fat is considered to be a sovereign remedy for everything from malaria to sprained ankles. His ivory is distinctly superior to that of the elephant for the manufacture of jewelry and accessories, being denser and finer in grain.

Among other things, this adventure will give us one more excuse to take Baby afield. We will use 500-grain solids, and when the opportunity presents itself we will shoot with extreme care.

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Now we observe the ultimate gift for the man who has everything. This is a titanium-plated Anaconda. Here in the tail end of industrialization we come across the manufacture of items which are designed not for use, but only for ownership. Such things were made historically on a one-at-a-time basis for kings and princes, but now we make them up in quantity for anyone whose wife (mother, daughter, concubine, secretary) has more cash than good sense.

It is interesting to me that while one cannot yet purchase a production Scout rifle, which ought to be the most

useful thing of its kind so far designed, one can now purchase a titanium-plated Anaconda. Food for thought.

(The "Anaconda" I refer to here is the long-barreled Colt revolver in caliber 44-Magnum.)

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Considering the recent Christmas festivities we were reminded of an exchange that took place in lowland Scotland in the early 17th century. The English visitor looked around at smoking wreckage and disaster, ravished fields and slaughtered livestock, and exclaimed,

"Good heavens, are there no Christians here?"  
The response was,  
"Nay, Sir, we be mainly Armstrongs and Elliots."

---

Now that so many states are issuing licenses for concealed carry, and have had to come up with something regarded as "qualification" for the issuance, we are treated to the tiresome spectacle of the blind leading the blind. Legislatures do not know what sort of law to pass, and the qualifiers have no idea what it is they are trying to qualify. This is okay in the big picture since it puts more armed citizens on the streets, but I am receiving a flood of letters pointing out the inadequacy of the qualification process. You cannot "qualify" a shottist (or a pianist or an airplane pilot or a matador or a dancer) in "six easy lessons." The only sensible thing you can do is examine the applicant for his knowledge of the law as it applies to his jurisdiction. You may, of course, make sure he understands how to load and unload his weapon, but to try to turn him into a pistolero is absurd.

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The legislative efforts in this line continue to be mysterious. According to the new Texas law, for example, a nurse may not carry her properly licensed pistol into a hospital. As we all know, a nurse is particularly vulnerable to violent attack, not in the corridors of the hospital, but on her way from the door to her car in the wee hours. If she really needs a sidearm, this is when she needs it, but current Texas law seems unconcerned.

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In answer to those of you who have written in, the Whittington dates for 1996 appear as follows:

*General Rifle Class: 28 April to 3 May*  
*General Pistol Class: 14 to 19 July*  
*Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial: 18, 19, 20 October*  
Rich Wyatt (303) 232-0542

*Keneyathlon: 17, 18 June*  
David Kahn (303) 697-9495

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Reluctant as we may be to compliment a dictator who prefers to be addressed as "Comrade," we are compelled to do so in the case of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. He officially refers to homosexuals as "perverts who do not deserve civil rights." In his words,

"Let the Americans keep their sodomy, bestiality, stupid and foolish ways to themselves. Let the gays be – gay – in the United States and Europe, but they shall be sad people here."

How about that?

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We have struck out on the Gunsite zeroing target. Our printer here in Prescott has decided that marketing it is not economically feasible. I think very highly of this design and I think the target should be stocked on every well-equipped rifle range. If anyone in the *family* is interested in grabbing onto this opportunity, I hope he will get in touch with me.

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With the increased popularity of the "double-action" self-loading pistol we have come to instruct students in four different presentations. This does complicate matters, but we have seen all four systems work, under pressure, and no self-respecting instructor can justify his omitting any one of the four.

1. The Weaver system. Here the trigger starts back as the weapon starts up, arriving at full-cock exactly as the eye picks up the sight system. This is the system that Jack Weaver used in his mastery of the double-action revolver, and it is the most elegant way of using the DA auto.
2. The point-and-crunch system. This is the least efficient method and the most common. It is practically universal with the unenlightened. To use it the shooter simply points the uncocked weapon at his target and cranks on through. You can hit this way, but not quickly.
3. The thumb-cock system. Here the shooter catches the lowered hammer of his piece with his left thumb as his hands come together in the ready position. He cocks the piece with his thumb as the weapon comes up on target and fires his shot from the fully cocked position. This works. It is as fast as the man can make his hands work, and it affords a precise first shot. Its drawback is that it needs both hands.
4. The shot-cock system. This is not considered politically correct by many departments, but it does work. I have seen it used with startling efficiency on both the range and in the street. With this system the shooter simply flings his first shot down range with no regard for proper stance or sight picture. This cocks the piece and it just may hit the target by accident. However, the pistol is instantly readied for the second shot, which can be placed with precision. I know of no one who teaches this system, but it does work very well, and it is a mistake to pretend it does not exist.

Thumb-cocking is probably the way to go, unless you are a master, in which case you will use the Weaver system.

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Department of Pretty Arcane Stuff

"As the supernatural world is eternally at work behind events in the natural world, so the world of man-in-nature continues to operate behind the synthetic, abstracted, and unreal world of man outside-of-nature. For that reason alone I shall always hunt elk. (Though, of course, I really don't need any reason.)"

Chilton Williamson, Jr. in *Chronicles* magazine

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With abject apologies to Victor Herbert, we submit the following lyric, which evolved out of our joyful goings on at the *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* at Whittington Center last October:

Give me a gun,  
That's a stout hearted gun,  
That sounds off with a soul-stirring roar.

Give me just one,  
That's a stout hearted gun,  
And I'll soon show you trophies galore, O!

(If it) has a good trigger,  
I'll need nothing bigger,  
As I load up and step to the fore.

Then, I'll show you man's best friend,  
And I'll not ask for more.

One stout hearted gun  
Can serve its master evermore.

(Sorry about that!)

---

I regret to report that an E-ticket from Orange Gunsite does not necessarily mean that you can shoot. I hate to report this, but I have examples. Marksmanship is one thing, but crisis management is another, and gunhandling is still a third. We should all give this matter further thought.

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In what I have longed considered to be an error, there are people who feel that the more shots they fire in an instruction course the better the course. Firing a lot of ammunition may only be an invitation to repeat original errors. A second error I see in watching the conduct of instruction throughout the world is a tendency on the part of the rangemaster to put people into advanced work before they are basically sound. I see people being exposed to fire-and-movement problems and priority of target problems before they are able to hit any target at all under simple conditions. All this does is convince the student of his weaknesses, and a conviction of weakness is a serious handicap in a serious confrontation.

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As our native whitetail deer continue to proliferate, they can become a serious problem to people with gardens or orchards. A good many such people are forbidden by law from decking a prowler or two and processing carcasses for the freezer. For such people we recommend the "Wrist Rocket" or other advanced version of the old fashioned slingshot. This instrument is capable of astonishing efficiency in practiced hands, and should be enough to convince the marauder of the error of his ways. Of course, the householder may have to stay up all night now and again, and that disadvantage may prove enough to let the deer have the orchard.

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Now we can all look forward to the SHOT Show in Dallas, where many marvelous things should be placed on display. I confess to a little confusion on the subject of the profusion provided us by the pistol manufacturers. Where there used to be about half-a-dozen good choices for the novice gunman, there now must be fifty. The problem, however, remains somewhat simpler than all this marketing effort would indicate.

The first requirement of a defensive sidearm is stopping power. The shooter must have the best possible chance of terminating the action with one well-directed shot. (It may be pointed out that even more important than stopping power is the need for the weapon to go off when the trigger is pulled. I will have to admit that, but I do not think that failure to fire on the first shot is a problem of any great consequence in current manufacture.)

The second requirement of the defensive pistol is reliability. It must continue to function after the first shot, even though this should not be given great importance.

The third requirement is handiness. If the piece is uncomfortable to wear and to use, it will not be present when needed.

Despite the foregoing, we see a great deal of emphasis placed upon "accuracy." Now certainly a shot which misses its target does no good, but nearly all defensive pistols available today are quite capable of placing all their shots in the center of a man's chest at defensive distances. Correspondents continually write me about systems they might use to increase the accuracy of their defensive pistols, as if they could appreciate the difference between a 3" group and a 5" group at 50 meters! Accuracy increments of this sort are absolutely irrelevant. But the majority of "gun writers" do not seem to see it this way.

And then there is a matter of magazine capacity. "If my piece holds twelve rounds, while yours hold only ten, I win." Here again we are dealing with irrelevance. The highest score I have ever heard of in a pistol fight was

five, and that victory was achieved with a 7-round magazine, without reloading. Our late companion Bruce Nelson was once asked in the course of an interview at a police station if it was not a good idea to carry a P35 because of its high capacity magazine. Bruce's response was, "Well, sure, if you plan to miss a lot."

We will see a lot more, of course, at the SHOT Show than a profusion of pistol choices. I will pick out the things which seem most interesting and report back to you in further issues of this Commentary.

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I do not know how many of you have ever heard of the Mobius Loop, which is a mathematical demonstration of the possibility of being in two places at once – in this case, on both sides of a plane surface. Back when I was in full charge of the Gunsite ranges I got to be pretty good at being in two places at once, but this year it appears that during the month of April I will have to be in three places at once. We will think upon it.

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" – Sensitivity – makes cowards of us all!"

Florence King

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News Item: In Fort Wayne, Indiana, Sutton bit most of the ear off of Wallace during a barroom brawl. When Sutton was arrested he swallowed the ear. He was charged with battery and criminal recklessness. It would hardly seem that biting is "battery," and we do not see how "recklessness" applies at all, but the police could not find any charge applicable to cannibalism.

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It would seem that if a police agency relegates gunfights to 10 meters and under, and is limited to students who do not care about shooting, good technique and good equipment become pointless. If your technique is going to be spray-and-pray, neither good trigger action, nor correct stance, nor sights are really going to matter very much. Shooting skill, and, more important, fighting skill, seem unlikely to outlast the century.

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A good friend and client of mine, who happens to be a hunting outfitter, has over the years developed a serious mistrust of what he refers to as "Magnum Shooters." They come to hunt with him with great big guns with which they cannot shoot well. They talk about group size, when what they really need is trigger control. They tend to be very taken with the 338, and jeer at anything smaller. My friend has kept records and has reached the conclusion that the standard range at which these people take game is 85 yards. Unless restrained, they will try long shots, but on these they will miss, or worse, wound. My friend makes his living off these people, and he would rather not be quoted in print, but he has no objection to my furnishing you with his name on request.

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A year and a half after the revolution in South Africa, we are informed that one is well advised to go armed there – just as in the United States.

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In *the Age of the Wimp* we are apt to forget that there really is such a thing as a hero. We call people heroes who simply do what they are told, or put out fires in garbage cans, or make statements which may risk their jobs. We hardly remember the real heroes, a few of whom are still alive. On June 4, 1943, for example, Dick Best flew two missions. He dropped two bombs, and he sank two carriers – in the teeth of enemy fire. If you will think for a moment of what it takes to blast your dive bomber vertically down onto the blazing guns of an enemy warship, hold your nerve, and plant your bomb squarely amidships, you may reflect upon what it takes to do that once. Dick Best did it twice on the same day. He is still alive and comparatively spry at 85. Let us have no more talk about "football heroes."

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For those who like to reiterate the modern fantasy known as POT (post operational trauma), the example of George Patton is illuminating. You will recall that he got into a fire fight down in Mexico when Pershing was looking for Pancho Villa. When asked later how it felt to kill a man, Patton responded, "I felt exactly the way

I felt when I landed my first swordfish."

There may be such a thing as POT, but I for one have never seen it.

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Attorney William Burkett of the Oklahoma County Bar's education committee frequently speaks to school children about legal topics. When he addressed a class of fifth graders recently, he asked whether any of the students knew the punishment for stealing in some countries.

"Yes," one boy said. "They cut off your hands."

"Could that happen here?" Burkett asked, and the students replied with a chorus of "nos."

"Why not?" he said to a girl in the front row.

"Because," she said, "the Constitution gives us the right to keep our arms."

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On the last day of 1995 our neighbors Bob and Allie Young conducted a notable invitational Schützenfest out on their Ravengard estate, for quite a nice crowd. They feel that this is a superior way to celebrate New Year's Eve – and we entirely agree.

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War cry of the 21st century, "I just wish I knew more about what we're doing."

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 2

18, January, 1996

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## Shot Show

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Well, the Mitchell pistol was (is) not ready. Don had a couple of items for display which had my signature on them, but they did not include a great deal of the necessary, and they are not for sale. The reason the item was displayed at the SHOT Show was simply to point out the virtues of the slimlining treatment of the 1911 frame. This is an idea dreamed up here at the ranch gunsmithy which has proven to be a really significant step forward in the service pistol. The only real drawback of the GI 1911 is that it is too big for small hands. When the butt is slimmed down in various subtle ways the piece becomes comfortable for the 25 percent of men and 50 percent of women who find the service pistol too big in the butt. Don Mitchell told me that the slimline job was uniformly admired at the show. The rest of the piece is about half ready, and with a little bit of luck and a tail wind the project should be completed by summer.

It is important to remember that the slimline frame is no disadvantage for a shooter with a large hand, but it is a decisive advantage for a shooter with a small hand.

The project continues underway. Stay tuned!

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Please let us knock off this basura about "*Condition Black*". The color code, as I created it, refers not to the degree of hazard in which the shooter may find himself, but rather to his readiness to take the irrevocable homicidal step. In *Condition Red* he is ready to do that, and there is no need to go beyond that condition. The notion that the shooter will find himself totally flumoxed at this point assumes that he is not up to the problem. I deem it undignified for an instructor to tell his students they are cowards and incapable of handling an emergency. Perhaps they are, but they should not be encouraged in this belief.

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Among the many extraordinary items we saw at the show was a 30-caliber US carbine sporting a muzzle brake! I would not have believed this, but I saw it with my own two eyes.

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Did you hear about this Israeli chick who decided she wanted to become a fighter pilot? Zahal would not accept her, so she took the matter to court, and the Israeli supreme court finally decided that she had to be accepted. So they took her in and she washed out, solving the problem for the moment without reaching any conclusion about the morals, ethics or manners of deliberately placing a woman in harm's way. No man who is "properly equipped for reproduction," to use the Spanish expression, will do that, but of course there are other kinds of men in positions of authority.

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If our sojourn in Dallas is an indication, Texas is a great country for "small beer." Nearly all bars offer a selection of this beverage, which was served to field hands at the lunch break during the Renaissance. (It is now called "light" or something of the sort.) Real beer is also available in most places, but only as an afterthought.

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We are sure that all the faithful celebrated Dan Dennehy's birthday on the 15th of this month. We neglected to give you advance notice, and for this we apologize.

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On the day before the show I conducted a meeting of the IPSC Rifle Committee. Those in attendance beside myself were: General Denis Earp (Regional Director for So. Africa) in charge of course design, Tim Anderson from Denmark, co-chairman, Peter Glenn from Australia, co-chairman, and Bob Chittleborough, the Regional Director for the UK.

The objective of the committee is to insure as far as possible that IPSC rifle competition does not go equipment-silly as pistol competition has. The committee could not agree upon a change in the weight ceiling, which now stands at 5kg. Two members wanted to reduce it, two members wanted to increase it, and one member wanted to have two different limits for the two divisions – self-loading and manually operated rifles.

We did agree upon a new target configuration, which may be displayed either in vertical mode for combat competition or in horizontal mode for hunting competition. This target may be used either in paper or in steel form.

The committee agreed that the largest possible latitude should be permitted the individual region, in view of the various national restrictions imposed upon rifle types. The committee also felt that careful supervision of course design must be enforced to achieve some measure of practicality.

The committee adopted the scoring principle invented by David Kahn for the *Keneyathlon*, and we will refer to it henceforth as the "K" system. This awards one point for a target shot at and hit with the first shot, no points for a target declined, and deducts two points for a target missed. The "K" system is not to be regarded as exclusive, but rather optional at the choice of the course designer. This is a distinct step forward.

Various other minor points were decided upon, but they are of interest only to those who are to set up IPSC rifle matches.

The report of the rifle committee will be submitted to the world assembly for approval in connection with the world shoot to be held at Brasilia in October of this year.

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"Americans, both politicians and voters, may have become corrupted by big government beyond redemption. A virtuous government requires a virtuous people. A frugal government requires a self-reliant people. A free country requires people who value liberty more than money."

Charley Reese

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We think it was rather unsporting of the Mossad to blow off that assassin's head with his own cellular phone. Now we may have to worry about government bans on cellular phones for use by "civilians." Much better they should have shot him. This high tech homicide may be the wave of the future, but it does take much of the fun out of life.

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We did not expect to see the Steyr-Mannlicher production scout on display at SHOT, since we were told last summer that it would not be ready. However, we did have hopes for '97, but now we are told to wait for '98. Since no one has promised us tomorrow, this new delay is unpleasant, however unavoidable it may be.

On the good side, the project seems to be well underway and in good hands. Since the new gun will be equipped with flush swivels, we did a certain amount of scurrying around at SHOT to locate a supply for the factory at Steyr. I had thought that they would choose to manufacture these items in their own plant, but due to the low value of the dollar it seems to be more economical for Europeans to purchase parts in the US when they are available. This may also be true of the new rifle.

The new gun will make weight. It will feature the double-detent, and it will take detachable box magazines of either 5 or 10 round capacity with a spare 5 in the butt. As of now it will probably feature the new Leupold scoutscope. It will feature the Ching Sling in combination with an integral bipod.

God speed the day!

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We all noted the passing of Arleigh Burke – the "31-knot Burke" of South Pacific fame – at the ripe old age of 85. Admiral Burke may be the last of the true fighting sailors, and we honor his heroic memory as something left over from a better day.

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It would be nice if when people borrow ideas from me they would take some care in the matter. I certainly do not own the term "scout", but today everybody (and his brother) seems to think he is producing a "scout rifle" on no basis other than the intermediate eye relief position of the telescope, and not always on that. A true Scout remains a rarity, and its definitive current example – "Sweetheart" – is not quite pure, being about three quarters of a pound overweight and carrying no reserve sights. Note that a true Scout is available only in caliber 308 (7.62 NATO). It is made on a short action suitable for this cartridge, which is readily available in quantity all over the world.

On a second point, I now note that there are people referring to any sort of aperture sight as a "ghost-ring". The essential quality of the ghost-ring is a large aperture combined with a thin rim which disappears when looked through, thus a "ghost." This idea was not mine, as both Karamojo Bell and E.C. Crossman mentioned it back in the early twenties. The term "ghost-ring", however, is mine and I wish people would take care to use it correctly.

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We were fascinated at SHOT to examine the "577 Tyrannosaur" from A Square. This piece is designed to end all discussion about stopping power. It is a bolt-action (1917), 3-plus-1, 13lb rifle which fires a 750-grain bullet at 2460 feet per second. It is said to be the first sporting rifle cartridge that "breaks the 10,000 foot-pound barrier."

In my opinion this is a definitive example of a piece which is made to own rather than to shoot. It is not at all clear that it will kill an elephant or a buffalo or a hippo any better than a well placed hit from a 470, and, of course, it will not do anything with a badly placed hit except annoy the recipient. As I see it, this combination should be referred to as the "577 Dundee." You keep it available in your armory so that when people start talking about the power of their rifles you can break yours out and say, "That's not a rifle. THIS is a rifle!"

---

The well-known knife-maker A.G. Russell informs us that a two-edged knife is illegal in some jurisdictions. Just fancy that! We are of the impression that the knife used to cut Nicole Simpson's throat had only one edge. Evidently some lawmakers feel that the murderer could have accomplished his job better if there had been an edge on the other side too. What will they think of next!

---

In this age of ridiculous lawsuits, we have another example for you. It turns out this bird was shooting on a range and was hit by a high-angle return ricochet. He was not hurt, of course, since a reverse ricochet arrives with almost no significant velocity, but he sued the manufacturer of the gun (for heaven's sake!) for \$75,000 worth of "mental anguish." To such a depth we have sunk!

In the first place, the direction taken by a ricochet has nothing whatever to do with the weapon, cartridge, its design, or its manufacturer. In the second place, being hit by a spent bullet is rather exhilarating. In a long shooting lifetime I have been hit at least half-a-dozen times by spent bullets, none of which drew any blood. In each case I thought the experience rather fun.

The war cry, of course, remains "It's not the principle of the thing, it's the money!"

(He lost.)

---

The proliferation of pistols noted at the SHOT Show is rather puzzling. At almost every booth one was shown what purports to be a new and more desirable handgun. We must admit that the perceived need for defensive pistols in our degenerating society is evident, but do we really need this enormous variety? The fact that we may need more pistols does not mean that we need more different types, varieties, shapes, sizes and prices of pistols. I looked at so many new pistols at the SHOT Show that I cannot really keep track of them all, and yet I am perfectly satisfied with the arm that rides on my belt as I write this.

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For two years now we have extolled the virtues of the excellent Blaser 93 rifle. It should be noted, however, that the straight-pull feature of this piece is by no means its sole claim to fame. The straight-pull (in which the shooter does not rotate the bolt, but simply pulls the handle straight to the rear) has been around since the beginning of the century. The Swiss Vetterli and the Canadian Ross and the American Lee were all straight-pulls, and now Mauser has come up with a new offering of this sort. I have now used the Blaser for going on two years, but when I examined the Mauser at SHOT I was not impressed. Essentially the Blaser is designed to be "right," while the Mauser is designed to be inexpensive. We all know what happens when an item is made to meet a price, and we are distressed to see the illustrious name of Mauser attached to such an item.

In my opinion the best feature of the Blaser (though it offers many excellent features) is its unique trigger action, which operates without a sear. This makes the R93 Blaser the most "hitable" production rifle available today. Triggers on other pieces may be customized to satisfaction, though in the US this introduces liability problems, but the Blaser has only one trigger action and it works only one way.

We were amused by two visiting Swiss shooters who noted loftily that the Swiss service rifle offered a straight-pull action way back before World War I, but a straight-pull per se offers little in the way of speed of operation, and usually exchanges it for complexity. A straight-pull is indeed a little faster than a turn-bolt, but not, in my opinion, enough to offer a serious advantage in the field. It takes a split second for the shooter to recover from recoil and get back on target (assuming he needs a second shot), but in that split second a good man can operate a turn-bolt as quickly as he can deliver his second shot.

This puts me in the way of a difficult decision. I must decide whether to take to Africa in March the Lion Scout, which I dearly love, or the Blaser, with which I am enchanted. Tough choice!

---

At the SHOT Show we were treated to a profusion of the coaxial lights and lasers. These gadgets seem pretty pointless on a handgun, though they may have some use attached to a shotgun. A pistol is an emergency device intended to be ready for unexpected use at all times. You do not enter an action deliberately armed only with a pistol if you can do better.

On the shotgun the coaxial floodlight may be a distinct advantage in a police entry through a darkened house. One should not use the light as a means of assuring hits, but simply to illuminate the target, which may be hit in more conventional fashion. On the other hand, the laser seems to me more of a hindrance than a help. We tested coaxial lasers at some length here at Gunsite several years ago and came to the conclusion that they tend to slow down the stroke as the shooter attempts to find where his orange dot is located. For specialized use at mid-range a coaxial laser does pretty well on a rifle, but this calls for some sort of target identification such as a star shell or flare gun operated by somebody else. Also a coaxial laser reveals the shooter in ways which may prove very dangerous upon occasion.

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Spray-and-pray continues triumphantly unabashed. In New York recently a "suspect" was carted off to the meat locker sporting 14 minor-caliber wounds. Of course this is a newspaper account, and it is quite possible that many of the lesions were exit wounds. Still, the account claims that over 40 shots were fired in the engagement. It appears that the goblin in this case was on the run, dashed into his apartment and hid in the closet. When the police entered he commenced shooting through the door – with what object in mind I cannot say. Your average chimpanzee could be expected to handle the problem better than that. When I recently asked why it is that these goblins do not attempt even to get out of town after committing their depredations, the response was, "They don't even know where out of town is." Apparently in *the Age of the Common Man* we should understand the need to lower our standards still further.

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One of the oddments that I have seen recently in the handgun line is the Baby Glock, which is a 40-caliber item hardly bigger than a well-filled wallet. It is not much of a shooting pistol, but when we remember that in over half of the defensive confrontations on record the presence of the pistol rather than its quality was a decisive factor, we have to admit that there may be some purpose for this Baby Glock. If one has to shoot it, of course, its 40-caliber cartridge is distinctly better than a 9.

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Again I must wearily emphasize that *Condition Orange* is not "hot yellow." The difference between *Yellow* and *Orange* is that in *Yellow* the shooter has no specific target in mind, whereas in *Orange* he has. This makes a decisive difference in his mental ability to adjust to the fact that he may have to shoot. In *Yellow* the shooter says "I may have to shoot today." In *Orange* the shooter says to himself "I may have to shoot him right now." No matter how much danger you think you are in, no matter how near the enemy or how great his numbers, unless you have picked out a particular target at which you are prepared to shoot you are not in *Orange* – you are in *Yellow*. Sometimes I despair of getting this point across, since I frequently receive correspondence from students I thought I had educated indicating that they were not listening when I made the point on the platform.

Well, I intend to keep trying.

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"Television makes dictatorship impossible, but democracy intolerable."

Shimon Peres

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 3

February, 1996

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## Mid-Winter

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We are thankful to note that, contrary to the vicious weather conditions in most of the United States, the weather here at Gunsite has continued mild and pleasant up til now, and that our shooting activities are in no way inhibited. What with experimenting on the design of the Mitchell pistol, and checking out the Wild West "co-pilot", and working out with the new model Leupold Scoutscope, and setting up daughter Lindy's Springfield pseudoscout for Africa, we are delighted to be able to continue our shooting activities without problems of mud and snow.

I seem to have sprung my right knee in painful fashion, but I refuse to let that interfere with my shooting activities. If I must be forced to let others do all the running and jumping – for the time being – I will be content to move and shoot carefully. In Africa you do not turn your back and run away. Anything that is big enough to kill you can easily outrun you.

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Those involved in competition should remember that the start signal should always be visual rather than audible. In the real world, you start because of what you see, not because of what you hear.

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A correspondent from Bosnia showed us a copy of a general order for operations in that peculiar land which specified no personal guns and no beer. I do not know who is in charge of those operations, but whoever it is seems to lack all concept of historical continuity.

I can cite two campaigns which were called off when the beer supply ran out. You may remember that the proprietor of one of the early English exploratory expeditions of the New World was threatened with hanging when he returned to Britain because he did not supply enough beer, and the crew had to make it all the way back to England on nothing but water. The guy who promulgated this order simply "doesn't know where it's at," to use the modern vulgar parlance.

As to personal weapons, to deny a soldier his weapons is to negate his existence as a soldier.

But, of course, these people of ours in the Balkans are not soldiers, they are peacekeepers, according to their Commander-in-Chief, who seems to have had his own difficulties with history.

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Among the ill-used words I see in print one that has puzzled me for many years is "crossfire." Just what is a crossfire? A shot across the bows, perhaps?

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The presumably authentic word we get in Washington is that Horiuchi will walk free, but that the BATF is being stalked and may be torpedoed. Well, as we have mentioned before, the murderer of Nicole Simpson and the murderer of Vince Foster are walking free. We should not expect too much of our current system of jurisprudence.

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In current parlance a "wildcat" cartridge is simply one that is non-standard and has to be made up personally or on order for use in weapons chambered for it. For most of my shooting career I have been mildly opposed

to wildcats on the grounds that existing and available standard loads will do everything needful, and to restrict one's weapon to specialized ammunition runs the risk of running out in far parts without the capacity for re-supply.

I have found these points to be generally true, but not exclusively so. While one of my favorite cartridges is the ancient and honorable 30-06, another is what may be called the "350 Remington Magnum, Improved" for which ammunition must be custom made-to-order.

One of the outstanding requirements of the Scout rifle is that it takes the 308 cartridge, which is universally available worldwide, but one wonders in this day of modern transportation methods if there really is any danger of running out of the personal supply carried by the shooter.

One of the things that seems to have been moderately common back in the great hunting days, when distances had to be covered by packstring or porter, was that loads could be lost under rigorous conditions. When the mule carrying the ammunition pack lost his footing and plunged over the lip of the waterfall, there would be little hope of re-supply at the next trading post if the ammunition was not of a standard pattern. These conditions no longer apply, and on hunts shorter than thirty days or less one needs only enough of his particular brand for zeroing and record shots, a number rarely exceeding 20 rounds.

Thus it is that I think the notion of "over-the-counter re-supply" is essentially trivial. Even as World War II fades into the past it is well to remember that "Red Mike" Edson, battalion commander on Guadalcanal and later president of the NRA, opined that under conditions of more or less continuous engagement the trooper could get along very well on 25 rounds a week. This idea would probably cause a modern ordnance specialist to faint dead away.

In any case, my suspicions of the wildcat concept have been allayed with time.

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Is it not interesting that where our founding fathers attempted to create in the New World a classless society, we have indeed achieved that, but seem to have replaced it with a caste-based society? One can work his way up the ladder in a class-based society, but nothing can be done about caste, which is the basis for the polarization of our people as we now see it developing.

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Long ago and far away, when I was the merest tad, my family was taken on a tour of the battlefield of Verdun, one of the great slaughter pens of World War I. Scampering about the field of action I retrieved from the mud a bayonet, badly rusted and with the wooden hilt rotted away. This souvenir stayed in my possession for a long lifetime, until the notion came to me to avail myself of the expert services of the distinguished knifemaker Dan Dennehy. When it was polished up we discovered that this bayonet was a product of Waffenfabrik Mauser of Oberndorf. Dan stripped away the remains of the rotted wood and refitted the piece with a modern Micarta hilt. Now we have what might be called a "sporterized Mauser," probably a unique collector's piece.

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From what we hear word-of-mouth from academia, it would appear that our modern academics cannot ride, cannot shoot, and are afraid to speak the truth. Presumably they have never heard of either Herodotus or Theodore Roosevelt – a couple of dead white males.

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A correspondent recently wrote in to tell us of a case in which a large magazine saved the day. It seems that the felon was finally tagged with the last round of a 14-shot pistol. The case is noted, but what may be more noteworthy is corroboration of the inadequacy of the 9mm Parabellum round. In this instance the felon, who had decked two police officers, showed no particular distress at being shot through the heart, but got into his car and drove off, only to crash some blocks later as the blood supply ceased in his brain. We had a case somewhat similar to this in Phoenix some years back, where a police officer in a car was shot through the

heart with a 38 Special revolver and reported over his radio that he had been hit, but was all right, whereupon, after driving a few blocks, he passed out and died.

The heart shot is not normally a quick stopper, unless the weapon is of more than adequate power for its task. A heart-shot quadruped normally runs off like the wind, only to drop after a fairly short distance. Likewise the human goblin may be shot through the heart and still have sufficient time in action to take care of the person who fired the shot.

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If you liked Ruby Ridge, you will love Clinton's second term.

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Following the demise of the Colonial Era, a considerable number of miscreants have discovered that the post-colonial gentry in their midst have been disinclined by generations of law and order to fight back. In New Guinea, for example, the bad guys – who are referred to as "raskols" – have taken to pillaging the innocent in large numbers, assuming their victims will offer no resistance. As you might suppose, times have a way of changing. Recently at Port Moresby one Mr. Cragolini, an Australian businessman, simply refused to go along with a band of raskols who burst into a restaurant in which he and his wife were dining. The news report says that there were eleven goblins, and Cragolini cleaned up on the lot, decking four, killing two, and scattering the rest.

This was a fine performance and hailed as heroism downunder, but it simply corroborates the fact that the human hyenas of the world are astonished and dismayed when their intended victims fight back. The answer to street violence is counterattack rather than more jails.

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In view of the recent shenanigans in Washington, does it not seem that things run better when the government is shut down? Of course, the administration only furloughed "non-essential" workers. Just what the government is doing hiring non-essential workers is not explained.

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We recently ran across the formation of the "Anti-Hopefully Society" founded by an English professor who seems to care about English, unlike most. His position is that people who go around saying "hopefully," when what they mean is "I hope," should be informed of the error of their ways. We have sent in our subscription.

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In a recent curious case the subject was struck in the left side of the face by a 380. The bullet was deflected by his jawbone down through his neck and into his torso beneath the shoulder blade. The subject did not respond to the blow, walked to the ambulance, was treated at the hospital for infection and sent home with a Tylenol. According to the account he was laughing and joking with bystanders throughout the experience and did not return for medical assistance on the following day. Moral: If you insist on using a miniature sidearm, confine your hits to the eye sockets.

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To no one's surprise, Spc New was convicted of disobedience, since he admittedly disobeyed an order. The question has never been whether this man disobeyed an order, but whether that order was lawful for his commander-in-chief to issue. A court martial must find Spc New guilty, but the issue must go much higher than that. Whether an American soldier who has sworn to support and defend the Constitution of the United States may be ordered into the service of another sovereignty would seem unacceptable on the face of it, but the matter must go beyond the army and on up.

For a soldier to decide whether the order he receives from his superiors is lawful or not is a very sticky wicket. Theoretically it is not up to the man receiving the order, but the Nuremberg trials set the precedent that it was. Here we have a real can of worms, but I hope that the court finds for Spc New, and that after discharge he runs for Congress.

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We have been experimenting with the new model Leupold Scoutscope, and we discover that it offers a larger "light pencil" than its precursors, which makes it somewhat easier to use on the snapshot. The difference is not great, but it is there. Daughter Lindy will be taking one of these glasses to Africa shortly, and while she almost certainly will not have to try a snapshot, it is nice to know that she has an edge.

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The following is from *family member* Walt Mansell of Red Bluff, California:

"For several decades we in law enforcement decried the ineffectiveness of the 38 Special cartridge, as compared to better rounds such as the 357 Magnum and the 45 ACP. It is very hard for us to understand, on a personal level, the great acceptance the 9mm has enjoyed among the American law enforcement community, and to a great extent with the many civilian gunwriters who support it as ideal for personal defense. If, in the real world, a 9mm bullet will do anything a 38 Special bullet will not do, I have not seen any evidence of it. Somewhat tongue in cheek, the only advantage we have seen of a high-capacity 9mm semiautomatic pistol over a simple 38 Special revolver is that it allows the shooter to miss more often."

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Note that twenty-eight states now have "right to carry" laws on the books, and that crime is down. The notion that the state can grant such a right is philosophically moot, but let us be glad with what we've got.

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We receive so many queries about the Scout rifle concept and specifications that it is with great relief that we see a full piece on this subject in the March issue of *Guns & Ammo* magazine. The author is our good friend, client and *family member* Finn Aagaard. We will make copies and have them ready for issue.

The great weakness of the Scout concept is that one cannot get one now. You can have one made to order if you find the right source, but it will not be perfect and it will take both time and money. Eventually, God willing, the production scout from Steyr-Mannlicher will be available over the counter. Meanwhile, one is best advised to stay with the rifle he has and try to avoid going grey while waiting.

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Correspondent M.T. Lumley of Missouri opines that where the Romans kept the masses in order by providing them with bread and games, we now provide them with foodstamps and football.

An interesting parallel.

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By great good fortune Gunsite stalwart Paul Kirchner discovered a number of articles by George Patton in the Yale Library, which were published in the *Cavalry Journal* back before World War I. It is well known that George Patton was an accomplished swordsman, but his Olympic-style fencing on foot is not reflected at all in his observations on the cavalry sword. When he wrote these pieces Patton was very young and fell into the youthful error of assuming that fighting is going to take place according to preconceived notions. His theory was that the cavalry saber is totally an offensive instrument, intended for shock action by mass cavalry charging knee-to-knee into an obligingly massed enemy. Thus he is only interested in the point and not at all in either cut or parry. To learn to hit accurately with a cut from on top of a galloping horse is simply too much of a task to be trained into a short-term soldier. I have tried using the cavalry saber from the top deck of a power tricycle and I can verify Patton's observations to the effect that hitting with the point is easy, but the delivery of a satisfactorily destructive cut at speed is a skill that must involve many long hours of practice. (Besides which the power tricycle is a more stable platform than a galloping horse.)

Pondering these points I see more reason in the use of the lance in recent cavalry actions, as by the British in India and Africa. The lance affords more reach than the saber and it is only at a disadvantage in the melee or mixup after the charge has been delivered, in which I for one would be much happier with a pistol.

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According to Louis Farrakhan, who now aspires to take over Jessie Jackson's place as fuhrer of the anti-white revolution, "We do not say that a woman's place is in the home, but we do say that a woman's base is in the home." I think that is a pretty good line, but since I was chided for admiring a recent statement of Comrade Mugabe I suppose I will get some static on this matter too.

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We discover with some gratification that a Swiss citizen, in order to maintain his rights of citizenship, must qualify annually with his rifle, even when he is on station overseas. We knew that the Swiss had to do this while in Switzerland, but we find that Swiss diplomats in Washington are experiencing some difficulty in finding a facility on which to maintain their Swiss citizenship. Riflemaster John Pepper has been helpful in this matter by encouraging these people to make use of the Fort Meade ranges where he conducts his training and competition operations.

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Those who suggest the feasibility of a nationwide pistol permit must realize that such a procedure would be un-constitutional according to the Tenth Amendment (assuming anyone still pays any attention to the Tenth Amendment). However, since the Constitution preceding the Bill of Rights makes it clear that states are bound to honor the acts of other states it would seem to follow that a citizen who has a permit to carry in a permit-to-carry state may expect his permit to be honored in any other permit-to-carry state. The legal aspects of this issue are not fully understood and one should not expect the gendarme on the beat to be fully apprised of the situation.

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In continuing experiment with the reduced size of the butt of the Mitchell pistol, a number of people have insisted that the slim gun kicks less than the standard model. Now changing the shape of the butt can do nothing to affect the force of recoil, physics not yet having been corrected to conform with the mood of the times, but the thought occurs that perceived recoil can indeed be reduced by giving the shooter a better grip on his weapon. Any hand can achieve a more secure grip on his piece if his hand wraps further around it, and a small hand should find this particularly noticeable. This notion had not previously occurred to me, partly because my hand is somewhat larger than average, but we may indeed have a strong selling point here.

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"In this country we have no place for hyphenated Americans."

Theodore Roosevelt

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We hear that one of the men shot at Tiananmen Square was able to speak out as follows before he died:

"Tell the American people never to lose their guns. As long as they keep their guns in their hands what's happened here will never happen there."

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"During the mandatory segment on Post Operational Trauma, as required by the State of Texas, I am compelled to inform the students that if they do 'ice a goblin,' they may need to seek psychiatric counseling to help them deal with the guilt and remorse that often follows. During that whole session, 'Gunny' Gillis kept cocking his ear, raising his hand and croaking, 'What?, What is it?' It seems that Gunny had never heard of POT, it having not been invented by psychologists until after his day. He had known some people with frazzled nerves from living on the edge for weeks at a time, but this was something new to him and he couldn't quite grasp the concept. All he knew was that after he had carried his flame-thrower all over Tarawa, he was just plain relieved and glad that it was over."

Gary L. Swan, Marion, Texas

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"God give us men of such a type as the time demands.  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and willing hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
Men who possess opinions and a will;  
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;

"Men who can stand before a demagogue  
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;  
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog  
In public duty and in private thinking;  
For while the rabble with their thumb worn creeds,  
Their profession and their little deeds  
Mingle in selfish strife; lo; Freedom weeps;  
Wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps."

From *Zarapath News*,  
published by the *Scottish Rite*, Davenport, Iowa

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 4

March, 1996

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## The Ides of March

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Despite the snow and ice which had enveloped most of the country in recent weeks, we in the Southwest have enjoyed almost no winter at all. While this has had a good effect on most outdoor activity, it has not helped the skiing, and we do need all the precipitation we can get, as in any dry country. As to that, the rains have finally hit in South Africa, breaking a 10-year drought, and while one wet season will not bring everything into order, every little bit helps.

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All hands should anticipate the *Keneyathlon* at Whittington Center coming up in June. This is, in my opinion, the most significant rifle contest in the world at this time, and while its rules and course of fire are still to be perfected, it is the best test of rifle skill I know of.

This year the "*Guru's Gold*" ring will go to the man placing in the first five who uses the lightest rifle, providing his rifle does not weigh more than 3 kilograms. (Last year the lightest rifle in contention was too heavy.)

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We recently got a nifty situation report from *family member* Charlie Putman, just back from a successful *family* hunt in South Africa and Zimbabwe (late Rhodesia). While he was eminently successful, being both a marvelous marksman and an experienced hunter, he added corroboration to our long held view that the 375 is not properly a buffalo gun. Without going into details (which may be furnished upon request) we feel that his observations are most pungent in regarding the different atmospheres encountered between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The South African revolution of '94 has not yet been able to trash the countryside, but the independence of Zimbabwe from the British Commonwealth has been in force now for a couple of decades and the results are obvious to the eye. The hunting is fine, but the countryside is a mess. Well, what did we expect?

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The press informs us that the Basuto people of Southern Africa have now renewed their traditional occupation of cattle raiding, in the manner of the Medieval Welsh. You may remember that Offa's Dyke (one of the two manmade structures visible on Earth from outerspace) was constructed to discomfit those Welsh cattle raiders. It was not hard to cross from west to east, but the barrier made it very difficult for the stolen kine to be driven back across. Perhaps the South African government could profit by this example.

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We found it curious that Lamar Alexander should try to use the slogan "ABC" to mean "Alexander Beats Clinton," when actually what it really stands for is the war cry of the right at this time – "Anybody But Clinton."

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Now we have in hand the "Co-pilot" from Wild West Guns in Anchorage, Alaska. This is a chopped and channeled Marlin 95 in caliber 45–70, intended for life insurance for the professional bear hunter and his client. It measures 35 inches in length assembled, and it takes down in the middle into two 18-inch parcels. It weighs 7lbs, or a tad less, and it provides five short-range sledge-hammer blows in quick succession. It packs into a neat little briefcase-sized padded pouch, and it appears to be quite the ideal instrument for the professional guide who may need to protect his client against bear or lion. I have tentatively dubbed it the

*Arctocrat* (Master of Bears), and I think it cute as a bug.

On the downside, it comes out of the box with a factory trigger that should not happen to a *BATman*. (Apparently the people in Anchorage feel that trigger action does not matter in arms-length confrontations. Every man to his own opinion, of course, but I disagree with this. For me a delicate trigger is the single most important feature in the precise placement of the snapshot.) Riflemaster John Gannaway is at work on this, and we may be able to fix it prior to delivery next month in Africa. Despite sandpaper surfaces between hammer and sear, which may be smoothed out, the angle of engagement is such that trigger pressure actually cams the hammer back a tad before releasing it, requiring the trigger finger to work against the mainspring. This arrangement is not unheard of on primitive-type weapons and may properly be termed "the hammercammer trigger." It can be corrected by a good gunsmith, but not all gunsmiths are good. We shall see.

Another negative, if minor feature, is the cross-bolt hammer-block now installed on most lever-guns by the liability agents. This gadget is referred to as a "safety," but on the contrary it could be lethal in a confrontation with anything dangerous. When it is pressed to the right it does not block the trigger nor interfere with hammer fall, it simply prevents the hammer from falling on the primer. In one of Peter Capstick's more memorable observations, "The most terrifying sound in nature is not the roar of a charging lion, nor the whistle of a descending bomb; rather it is a click when you expect a bang." The sort of mishap this invites is not serious in a deer gun, since all it will do is lose you your deer, but in a lion gun it might well get you killed. Fortunately it is easily de-activated.

The butt stock, at 13 inches, is a little too long for the instantaneous gun mount to the shoulder, and the square-cut heel of the butt tends to snag in this sort of action. Both these minor drawbacks are quickly correctable.

I have acquired a butt-cuff for this little piece, which seems to me particularly advisable in view of the side loading system of the lever gun which permits "topping off" without taking eyes off target.

A plus feature is a 6-port muzzle brake, which actually does seem to work. The recoil of a 7lb 45-70 might be expected to be brisk, but in our piece it was not more noticeable than that of a medium-weight 308. In theory a muzzle brake should not work, since by the time the gasses can work upon the baffles, the rearward impetus of the weapon has already been actuated. The fact is, however, that well-designed muzzle brakes do work, whether or not they should.

All together the *Arctocrat* strikes us as a nifty little item, and it should prove sensational when we introduce it to the South African Professional Hunters Association.

Our collaborator and good friend Paul Kirchner dwells in *Darkest Connecticut* – as he puts it, "In the belly of the bunny," a quaintly accurate locution.

I have always been a great one for cadging rides in military vehicles, and I have been very successful up til now. Never, however, have I got a ride in a first-line jet fighter. It now appears that our friends the Russians have discovered a market for this, and if you get to Moscow you can purchase a hot lap in a MiG 23 (two-seater version). Since my first visit to Moscow back in *the Dark Ages*, I have never thought of a good reason for returning – until now.

We learn with some dismay that the revered firm of Anheuser-Busch is now actively supporting Clinton's bid for re-election. This is not rumor. I have in hand an executive letter to this effect claiming that it is the company policy to support both sides of the political spectrum. The fact is that the Clinton administration opposed an increase on the beer tax leveled nationwide, which bill, if passed, would have hurt Budweiser in

the pocketbook. I stand foursquare with Queen Victoria of revered memory, who stoutly opposed any British beer tax to the last, claiming that it constituted an onerous oppression of the working class.

Regardless of taxation, there are other and much more important issues at stake at the forthcoming presidential election, and I can do without Budweiser.

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Note that gun lovers and gun shooters are not necessarily the same breed, fortunately for the manufacturers. Marksmanship is a demanding discipline, but affection is not. I know a good many people whose deep love for firearms amounts to an obsession, but who cannot shoot for sour apples. ("Why should they?" as Pogo asks.) Such men (and they are all men as far as I know) constitute a problem for their wives. "Why on earth do you want another gun?" – but they are the lifeblood of the firearms trade. They puzzle me but I wish them well.

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We have regrouped and are now able to give you an address for the 200–meter zeroing target I have been pushing for a while. These targets are the best thing of the kind that I have seen, and they are suitable for either iron or glass sights at ranges from 50 to 300 meters. They run about a buck apiece. Address queries to:

Andrew Langlois, PO Box 141, Windsor, VT 05089.

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When we opined recently in print that a soldier must absolutely obey orders, we were called out immediately to the effect that the Nuremburg trials had established a precedent that this is not so. According to Nuremburg precedent a soldier is bound to obey only lawful orders of his superiors, and apparently he is to decide on his own what is lawful and what is not. This was an unworkable decision when it was reached, and it remains so. If it is left up to the soldier to decide about the legality of his orders, his side has lost the war. Besotted as we appear to be with games, we seem to have lost track of the idea that war is a serious business, not a game. When a soldier refuses to obey a direct order, the historic consequence has been summary execution. I suppose we can all imagine certain cases in which we would refuse to obey orders, but we certainly must be prepared to take the consequences. The question of whether an order is lawful or not is certainly not for the soldier to decide.

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Further into that previous subject, we discover that Spc New, who disobeyed and took the consequences, has a father who is now running for Congress. And more power to him. We have often heard of sons who have profited by their father's prominence in search of political success, but this is the first situation I can call to mind which goes the other way around.

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Gabe Suarez, our man in Santa Monica, who is closing in on his ace rating for law enforcement shootings, very nearly tagged his fifth score recently. In pursuit of a very bad guy (VBG) he had mounted his shotgun and found the trigger when the goblin reached into his belt to seize his pistol. In doing so, he shot himself in the crotch, saving Gabe the expenditure of another round of 00–buck. The department is thinking of mentioning Gabe in dispatches for "admirable restraint." Hmmm!

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We have recently received several queries about instruction in "police rifle" and "defensive rifle." I am not sure of the role of the rifle in police work, but I do believe that there is no such thing as a "defensive" rifle. The pistol is the defensive arm. You wear it with no specific action in mind, but when you pick up a rifle you intend to go after something – or someone. Thus the difference in purpose of the two arms is one of concept, and training with either must be carried out with that in mind. The purpose of the pistol is to stop a fight that somebody else started. The purpose of the rifle is to "reach out and touch someone." Thus the objective of the rifleman is to achieve a first–round hit, on an appropriate target, at unspecific range, from improvised positions, against the clock. This is what I endeavor to teach in riflecraft, and it is equally valuable to the hunter, the soldier, or, in some cases, the policeman.

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Our *family member* Randy Umbs, who now lives top center in the cold country, informs us that there have been twenty-two snowmobile fatalities in his state (WI) so far this winter, most of which he feels were the result of the misuse of booze. Roaring off into the snowy night in a state of inebriation is a pretty good way to check yourself out. Perhaps it is a happy way to go – who knows?

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In perusing a new account of the Lewis and Clark expedition we note again that the Pennsylvania squirrel rifles taken on the expedition were simply not powerful enough for the task. They killed their meat, but it was often a messy business, and they did not measure up to a grizzly bear. This fact is well-known and has left us with the notion that it is always important to "use enough gun" – to quote Robert Ruark. The matter of what is enough is the question.

In my opinion – which is clearly not unanimously held – the 308 or 30-06 will do everything that needs doing, short of buffalo and the pachyderms. Bullet placement, of course, is the key. We cleaned house on the Babamkulu adventure of 1994 using the 308/180. On our forthcoming hunt we expect to depend on the 30-06/180 and anticipate no trouble. (This does not include our projected hippopotamus, on which we intend to use Baby, with 500-grain solids.)

Earlier this year *family member* Bill O'Connor slew his nilgai in Texas with the 308/180, which apparently confounded a number of observers who insisted that the nilgai is too tough an animal for that.

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The bell tolls again for another of the great. Adolf Galland, at one time the youngest two-star general in the Wehrmacht, passed away after heart surgery at the age of 83.

Galland was undoubtedly one of the dozen or so greatest aviators of all time, and his legendary exploits are too numerous to mention. Among other things, his "The First and the Last" stands as the definitive reference for those who would study World War II from the German side. But more than his outstanding capacities as a warrior, Adolf Galland was distinguished as a gentleman, which is an almost extinct species. In *the Age of the Common Man*, a gentleman is hard to find. The cause for which Galland fought was lost – fortunately for us – but he acquitted himself beyond reproach, and he well deserves his place in the Hall of Fame.

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Marion Hammer, President of the NRA, exhorts us forcefully to participate in the education of the young. If we do not get the kids away from the tube and out on the range, we stand to lose our liberty in the 21st century.

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These anti-gun people are still hard at it. They are now pushing a bill to prohibit what has come to be called "canned hunting," which is the hunting of non-native species on ranches stocked for the purpose. This sort of hunting may not be everybody's cup-of-tea, but it is legal, economically sound, and can be just as sportsmanlike as one may desire. These bambiists have no business butting in to the pastimes of other people, as long as those pastimes do not endanger the uninvolved and do no harm to the environment. These busybodies simply do not want other people to indulge in activities of which they disapprove, and enjoy doing so. As Mencken put it, they are dismayed by the idea that somewhere, somehow, somebody may be having a good time. May they go fly a kite!

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Rifleman John Pepper tells about an adventure he had in Korea in which he had no use for his front sight. In an unexpected meeting engagement in the snow and the dark, John's party slammed into a platoon of Chicoms. In a really close encounter John found the muzzle of his M1 rammed solidly into the midsection of his opponent, and he emptied his magazine – achieving a decisive, if messy, victory.

So here is a case in which the commandment "Front sight, surprise" does not apply.

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The Chinese Norinco "Sportsman" seems to be an almost exact replica of the renowned Colt Woodsman 22 auto-pistol, on which a whole generation of American sportsmen grew up. A sound 22 self-loading pistol should be a feature of every respectable American household. Of course, "respectable" is the key word here.

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As we now prepare for our forthcoming adventure in Africa, we must point out that there will be a hiatus in the issuance of this journal. I will not be able to put one out while I am off station; however, I am ahead for the year in the production of these commentaries and I will have much to talk about upon our return, so please stay tuned.

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We note in the press that the army is hard at work in pursuit of an infantry weapon that does not call for any skill on the part of the user. The so-called "Objective Individual Combat Weapon" costs about \$15,000 per unit, and is yet another example of the attempt to make up mechanically for human deficiency. This is probably not a good idea. Whatever enemies we may face in the future will almost certainly outnumber us, and we should think about making our individual weapons deadlier, but not easier to use. I still cling to the hope that it is possible to turn out good soldiers, rather than cannon fodder.

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Did you catch that bit last Christmas about the elephant action in India? It seems that the villagers were brewing up a large batch of beer, and the scent was wafted out into the night and picked up by this herd of wild elephants, who got the message and followed their noses (or rather their trunks). When they got into the brewing vats the villagers sought to drive them off with burning brands. The elephants understandably took exception to this and trashed the place, squashing one Indian in the process.

Moral: "Do not get between an elephant and his booze."

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The gunhandling we observed recently at the SHOT Show was customarily atrocious. The fact that all weapons displayed on the floor of the show are presumably de-activated cannot excuse total failure to comply with The Rules. Proper gunhandling habits should be trained into anyone who has any reason to handle a firearm. Unfortunately at this time too much instruction is being carried out by people who are not qualified to do so.

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In reading further into Patton, I discover his interesting opinion that a good tactician is not necessarily a good strategist – and vice versa. To oversimplify, tactics is the art of winning battles, whereas strategy is the art of using battles to achieve a political objective. We may recall that Grant could not stand the sight of blood, whereas Bedford Forrest seems to have enjoyed it. I suppose a truly competent soldier should be good in both areas, but it is interesting to note that this is not always true.

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The rumor mongers continue to insist that the National Rifle Association is in bad shape administratively. It was clearly established at the last board meeting that membership is up and the budget is balanced; but, of course, the facts of the matter are irrelevant to those who would discredit us.

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In my youth it was assumed that the grizzly bear was dangerous to man, but that the black bear was not. As man-versus-bear encounters increase with the population explosion, we discover that this previously held opinion is not necessarily true. During the last hunting season in Canada, a she-bear (black) took on two hunters who were carrying out an elk carcass, and killed them both. I have no details apart from the conclusion, but any bear is a big, strong animal, and quite capable of homicide under the right conditions. Let us say that bears are only cute at a safe distance.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 5

April, 1996

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## Interim Sitrep

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We can report here only briefly since we arrived home from Africa last night and take off for the NRA Annual Meeting tomorrow, but let no one think that we are remiss in our duty to our readers. We will be back on the line with a full-sized issue next month, barring accidents.

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Well, we did not do our hippo, since I had not recovered sufficiently from my spinal compression to do any serious hunting. This was no tragedy, however. It is always nice to have something to look forward to on the next trip.

Neither did we actually shoot the renowned G6 field gun, but we did have a chance to explore it thoroughly in person, and we were treated to an excellent promotional film on the subject. Not much was lost, however. I ought to know by now what a canon sounds like when it goes off.

I was able to deliver the Marlin "Co-pilot" from Wild West in Alaska to its new home as a lion-stopper in Africa. This piece, as you know, is a cutdown and customized version of the Marlin Model 95 45-70. It was much admired in the field, and one of its most admired features was a sighting system I proposed, which consists of a brilliant red shrouded bead front and a Steve Wickert ghost-ring rear. This is about the fastest arrangement I have seen, and considering that the weapon will not ordinarily be used beyond a range of 25 meters, it is every bit as precise as the shooter can make it.

The action handled a sock full of 500-grain reloads without a hitch, and the muzzle brake holds recoil down to a surprisingly comfortable level.

Danie intends to use this piece on buffalo – just for experimental purposes. I cannot recommend the 45-70 cartridge as a buffalo gun, but up close and in the hands of a very cool marksman it may do very well. We shall see.

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"Hunting is an intense personal experience. It is a conviction at the very core of our being, just as the love of our spouse or parents. Using men as an example, ask for a public testimony from most men about the wife they love, and their brains begin to melt down. They stutter, find themselves at a loss for words and generally are ineffectual, but let them be threatened by the loss of a spouse and suddenly even the most withdrawn husband can be eloquent."

Dr. Bill Morrill, in *Safari Times*

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We enjoyed short shoots in the Kalahari, the Waterberg and the Onderberg and thus saw more of the country on this series of minor hunts than we would have on a major safari. The abundant summer rains have broken the drought, rendering the High Veldt verdant and the Low Veldt lush. This wet season was not without certain drawbacks, however, since the grass was so high that one could not see the warthogs, and the anopheles mosquito was buzzing forth in unprecedented profusion, making malaria a very serious matter in the low country.



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Our companions on this adventure were Colonel C.J. Ancker III, US Army, and his wife Jan. Clint is a multiple graduate of Orange Gunsite, and though he has no previous hunting experience, he delivered exactly as one would expect in a much decorated war hero, taking springbok, blesbok, gemsbok, and impala with the Blaser.

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Daughter Lindy performed as expected on her first excursion afield for blood. Having been put through the rifle school at Whittington, and having worked up her 1903 into a "pseudo-scout" she put everything away neatly with the same 30-06 180-grain cartridge that her father used back in *the Dark Ages*. We are now down into the last remnants of our original supply of Norma 180s, and these feature a semi-spitzer open-point projectile with a boat-tail. The combination flies with great precision and hits hard. It may be criticized as old fashioned, since it opens up rather quickly and does not retain its impact weight, but this is no drawback when the weapon chosen has sufficient power for the task. For example, the zebra (which is a very tough animal indeed) was taken behind the last rib at about 190 paces – target angle 130 degrees. The bullet fragmented in the boiler room, doing quick and terminal damage which brought the beast down only a few paces from the point of impact.

It was indeed delightful for an old codger, such as I, to watch his offspring deliver perfectly with an action designed in 1903 and a cartridge designed in 1906 – which is even before my time. On the other hand, the new technology was employed in a high-strength, light-weight composition stock from Robbie Barrkman, and the new Leupold scoutscope. This new glass, available only this year, took one extremely hard knock in the course of a wild ride in the hunting car, and when we rechecked the zero we found it had held solid without error of any kind.

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I have been somewhat amused at the spate of indignation I have aroused by insisting that the proper word is "shottist" rather than "shootist". Several people have leafed through a series of dictionaries to tell me that I am wrong about this. Apparently it is a matter of English-English versus American-English. I have been presented on two occasions to audiences in Great Britain and in South Africa as a shottist, and I assume that a proper English language dictionary would support me in this. Our British cousins spell color with a "u" and refer to a fender as a wing. Other examples will occur to you. Personally I prefer shottist, but it appears that I cannot insist upon that.

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The political situation in South Africa may best be described as unsettled at this time. While street crime has grown by leaps and bounds since the revolution, it is mostly committed by the underclass against the underclass, much as in the US, and then there is the good side in that the traveler may be always legally armed, which puts every confrontation in its proper light.

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We were all saddened at the death notice of Peter Hathaway Capstick, one of the truly notable commentators on the African scene. His death was untimely at age 56, and we will miss his lively accounts of the wild. In mitigation it may be noted that he did get a great deal of his writing published where succeeding generations can enjoy it for the indefinite future.

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The date for our recent African adventure was selected by Dick Thomas of Columbia, Missouri, who was the host of the original IPSC Founders meeting in 1976. The meeting itself was very pleasant, and we were delighted to socialize with many old friends from the past. We did not, however, see many of the founding fathers at the opening banquet, and I was unable to revive interest in the famous "Mason Williams Course of Fire," which distinguished the original Founders meeting in Columbia. This competition is most ingenious and I commend it to those of you who want to have an entertaining experience among friends indoors without the necessity of repairing to a pistol range. In this match a small-ring bullseye target is set upon the far wall of the dining room. Each contestant is given a notepad and an empty target pistol (I know, I know, no guns are empty, but read on). The contestant engages the target, slow-fire, one "shot" at a time from offhand. Each

time the striker is released the shooter notes down where he thinks the shot went and turns the paper over. He does this ten times and the judges take his paper. When all contestants have had their turn, scores are tallied and three prizes are awarded – "Biggest Liar" to top score, "Most Honest" to low score, and "Grand Prize" to the contestant who scores exactly in the middle of the pack.

This contest is challenging, amusing, and can be hilarious. We did not actually run it at the *Founders Reunion*, but I commend it to all and sundry. ("Sundry" being those who do not yet have their concealed carry permits.)

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We were able to show Clint and Jan a very choice morsel of the South African experience in the two weeks that they could spare. Two weeks, of course, is never enough, but then neither is two months. There is just too much of Africa to enjoy without making it a continuing avocation.

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In a new account of the Lewis and Clark expedition, "*Undaunted Courage*", we note with satisfaction that while the heroes of this mighty expedition had no idea what their requirements might turn out to be, they had their priorities straight. Before the adventure was over they had run completely out of tobacco and of whiskey – but they never ran out of gunpowder. In every respect these two men coped; in fact, they are possibly the two best copers I ever heard of.

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As the new weapon of the common people appears to be the Chinese version of the Russian SKS, it has now become obvious that some kind of sight should be available for it, and the Lyman Corporation has leaped into the breach. Their new Model 66 SKS sight will bolt right on to both Russian and Chinese rifles and provide both a target disk and a ghost-ring.

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On the subject of things Chinese we note that Norinco is now producing in their "Sportsman" an apparently exact replica of the renowned Colt Woodsman, which piece was the mainstay of the youth in those dear, dead days before World War II. I do not know how well the Chinese version is made, but the concept is admirable.

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The "Fund For Animals" (FFA) is now campaigning to disenchant woman from both hunting and fishing, claiming these activities to be "old fashioned" and therefore beneath consideration. We may doubt that they will succeed in this. Most of the best things in life are old fashioned, and unlikely to be disregarded on that account.

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I am often asked why it is necessary for a scout rifle to be a 308. Well, it is not actually necessary, but it is desirable on two counts. First, the scout must be a general-purpose rifle, taking ammunition which is available worldwide without handloading. Second, it must be a short cartridge so that it can be fitted into short actions, making it more likely for the completed item to make weight. The weight ceiling on a true scout is 3 kilograms (6.7lbs). The only one that I know that makes weight today is "Scout I" built on the Remington 600 carbine. The forthcoming scout rifle from Steyr-Mannlicher will make weight. I have been assured of this by the designers, who swore to it on the bones of St. Hubert. The prototype, which I held in my hands last year, ran a touch over 7lbs., but it had a wood stock. The composition stock on the production model will reduce this to the specified limit. (It says so right here.)

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We learn from *Soldier of Fortune* magazine that when Senator Arlen Specter issued a request last summer for the names of all known militia members at least one citizen did what he could do to help. He sent Specter a copy of the local phone book. According to the Founding Fathers, almost everybody not in the military is in the militia.

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Well, that is all for this short copy. After a 24-hour touchdown in Arizona, we are off to Dallas for the annual meeting of the NRA Board, and then to Ann Arbor for the wedding of granddaughter Lisi, and then to Whittington for the rifle shoot. One of these days the dust will settle and we can get back on schedule, but I

cannot predict when that will be.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 6

May, 1996

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## Spring is Here

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As we expected, the month of April turned out to be impractical. They say behind us, but the call of duty does not grow less. As soon as I get this that it is great to be busy, but this could become ridiculous. April is now issue polished off, we will be off again to darkest Louisiana, and thereafter back to Colorado for another short stay. I will work my writing commitments in as best I may, but things certainly have a way of coming up unexpectedly.

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The NRA annual meeting at Dallas was most encouraging. The presidency of Marion Hammer, the first woman in that office, has attracted great national attention. And while Marion is in truth an excellent executive, this is not because she is a woman, but rather because she is excellent. Still, the feminists have taken due note, and the fact that the most prominent American freedom fighter is female is certainly not lost upon the feminist movement.

As usual the media did their best to denigrate the Association, partly by ignoring it and partly by malicious rumor. There was no notice of our activities in the Dallas Morning News, and rumors were circulated to the effect that we are losing membership and going broke. We are doing nothing of the kind. Membership is up, and the treasurer's report shows us well in the black.

It was amusing to encounter a small group of anti-gun activists outside the convention center. When approached by various spokesmen for our cause, these people shriveled up and took refuge in misdirected vituperation. It is so easy to destroy the logical position of a hoplophobe that such people do well to avoid debate. They are quite ready to publish their foolishness, but they wisely shrink from debate. Hoplophobia is, after all, not a reasoned position, but rather a mental aberration. Being basically emotional, it is a feeling rather than an examined forensic position.

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On our recent African adventure we tried a system which we had never used before. This was a sort of smorgasbord hunt in which, rather than spending our entire hunting time in one area with one outfitter, we browsed around. We hunted gemsbok and springbok in the Kalahari with Ian McFarlane, blesbok and impala in the Waterberg with Alf Adami, and zebra and impala down at Engonyameni with Danie van Graan. This sort of thing can be enchanting, and one meets new people, sees new country, and savors a different sort of hunting at each location. It is not always possible to arrange, but I am very glad we were able to do so on this adventure. The only trophy that daughter Lindy really wanted was an imposing big zebra hide for her living room. This she put away nicely with the 30-06/180. Her Springfield combination is absolutely "enough gun" – in the hands of one who can shoot it expertly.

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So now we have the Daewoo triple-action pistol, which can be fired in three ways, rather than just two, as in double-action. Like so many aspects of gadgetry, it is not clear what this feature is intended to accomplish, other than to introduce something new to the sales force. It is sometimes hard for me to realize that I have got through most of my adult life using the single-action, self-loading pistol personally and instructing thousands of people in the use thereof – without any sort of mishap. I must have missed something along the way.

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With surprise and disappointment we learn that Steve Young, the outstanding quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, is a hoplophobe activist. One would not expect such an attitude in a good Mormon boy. Note that this is not a rumor, but was verified by a spokesman from Mr. Young's office.

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I regret to report that the annual *Keneyathlon* has been cancelled, at least for the time being, by its originator, Dr. David Kahn. It appears that it is not possible to arouse sufficient interest through normal public channels, and while the *Keneyathlon* was the best practical rifle contest so far devised, not enough people know about it to make it economically viable.

Since we have already fabricated the *Guru's Gold* ring as a prize for the best performance in the *Keneyathlon*, we will undertake to present this to the best performance at the practical rifle match scheduled for 13, 14 July at Whittington Center. This means the best performance by a practical rifle, as opposed to a target rifle. Contact:

Brad Schuppan, (505) 445-3615.

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Note that the NRA book service still has a small supply of "*Another Country*," which I think is my best work so far. Contact:

NRA Sales Dept., PO Box 5000, Kearneysville, WV 25430-5000.

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We are now expecting the chance to examine a new version of the "Thumper" concept, which is now being developed in Phoenix. This piece takes a full 44 Magnum cartridge but is said to deliver very little felt recoil. We will look into this and report back.

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The battle cry at the NRA convention was sounded as "Safety, Responsibility, Freedom." These words must be trumpeted to the best of our ability in this vital election year. It is up to us to convince the people at large that a vote for the left in this forthcoming contest is a vote against political liberty. Let not personalities obscure the problem. If we are forced to endure another four years such as those just past, the tradition of American liberty may be so badly damaged as to be irreparable. I do not know anyone who intends to vote wrong in this forthcoming election, but then I do not know enough people. We just must put out the word.

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In a somewhat similar parallel, a forthcoming election in South Africa may result in an ironclad, one-party Marxist majority if the Zulus help the ANC. If they do not, some sort of reasoned equilibrium may be established for the foreseeable future.

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Colleague and multiple Orange graduate Naish Piazza has asked me rather wistfully why I have not mentioned his Front Sight operation in Bakersfield, California. The main reason is that I was waiting to hear that the operation was in full operation. Naish knows the doctrine and has acquired the services of two excellent educators in Gabe Suarez and Brad Ackman. For detailed information address

Front Sight, Incorporated, PO Box 2619, Aptos, CA 95001.

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We note with irritation that our enemies are fond of referring to us shooters as "extremists." Extremism in the eyes of some is a negative characteristic, but I have never found it necessarily so. As Goldwater put it some years ago, "Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice." Nonetheless the mood of the times changes, and it might be well for us to reverse the pitch here and start talking about those who would deprive us of our political freedom as extremists. They are indeed that, and they deserve to get their own insults back in their faces.

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Having been raised back in another age, I have always been rather puzzled at the concept of "catch and release" fishing. In my day we ate the fish we caught, and if we did not want to eat them, we did not bother to catch them. To each his own, of course.

Now I note the term "catch and release" hunting applied by the admirable outdoor writer John Barsness. This refers to the act of passing up a viable shot to wait for another day. I have practiced this various times in the past, but never without simulating the shot. When a good rifleman feels the striker snap forward he knows, because of what he sees in his sights, where his shot is going to go. If he does not simulate this, the point is not made. Therefore when I have encountered a situation in which I had the rifle and was unwilling to take the animal, I have always carefully removed the round from the chamber, assumed the best possible firing position, and pressed the trigger. This, I think, is the proper method to use if you like the idea of catch and release hunting.

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For pistol instruction at Whittington Center 15–20 July contact

Rich Wyatt, 3430 Wright St., Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, (303) 232–0542.

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Note now that a new Berreta pistol features a rotary lock, somewhat similar to that on the old Obregon pistol from Mexico. This may be a good idea, though one is tempted to observe the old maxim, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I do not think current Berreta pistols are in the habit of blowing open, so whether they need the extra strength of a rotary lock is unclear. However, progress is progress, and we should not sneer at it.

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Our good friend and fellow board member Al Rubega is entering the lists for the governor of New Hampshire. Al is a good man and we have admired his work often in reading of it in New Hampshire. If he makes it to the office of governor, American shooters will have placed a strong building block in freedom's wall. If any of the *family* are able to vote in New Hampshire I urge them to vote for Al.

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At the NRA show we were interested to examine the new graphite barrel sleeves from Christensen Arms. The idea here is to produce a very stiff barrel without increasing weight. The Christensen barrels consist of a thin sleeve which takes the rifling surrounded by a thick graphite tube which gives the piece the approximate contour of a bull-gun. Whether or not barrel stiffness is a real asset to a practical rifleman is moot, but the inventors claim great things with this device and we wish them success.

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A newly elected director of the National Rifle Association, who happens to be a woman, approached me at the Dallas conclave with the notion that she is new to rifle work and can use any help available in perfecting her skills. When I asked her what sort of rifle shooting she enjoyed, she replied, "Big Bore," which suggested to me that she was going in for 30-caliber military target shooting. Further inquiry revealed, however, that she is very keen on big game and had, therefore, recently acquired a 300 Weatherby magnum (!!!!). One does not disparage a new acquisition, whether automobile, rifle or wife, but I cannot think of a worse place to start for a lady novice than with a big-bottle 300. As I have often opined, boosting the velocity of the 30-06 provides little in the way of efficiency in return for a certain amount of bother in bulk and blast. If you want more power than the 30-06, you want more bullet, but this woman does not suggest she needs more power. One would wish there were more schools around for shooters where the true doctrine could be expounded. As of right now, however, a rifle school is a rare thing, and only a couple of those are prepared to set forth proper doctrine. I have been so gratified at the results achieved by my students, both male and female, in Africa, that I feel justified in my opinions, and for a shooter to commence his studies with a medium-bore rifle is probably a mistake.

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Perhaps you may have noticed a piece by our colleague Finn Aagaard in the current *American Rifleman* on the topic of "Point Blank Shooting." This is an excellent article and fully covers a basic lecture in the general rifle class. If you are going to take up rifle shooting seriously, you should cut it out and put it where you can refer

to it.

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One of the sillier gadgets now available for sale and presented at the various gun shows is an actual cartridge counter for a pistol, which is incorporated into the starboard stock and which reads the number of rounds left in the magazine to a shooter if he glances away from his sights. There really is such a thing! On a rifle it may make some sense. We have always been pleased by the cartridge counter on the receiver on the early models of the Savage 99 rifle, though I have never heard anyone tell me that he put it to practical use in the field. The rifle and the pistol are conceptually different instruments, but in either case it is well to remember that if you shoot carefully you will never run dry. (If you were actually attempting to repel boarders in the form of hoards of knife-wielding Malay pirates, I imagine you would run dry anyway, with or without your cartridge counter.)

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Have you noticed that this weird group calling itself "People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals" (PETA) is now agitating for a ban on the use of baboon marrow transplants into people? Whether such transplants are successful or not I cannot say, but I have observed baboons at some length and I can assure all and sundry that ethics are not their strong point.

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We learn from the Clinton administration that there is now a move afoot in the United Nations to ban all international traffic in smallarms. This turns out to be a Japanese idea whose time, God help us, has not yet come, but Bill and Hillary are all for it. It can be said a fanatic is defined as one who doubles his efforts after he has lost sight of his goals. Examples will occur to you.

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We are pleased to announce that both Dan Predovich and Finn Aagaard earned their Scharfschützenabzeichen at the just concluded rifle school at Whittington. Congratulations! That antique emblem featuring the hawk's eye peering through the bushes is not common, and in view of current operations it has become even less so. If you see a man wearing that badge, take note – he can really shoot.

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We read of an interesting case up in Salt Lake in which an armed robber was killed in attempting his crime, after having stabbed his intended victim who ran him down with a van as he ran.

Now it appears that "the authorities" are attempting to pin something on the victim, on the grounds that while one is entitled to defend himself, he is not entitled to retaliate. This view point, while widely held, strikes a very sour note with those of us who were raised to revere the dignity of the common man. Following this reasoning, if a goblin walks up to you in a mall, sticks you with a stiletto and then flees, you are supposed to burst into tears and call the police. This seems to me a poor idea.

I call your attention to the book *"No Duty To Retreat"* by Richard Maxwell Brown, published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1991. In this work the author explores the legal basis for the idea of retaliation, and he concludes that both historically and legally the idea that one should retreat from violence, rather than take preventive action, has no basis in fact. This does not end the argument by any means, as in today's climate of opinion certain social workers seem hell-bent to protect the perpetrator from his prey. The book, however, provides excellent ammunition for those of us who feel that a man is not a rabbit.

It is interesting to note that in South Africa at this time lethal force may be used by the victim of a crime if it is necessary to save his life – or if it is necessary to prevent the escape of the perpetrator. There it is held that a citizen is duty bound to arrest the perpetrator of a violent felony committed in his presence. It must be established that the victim was actually endeavoring to make an arrest. This is most easily accomplished by shouting "You are under arrest. Stop!" at the top of your voice. Since it has been proven that the only thing a violent criminal has to fear is his victim, it would certainly seem that this South African procedure has much merit.

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*Rifle Master* John Pepper of Maryland offers a correction to our forthcoming work "*The Art of the Rifle*," which I sent to him for review. John points out that one does not look through a telescope sight, rather he looks at it. The image of the target and the reticle is located within the tube, rather than out in front of it. Good point John, and thanks very much!

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While in Pretoria Colonel Ancker and I had the opportunity to examine the new Vektor compact service pistol. It has very nice lines and it feels good in the hand, but the trigger on the one we examined was disastrous, and, after all, the piece is still only a 9. One looks long and hard at new technical developments before one finds one that truly answers a manifest need.

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The machinations of the liability lawyers have done grievous harm to the American industrial capacity. The notion is that if a customer does something stupid and hurts himself with an instrument, the manufacturer of the instrument owes him a whole lot of money. This means that you cannot find proper steering in American high-performance streetable autos, and that it is equally impossible to find an acceptable trigger in a currently manufactured American rifle. You are not only most unlikely to find a good trigger in such a piece, but you are forbidden by the manufacturer to improve it for fear of invalidating the warranty. There are even some gunsmiths who will not do a trigger job for you because of their fear of the ambulance chaser.

If you want a good rifle trigger out of the box you will have to look for it overseas. As we have mentioned, the trigger on the Blaser is the peak performer in the world at this time, but it is also true that Steyr Mannlicher will put a trigger in a production gun which is so good that the shooter really cannot ask for anything more.

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In that connection we have great good news from Steyr Mannlicher regarding progress on the Scout project. This is fully underway, and the component stock, which we did not see last year in Austria, is now visible on various prototypes. The Scoutscope is in position. The integral bipod looks good. Stock length is adjustable. The spare magazine is contained in the stock. The double-detent is featured in the magazine latch. The sling sockets accommodate the Ching Sling, and the whole piece will make Scout weight, which is 3 kilograms, unloaded but with sight in place.

I am pleading with the manufacturer to place the weapon before us in 1997, but as of now the release date is '98.

This item, as now examined and photographed, is not just an improvement, but rather a great leap forward. It should constitute the practical rifle of the 21st century.

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I have sometimes remarked that while I am willing to admit that a muzzle brake does reduce recoil, I still do not know the theory behind the structure. It would seem to me that by the time anything has passed the muzzle the rearward thrust of the weapon would already have been fully delivered. Apparently this hypothesis is not right, since we see a variety of muzzle brakes on both field artillery pieces and tank guns which would not be installed merely for fashion's sake. We were told in Pretoria that the muzzle brake on the G6 self-propelled gun, which is the pride of the South African arms industry, reduces recoil by as much as a third, and recently a correspondent wrote explaining to me that I did not understand about rocket propulsion in this regard. This is true. I do not understand, but I am certainly willing to learn.

I note that the mighty 120 smooth-bore gun of the Abrams tank has no muzzle brake, but then a smooth-bore weapon recoils distinctly less than a rifled piece of the same power. One of these days we will have to set up a lecture program at one of the gun shows on this subject of recoil reduction.

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Our man in England kindly provides us with "*The Week*," an excellent periodical on the current scene. From it we pass on the following observation on the state of the British military establishment:



"The navy is overrun with officers trying to be gentlemen, the army with gentlemen trying to be officers, and the RAF with neither trying to be both."

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 7

June, 1996

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## Summer is Icumen In

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June is busting out all over – as the song has it. May we now look forward to "a summer of roses and wine" – or is such an idea repulsive to the Puritans among us? The thing about summer is that it is usually too hot for comfort, a fact that bothers some people more than others. Excessive heat does indeed discourage trips to the range and hikes back and forth to the target area, but we must steel ourselves to this and continue our shooting practice as conscientiously as we do in spring and fall. Shooting skill is lost more quickly than we would like to admit, and unless you keep up your practice you cannot expect to maintain your command of the situation. I find this to be more true of the pistol than the rifle, but this may be because bench rest precision is a talent of a lower order than rifle snap or a par Presidente. Be that as it may, try not to let the heat of summer discourage you. The "one-box-a-year" hunter may never aspire to the laurel wreath.

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We were somewhat startled recently to see a "Springfield Scout" proclaimed on the cover of the *American Rifleman*. We investigated immediately and found to our relief that the piece referred to bore no resemblance either to the production scout now about ready for release in Austria, or to daughter Lindy's Springfield "pseudo-scout," which distinguished itself recently in Africa. Certainly no one owns a copyright on the term "scout," but I do my best to keep the concept consistent.

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Those dismal people who make an issue of denying us our cultural heritage keep right on trying to censor the literary classics of the ages. This attempt at thought control, which was so forcefully repudiated by Thomas Jefferson as "tyranny over the mind of man" seems most rampant in those very places where freedom of thought should be held inviolate – specifically the groves of academe.

In this connection I would like to propose the descriptive logo *NPC* for "Not Politically Correct." This trade mark could then be stamped upon almost everything of value anyone of adequate liberal education should regard as required reading. The list would include, for starters, the Old Testament, the Koran, the Merchant of Venice, the Arthurian Legends, Huckleberry Finn, Jock of the Bushveldt, Denatured Africa, Greenhills of Africa, many of the works of Rudyard Kipling, most of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and (modestly) *Another Country* – amongst many, many others. If we could bring ourselves to label the good books of the world *NPC*, we might save a lot of wasted reading time. As far as I can tell when someone is careful to be "politically correct" today he talks like a fool.

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I enjoy controversy, and I am annoyed by the fact that those who agree with me are the ones who write to me personally, whereas those who wish to discredit my preachings write to the editor of the magazine, in the possible hope that I will not take on their arguments personally. Fortunately the editors usually send the hostile communications right on to me, and I enjoy getting my teeth into them. When I am wrong I wish to learn about it, as only thus can I improve my awareness of the subject. On the other hand, when someone chooses to denigrate me when I am in actuality right, it is rather fun to deflate his hostile arguments with the rapier rather than with the axe.

In this line a correspondent recently complained to the magazine (not to me) about my mention of the "shot-cock" system as a means of operating the trigger-cocking pistol. This shot-cock system, in case you have not caught the argument, is a firing stroke by which the shooter plants his first round as quickly as he

possibly can from the hammer–down position, cocking with the trigger. He pays little attention to precise control of the shot, but concentrates on getting it off as rapidly as possible so that he can place his second shot from the cocked position – with accompanying precision. The correspondent in this case claims that I must be out of my mind in that such a procedure is an invitation to negligent discharge. In the first place it is not, since the shooter fires his first shot in the general direction of his adversary. It may actually hit, though it usually does not, but it is not a negligent discharge. Certainly I do not teach this system, since I consider it a sloppy answer to an unfortunate mechanical contrivance, but to deny that it exists would be foolish. I have seen it work on the range, and I know of a case where it was used on the street in Phoenix with decisive success. On the range I once saw a student place second in the shoot off, though not once did he hit his target with his first shot. I had not taught him this but he had worked it out for himself, and I cannot condemn him for that.

Our critic goes on further to say that the thumb–cocking system, by means of which the pistol is cocked with the left thumb as it comes up on target, is technically unworkable. In class work I always permit any student who is stuck with a trigger–cocking pistol either to thumb–cock or to use the crunch–tick system, whichever seems best to him. Thumb–cocking wins almost every time.

It seems that my correspondent is operating from an unsound base, not having had the experience to see what works in practice, but rather worrying primarily about the deadly danger of negligent discharge. I have taught thousands of pistol shooters, and I cannot remember the last time we had a negligent discharge on the range.

Curiously enough, the hostility I detect expends itself in personal insult rather than attention to the facts. One does not win arguments by casting aspersions at one's opposition, but rather by careful presentation of the pertinent facts, but then we do not teach debating skills in schools anymore, as far as I know.

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The question as to whether the 10–millimeter (40–caliber) pistol cartridge, in any of its forms, is a satisfactory fight–stopper remains open. I have no doubt that the original Ten, as made up and loaded for the Bren Ten, had all the necessary attributes, firing as it did a 40–caliber, 200–grain, flat–point projectile at upwards of 1,200 feet per second. The "Attenuated Tens," as now loaded and sold, are way short of this, but I suspect that they are still quite a bit ahead of the Parabellum cartridge. Time will tell.

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"Environmentalists do not want to live in or work with nature, they want to manage it from a distance."

Chilton Williamson in *Chronicles*

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By now seven correspondents have informed me about the theoretical operation of the muzzle–brake, and I thank all of them profusely. I wrote that I knew muzzle–brakes worked, but I did not know how, because the rearward impetus applied to the firearm must be completely exerted by the time the projectile leaves the muzzle, and therefore cannot be reduced by anything forward of the muzzle. The crux of this matter, as it turns out, is time. The rearward impetus applied to the firearm is indeed initiated before any sort of muzzle–brake can take effect, but time is necessary for the rearward impetus to be transmitted into motion. Recoil effect is produced by the rearward velocity of the weapon, and that velocity does not have time to build up before the forward impetus of the muzzle–brake takes hold. Upon discharge the weapon starts to the rear, but before it can really get started it is pulled quickly forward by the muzzle–brake. Thus it is.

Still, one gets nothing free. The drawback of the muzzle–brake is apparent blast as the propelling gases are deflected sidewise, and in some cases rearward toward the shooter. Whether a novice shooter is inclined to flinch more from recoil than from blast is a matter of the individual. I prefer to leave muzzle–brakes off the weapon unless they are definitely needed, and that need can only be really determined by the shooter himself.

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We left the "Co-pilot", which is an 18-inch 45-70 with a muzzle-brake, with Danie van Graan in Africa. In firing it I did not notice a disturbing blast, but I did notice that the weapon recoiled somewhat less than I anticipated. In chronographing, Danie discovered a very interesting thing. It appears that his 18-inch 45-70 was starting 400-grain bullets about 60f/s faster than his 24-inch 45-70, which he has been using as a lion stopper for a long time. It does not seem possible that this could be a chronograph error since the comparison between the two weapons was done with the same machine, nor does it seem possible that the muzzle-brake itself would increase velocity. Danie's gun profits by the very latest in manufacturing technology, and it is possible that the barrel in the "Co-pilot" is a little smoother than that in his old gun, though this does seem unlikely. Fred Wells of Prescott is of the opinion that what we have here is bore friction, and that for each loading there is a barrel length which utilizes the power of the load most efficiently. Beyond this critical length the bullet is exerting drag on the rifling, thus reducing its initial velocity. This could indeed be the case. What is most interesting is that Danie has not only not lost any velocity in his short-barreled gun, but with his loadings he has gained a bit.

Who'd a thunk it!

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Note that laser pointers for pistols are now verboten in Germany. That certainly should solve the crime problem!

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As you know, the British subject is effectively forbidden the use of firearms in defense of his life. So now we read in the English press of one retired army officer who overcame this problem by repelling boarders with his sword. When three goblins broke into his house with knives, he produced his regimental sabre and gave battle. He ran those birds out of his house and well down the street, though the account does not say that he damaged any of them severely. Swordsmanship is effectively a lost art, but I doubt if the world's miscreants are fully aware of that.

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Our man in Australia informs us that the Australian parliament has decided to banish all self-loading smallarms and all "military calibers." Prospective legislation also forbids the presence of minors on any shooting range and sets up a federal "gun police" organization to execute the disarmament of the Australian people.

Just how far this legislation has progressed we are not sure, but apparently this semi-auto ban has passed.

Do you suppose that the dubious social heritage of the Australian people has brought about this situation? When one considers that the previous prime minister was presented with a grandchild permanently addicted to heroin, we might lend support to this theory. Let us remember that "an armed society is a polite society" and a disarmed society is a rude society, as the history of the 20th century forcefully emphasizes.

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"Better a 4-inch rifle with a fine trigger than a 1-inch rifle with a bad one."

The Guru

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I take this opportunity to make known to all that the rifle match scheduled at Whittington Shooting Center must not be referred to as a "Jeff Cooper Bolt-Action Contest," despite advanced notice to the contrary. From the beginning I have utilized whatever influence I may possess to avoid categorizing marksmanship contests by action type, despite considerable pressure to do so. No match of which I approve will ever separate contestants by the action of the weapons they use, and in no case should mechanics be allowed to take precedence over marksmanship. The match will be held as scheduled, and I will present the *Guru's Gold* to the winner, but it will not be a "bolt-action" contest.

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Those of you who are interested in rifle competition should note that one Harald Slemwag of Norway recently shot the first recorded possible (600x600) on the international rifle course. This involves 20 shots prone, slow-fire, at an x-ring 100 millimeters (about 4 inches) in diameter, at 300 meters (about 330 yards). We should note that this is not a bench rest record, but fired from the prone position, unsupported.

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Note that piracy is up, worldwide. In this spineless age, in which the aim of the majority seems to be to produce a culture of spiritual eunuchs, this is not to be wondered at. When you are out of sight of land in your personal vessel you certainly should be prepared and ready to protect yourself against felonious attack, day or night, but if you try to prepare yourself for this you will provoke unwelcome attention from almost any coast guard service in the world. (A sword is not much use under these circumstances.)

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Is it not annoying that in *the Age of the Wimp* the adjective macho, and its accompanying noun machismo, have come to be regarded as derogatory? There is no exact translation into English of this Spanish term, but it signifies a combination of dignity, elan vital, courage and "copability." An example that comes to mind is that of Rene Barrientos, who was at the time president of Bolivia. It appears that a political scandal arose when a couple of military aviators died when their parachutes failed to open. It was adduced by the political opposition that Barrientos was profiteering off of second rate parachutes discarded by the US

Rather than arguing the point, the president decreed a press conference at dawn the following morning. He arrived promptly, dressed in full flying gear, and told the assembled reporters to pick out a spokesman. When this was done the president escorted the spokesman to the storehouse in which all parachutes were stored and had him pick out any one at random. When this was done the president donned the parachute and climbed aboard a two-seater jet fighter plane, piloting it himself. He circled the field, and when ready, rolled on his back and bailed out. In the parachute he guided himself to a stand-up landing in front of the press corps, whereupon he shrugged out of his harness and said, "Now, let's everybody get back to work."

That was macho. Don't put it down.

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"Without freedom there will be no firearms among the people; without firearms among the people there will not long be freedom. Certainly there are examples of countries where the people remain relatively free after the people have been disarmed, but there are no examples of a totalitarian state being created or existing where the people have personal arms."

Neal Knox

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*Family member* and Orange Gunsite rangemaster Dave Harris reports a personal contact from up in northern California. He handled it perfectly, and he attributes this to his thorough indoctrination in the combat mind-set. On conclusion he was asked by his fellow police officers if he did not feel shock and distress after having disposed of a goblin. His answer was, of course, "Certainly not. I feel fine. How about you?"

But there are people who still push this "post operational trauma" foolishness, and far too many of them are in the police service. As we have sometimes said, "There is nothing wrong with winning a fight. There is a great deal wrong with losing one."

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For many years we have been taught and believed that any sort of "take-down" system was to be avoided as injurious to practical accuracy. Perhaps times have changed, or perhaps the thesis was never fully correct, but we have used two take-down rifles recently which suggest that we may have been wrong all these years. Riflemaster John Gannaway recently ran a full test on the Blaser R93 rifle, which comes neatly apart for shipment. It is an astonishingly accurate rifle, and it loses no accuracy whatever by being dismantled and reassembled.

This matter may also affect our view on detachable telescope sights, which in the past have not proved satisfactory. It is possible that modern technology and modern metallurgy have changed this, and while we still think it a poor idea to take the telescope off a rifle without re-zeroing, we will have to study this matter more fully.

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There still exists a certain amount of ignorance about the use of the rifle sling as a shooting aid. Evidently many shooters simply do not know how to use it, and the accessory suppliers are no help. Under the right circumstances, the shooting sling increases hit probability as much as a third. In well over half a century of field riflery I have used the loop to secure over half my kills. That is just one man's experience, but it should not be ignored.

A good many of the unenlightened feel that the shooting sling is too slow into operation, apparently never having practiced its quick acquisition. The military loop sling can be locked on in five seconds – the speed slings (CW and Ching) in about one. Clearly the shooting sling is of no value in the offhand position, nor from a rest, but in the tundra or the desert it comes on strongly – and often in orchard bush. (I once decked a running buffalo with Baby, shooting from "jackass prone" and using the Ching Sling. This was the longest buffalo shot I know of – 175 paces.)

Modern flush sockets, used with the hammerhead attachments, make a speed sling instantly ready to mount or to remove. "Don't leave home without it."

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Lest we forget it on Memorial Day, the murderers of Nicole Simpson, Vince Foster, and Vicki Weaver still walk free – without risk or stigma. All we get from the media on this subject is a big yawn.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 8

July, 1996

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## The Glorious Fourth

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As we look forward to our celebration of our 220th birthday, it is interesting to consider how much we may have achieved in the search for the optimum balance of order and liberty, which the Founding Fathers sketched out for us.

Certainly, in terms of physical well-being, we have surpassed any political achievement in history, but whether we have made much progress in our search for personal liberty remains an open question. We can still vote, but sometimes one wonders whether that is enough. No king or emperor from the past ever attempted to heckle, harass and regulate the personal behavior of his subjects the way our bureaucracy does now. On top of the millions of authorized busybodies on the public payroll, we now have seen erected a sort of informal "thought police" which makes a joke of the idea of free speech. Only those who do not hold jobs may now speak their minds without fear of administrative punishment. It was Socrates who was put to death (gently) for speaking too freely in ancient Greece. We have not yet begun to execute the politically incorrect, but the example of Marge Schott certainly gives us cause for alarm.

So let us by all means celebrate our nation's Independence Day (without privately operated fireworks, of course), but while we take pleasure in what we have achieved, we must not forget what we have lost. The handwriting is certainly on the wall. Let us take heed!

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*Family member* Barrett Tillman tells us that he recently caught a segment on the tube portraying girl soldiers undergoing bayonet training. We had been told that obscenity on television was growing out of control, but we did not realize that it had gone this far.

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A correspondent recently brought up the debate over the matter of embellishment of arms. He pointed out that he had a friend who thought that the decoration by engraving, inlay or other ornamental work was inappropriate to a firearm, which is essentially a utilitarian instrument. To my mind this is entirely a personal matter. The Romans, who were accomplished swordsmen, never seemed to have decorated their swords, regarding them rather as a gardener regards a spade. In the Dark Ages, on the other hand, the Vikings, among others, went to great lengths to ornament their swords with gold, silver and jewels, turning some of these into brilliant works of art. Today we see gorgeous Italian shotguns and German rifles that one would hesitate to take out of a glass case for fear of getting them dusty or finger printed. I rather like the idea of a pretty gun, but the piece I carry for daily wear is absolutely plain.

The matter is worth discussing.

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Just last week up in Denver we were treated to an example of the handgun training procedures now apparently in widespread use amongst the feds. I was holding rifle school on a range back-to-back with the contingent of agents from the Health and Human Services division. Their training procedure was strictly in accordance with regulations handed down from on high, and the officer in charge was a *copchick* in the range tower manning a bullhorn. Naturally she could not do much supervising up in that perch, but she had the training manual in front of her and she proceeded with great precision. Instructions were given out verbally over the horn, and the students were expected to follow these instructions individually on each of several firing points.

One exercise which fascinated me consisted of firing six rounds, three barricade–right and three barricade–left. Two shots were to be fired at the body, and then a single at what she referred to as "the groin." The objective of this drill leaves me without a clue. Presumably it was some sort of degeneration from the classic *Mozambique Drill*, in which the student fires two shots as fast as he can at the center of mass, then, after pausing to observe the effect of his first two shots, he slows down and places one round carefully in the head. The idea is that if the first two shots do not quiet the adversary, this is either because he is not interested in the cartridge employed or he is wearing body armor. Speed is no longer a dominant consideration, but turning the adversary off is. The way one turns his adversary off is with a shot to the brain. A shot to the pubis, even if perfectly delivered, is unlikely to stop the conflict. It may annoy, inconvenience, or enrage the adversary, but it will not stop his shooting. Only a head shot will do that.

Thus we have the *Mozambique Drill* derived from an actual circumstance in Mozambique many years ago, in which the victorious contestant was one Mike Roussou, later killed in action in the Rhodesian War. The *Mozambique Drill* is a very definite addition to the repertoire of any qualified pistolero. What was being taught on the range up in Denver does not seem to follow any reasonable pattern.

I do not suppose it is relevant, but these Health and Human Resources people were able to achieve at least one negligent discharge behind me. We may assume that was due to violation of Rule 3, but fortunately no one was hurt. Just what these HHS people need with pistol training is an open question, apart from the truism that everybody needs pistol training if it can be made available. The more armed citizens we have, the better, but I do not see the need to single out one batch of federal bureaucrats among the population at large.

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The British, who are about twenty years ahead of us down the road to serfdom, have now decided to take still further steps in the emasculation of the British subject. We get the report now that the British police have called for a complete ban on the private ownership of handguns "to prevent any repetition of Dunblane." (This last was an atrocity committed by a madman against a flock of school children up in Scotland.) Just how a ban on the ownership of handguns is going to interfere with the activities of a criminal madman is not discussed.

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According to Orange Gunsite stalwart Ronin Colman of Texas,

"Hits vary inversely in proportion to the number of rounds in the magazine."

That is well put.

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It appears that the hippopotamus is growing increasingly uppity. The Barry Miller/Steve Lunceford boating excursion on the Zambezi got too close on several occasions last month, and while the hippo bull did not actually reach the canoe he certainly looked as if he had it in mind. Here is another beast which is definitely not cuddly, regardless of what the Disney people seem to think.

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Did any of you catch the testimony of the handwriting experts in the Vince Foster case who established that the so–called suicide note left by the deceased was a forgery? The *New York Times* did not exactly censor this item, but placed it where it could hardly be found in the back pages of the financial section. When quizzed about this, the editor stated that he thought implications to the effect that Vince Foster was murdered lead to inappropriate attitudes on the part of the reading public. I am sure that the White House is in full accord with this policy.

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War Cry: Second Term or Second Amendment. Take your pick!

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Somewhat to our astonishment we have been informed that the 18–inch barrel on Danie van Graan's "Co–Pilot" does not lose anything in velocity over the 24–inch version of the standard M95, but rather it increases a bit – about 60f/s. These figures are taken from Danie's chronograph, using the same identical hand



loads in the two guns. It has been suggested that his loading has in effect burned out in 18 inches and is simply encountering bore friction in its last 6 inches of interior travel. For whatever reason, the result is comforting and adds one more plus to Danie's lion stopper.

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It is interesting to note the clamor in the liberal press to the effect that Israel's new prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is likely to hinder "the peace process" in the Near East. It seems that the idea of "trading land for peace" is a fundamental element of this peace process. As we have mentioned before, one cannot trade land for peace any more than he can trade tanks for poetry. Land is there. You can walk on it, fortify it, and defend it. Peace is an abstraction, and a rather pointless one at that. Peace may be defined as the absence of strife, and it is the easiest thing in the world to obtain. To achieve peace, all you have to do is give up.

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The new bolt-action designed by our good friend Ulrich Zedrosser of Steyr Mannlicher has now been displayed for review in Europe. It is entirely different from any bolt-action now in use and will be incorporated into the conventional rifles offered by Steyr Mannlicher at next year's gun shows. This action, known as SBS (for "safe bolt system"), will be used in the forthcoming Steyr Mannlicher scout. It appears that the factory does not wish to introduce the scout at the same time as the SBS is shown in a more conventional system. I find this a bit sad because the production scout should in truth be the general-purpose rifle of the 21st century, and it should not be offered as an alternative to a conventional weapon. However, I suppose we should be happy that the scout project has come along as far as it has, even though not as rapidly as we would wish. I asked the factory directly if they would show me the production scout in marketable form at IWA in March of '96. They hemmed and hawed.

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Did you know that the Viet Nam War Memorial was designed by an anti-war activist? One wonders what the Arc de Triomphe in Paris would look like if it had been designed by Mahatma Gandhi.

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In this dreary period in history where cowardice is a virtue, prevarication is normal, perversion is flaunted, and even our thoughts are censored, my own principal escape lies in hunting. When you get out in the woods, rifle in hand, in pursuit of noble prey, you can put the evils of the age to one side and dismiss them from your thoughts for the duration of the experience. Fishing doubtless provides a similar release, though I am not enough of a fisherman to know, but I must feel sorry for the non-hunters (and fishermen) for whom there is no window on the real world.

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We have admired the Blaser R93 straight-pull rifle for a couple of years now and have used it successfully both on the range and in the field. The straight-pull feature is admired enough so that now there are two more offerings of the same type, though they are not mechanically similar. The first is the Mauser, which was visible at the SHOT Show last January, and the second is now offered by Heym in Germany. This action features eight hemispherical forward-mounted lugs which are withdrawn into the body of the bolt when the bolt handle is pivoted horizontally to the rear.

A straight-pull bolt-action is not a new idea since the Swiss Veterli, the Canadian Ross and the American Lee were all in action prior even to World War I. Its primary advantage is speed of successive shots. Its disadvantage is complexity. I admire the Blaser very much, but not because of its straight-pull feature. The primary advantage of the Blaser is its radical trigger system, which is unmatched by anything I have seen.

I look forward to testing the Heym at the first opportunity, but I will be quite happy with the turningbolt system on the Mannlicher production scout as soon as I can get my hands on it.

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The suicide of Mike Boorda came as a thunderclap to those of us on the outside of the naval establishment. This business of the improper display of the Combat V on a ribbon was simply not enough to account for tragedy and disgrace. The Chief of Naval Operations simply does not do that, and his act has done irreparable damage to America's first line of defense.

On going more deeply into the matter, we discover that there is more here than meets the eye. The naval establishment – most specially the naval air arm – constitutes the republic's first line of defense, and when it is pilloried by feminist activists such as Pat Schroeder and its traditions are thrown aside in the face of "sensitivity", it had become impossible for Boorda to look himself in the mirror. Turning our mighty fleet carriers into floating brothels, and the erosion of the iron discipline necessary to fighting efficiency are rapidly wrecking, if they have not already wrecked, America's status as a world power. Mike Boorda apparently could not face the prospect of presiding over this calamity – by the direction of the sleazemaster in the White House. The business of the Combat V was seized upon by the media as a reason, when in fact it is no such reason. This is a bad business, and improvement is not currently in sight.

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I recently ran across a curiously pungent remark in one of Stuart Cloete's African novels. When at the beginning of the first Boer War the British colonel boldly exclaimed that

"These undisciplined farmers will never stand up to trained Redcoats,"

the inferred response was

"No, we will not stand up to them. We will just shoot them."

Those comments are impossible to verify, but we know what happened in the ensuing conflict. Discipline is an excellent thing in war, but practical marksmanship can be even more important under the right circumstances.

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We thought that everybody knew that you do not point toy guns at people, but it appears that an awful lot of people do not know what everybody should know. Some loony recently made this mistake in Phoenix and got himself shot dead by the police. Another thing we thought was common knowledge is that if you choose to fight with the police, you should be aware that the results can be pretty serious – like fatal. We just had a junkie attempt to take on the whole legal and judicial establishment by extraordinary force and violence, including spitting on the judge. Our most prominent journalistic bleeding heart in Arizona professed to be much put out when the miscreant wound up dead. He declaims that being a junkie is not a capital offense. It is not, but fighting with the police very well may be.

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It appears that everybody wants to get into the firearms training act. Various groups large and small are springing up hither and yon, offering weapons training to all and sundry, with or without qualification. It takes more to be a professor of arms than most of these people are prepared to offer. Back in the days when I ran Orange Gunsite, the qualifications for an instructor, just as coach not a range master, were as follows:

1. He must be better than just good with his own weapon. He need not be an international champion, but he does need to be able to do anything he asks of a student, easily and on demand, and more besides.
2. He must be possessed of a powerful desire to impart. He must want his students to be, if anything, better than he is. It is not enough for an instructor to be a good shot, he must be able to produce good shots.
3. He must display an adequate command presence, since he has no military or administrative authority over his students. This means that his bearing, posture, voice, general appearance, and patience must be such that he can command without rank. This is not a common attribute.
4. He must have "seen the elephant" either in a military or a law enforcement capacity. He must have been shot at and shot back, so that he can tell his students that he knows exactly how it feels.
5. He should be reasonably fluent in one language other than his own, since this business is international in scope.

From the foregoing it is obvious you cannot just whistle up a firearms instructor, nor can you create a firearms academy with personnel from the employment agency. Too many people are trying to do this and it is not only dishonest, but definitely dangerous. We have many examples.

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How many rounds should ride in a magazine of a hunting rifle? Since most military-style bolt-action rifles which have been converted into sporting rifles are equipped with five-round magazines, I have always thought that five was the normal count, even though in most of my hunting experience smaller capacity would have been no handicap. Now we see that the majority of new sporting actions coming from Europe carry only three rounds, and that many domestic models are limited to four. A reduced magazine can make for a slimmer, trimmer weapon, and a single-column feed system may be made somewhat more satisfactory than the traditional Mauser double-column. As to the first consideration, I personally find the extension magazine on some of my weapons to be attractive to the eye, besides offering me a handy fingerhold when I am carrying the piece at the balance in one hand. Both Baby and the Lion Scout feature extension magazines, and I like their looks, but after all, beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. The production scout offers either option to the shooter, and I think that the magazine housing for the ten-round detachable box gives the finished piece a very purposeful air. It comes off with a screw driver for those who wish a flush magazine.

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A recent constitutional referendum in South Africa produced nearly 250,000 responses. Form questions involved desirable features of the new constitution, and the enormous majority of answers favored re-instating the death penalty. Far behind were those who wanted animals to have rights and those who wanted the right to own firearms. The proportions were 186; 17; 14.

It is unlikely that anything serious will result from this referendum, but it is nonetheless interesting to know how high up on the list desiderata is the re-institution of the death penalty. The public has been clamoring for this in England for many years, but those in the know claim that it has no chance at all of becoming the law. As in the US, it is quite possible for the elite to enforce their will over any sort of majority.

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It is interesting to observe the number of manufacturers who claim that a given rifle barrel or a given rifle action will produce "guaranteed" results on the target. It is clear that the barrel of a rifle, while extremely important to its accuracy, is only one element that makes up the total result. A good barrel must be fitted to a good action, and the combination must be bedded into a good stock. These things are essential, of course, but what is even more essential is good ammunition. No manufacturer can say that his barrel, his action, his stock or his sighting system will produce accuracy in and by itself. It is the total combination that produces accuracy, and in my opinion the quality of the ammunition is the single most important component of the overall effort. When I took over my first SSG I was implored by the factory to use only premium ammunition in it. I did so and I got good results. Later I ran across a gent out in the far Pacific who had an SSG which he said would not stay on a copy of *Time* magazine at 50 yards. As I rather suspected, he had been using trash ammunition in it. We rustled up some Hirtenberger Match rounds and the piece shot exactly as it should with that.

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On the subject of concealed carry, it occurs to us that the occupation most in need of this asset is that of trained nurse. A nurse goes on and off duty at all hours. Most nurses are young, trim, reasonably attractive females. They must necessarily make their way from the hospital door to a parked car out on a darkened parking lot in all kinds of weather. It seems to me that a trained nurse should be issued a concealed carry permit – and her tuition-free application to a reputable pistol school – when she gets her RN certificate.

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I must look still further into this matter of recoil suppressors. They do work, but their accompanying disadvantage of increased blast must be taken into consideration. A good many people are more upset by the noise of discharge than by the jolt of recoil. Gadgeteers seem to be the heart of trade however, and now we see such weird applications as muzzle-brakes on the 30 caliber carbine, and finally (Heavens to Elizabeth!) on 22s. Just go ahead and build it. Some innocent will buy it!

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We note with despair that the British tax people have now decided to regard the two free pints issued daily to workers at the Guinness brewery in Dublin as taxable income. What is the world coming to?

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 9

August, 1996

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## Hot, Ain't It!

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It is now high time to make your preparations for the annual *GR and TRM (Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial)* at the Whittington Shooting Center in New Mexico on 19, 20, 21 October. It would be most helpful if you would send in your proposed declamation title as soon as possible to avoid duplication. So far "Horatius at the Bridge," by Lord McCauley, and "The Truce of the Bear," by Kipling, are taken. Let's have more!

Appropriate musicianship is in order. If you care to bring your guitar, autoharp, or harmonica we will all cheer (I think). The songs, like the poetry, should be appropriate to the spirit of the great TR. We do not limit ourselves to presentations by the president or directly about him, but they should be in the mood of the strenuous life he extolled. I discover that he and Rudyard Kipling were close personal friends, and may explain why so much of Kipling is heard at the reunions.

There will be shooting of rifle, pistol and shotgun during the day, and recitations in the evening. Accommodations are not unlimited, and if you wish to be put up at the headquarters bunkhouse, take care to get your request in now to

Mike Ballew, NRA Whittington Shooting Center, PO Box 700, Raton, New Mexico 87740  
(505-445-3615).

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5 August is *Lion Day* in my book. That Low Veldt lion whistled up for me by Danie van Graan of Engonyameni stands as one of the countless, fantastic high points of my life. Nose-to-nose with a furious lion at 11 paces, I truly experienced the thrill of a lifetime. I could not arrange for instant replay on a video tape, but one can't have everything.

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We note with amazement that New Zealand and Argentina are now showing budget surpluses. That is not the sort of thing you are likely to hear on your television or read in your local newspaper. More likely you may hear about the newest looming terror in our atmosphere – which is *Dihydrous oxide*. It is responsible for 4,100 deaths a year in the United States alone, and our lakes and streams are full of it. (For those who neglected their high school chemistry, *Dihydrous oxide* is H<sub>2</sub>O.)

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Note that they are having a bitterly cold winter in South Africa, with up to 3 feet of snow in the Soutpansberg and the Drakensberg. A number of people died of exposure, and the troops had to be called out for rescue operations. That is hardly what most people expect of the African ambience.

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At the behest of *family member* Tom Russell, I have now commenced work on a definitive manual on course design. Having studied this matter diligently for about thirty years, I have amassed a pretty good fund of knowledge on the subject, and it is easy to see that a great many people who presume to design competition courses for both rifle and pistol have no such background. This is a labor of love, and the introduction, which I have just completed, does indeed show promise.

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"Gunmen have more fun – and less trouble – than other people."

## The Guru

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European designers, including Lapua and Heckler & Koch, among others, are hard at work producing what they call oberfliegeren. These are rifle cartridges which serve about the same purpose as hot rods, which is to gain attention. One of the most prominent is the 9x90mm, which uses a case somewhat similar at the head to the 50 BMG, but is necked down to a 36 caliber. But the manufacturers of these remarkable cartridges maintain that they are designed for police snipers, but it is pretty hard to see just what tactical niche they fill. Pushing a 280-grain missile out the muzzle at 4,400f/s may indeed accomplish something, but I can't imagine what that might be.

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A *family member* recently returned from Bolivia informs us that Bolivian gun laws may be the best in the world. There are none, and Bolivia gets by with a serious law against murder. Funny that no one in Britain or America has thought of that so far!

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The limits of human chutzpah remain to be fully explored. It seems that some *copchick* in New York is suing the Glock people because she shot herself in the leg. Her case is apparently that the Glock is too easy to shoot. My own opinion has always been somewhat to the contrary, but who cares about that?

---

The recent New Mexico practical rifle match held at Whittington last month was won by a "race gun," establishing once again that the gamesman is not an endangered species. No matter. The shooter in second place used the M1 Garand, which is the greatest personal fighting instrument ever devised by man. Third place overall, and earning the *Guru's Gold*, was Tom Russell's scout. The scout, above all, is a general purpose rifle. It is not designed to beat the course or to bend the rules, but to do everything well. I like to think of it as my legacy to the 21st century.

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The Stoic philosophers of Ancient Rome featured the motto "Do good, for good is good to do." The point is that one should not do good things in hope of any reward, either here below or in the afterlife, but rather that good deeds are good in and of themselves. They are their own reward. One can get into serious trouble by doing good deeds at random, as I have found out to my bitter sorrow, but that does not invalidate the principle.

---

It is clear that many people do not know what is meant by the expression "To see the elephant." Let me elucidate:

In pioneer America a great many people grew up on a farm, which was too remote from a population center to provide what might be called worldly entertainment. During the summer season various traveling circuses toured the sticks, bringing diversion to households which were not too far afield to prevent attendance. These traveling circuses always included an elephant – an animal which is truly too remarkable to be believed, unless one has actually seen it.

When the father decided that the time had come for his adolescent son to learn about life, he would wait for the appearance of the circus and provide the boy with a couple of dollars with which to go and visit the entertainment. At the circus he visited all the sideshows, he got drunk, he rented himself a girl, and he saw the elephant. On his return to the farm, he may not have been any sadder, but he was certainly wiser than before.

Today we have borrowed that expression to relate to the combat experience. Personal combat is definitely a rite-of-passage, and a man who has not experienced it has not seen the

elephant. When you have been shot at and shot back successfully, you have definitely grown up and now know things that less experienced men do not understand.

---

I was recently taken to task by an Israeli rangemaster for what he regarded as my casual attitude about "ploppies." The term is an Afrikaaner invention referring to a spent bullet, which floats in from elsewhere and goes plop in the dirt at your feet. This Israeli thinks that ploppies are extremely perilous, but I think he is confusing spent bullets with ricochets. A ricochet can be quite dangerous, but only if the deflection of its original trajectory is relatively slight. When a bullet bounces off the ground or other obstacle, flies high in the air and comes back propelled mainly by gravity, it is no big deal. In the eye or in the teeth it may indeed cause some damage, but I have been hit six times by ploppies, and no one of them ever drew any blood.

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"Acquiring a fine gun is the easy part. Acquiring shooting skill is as difficult as ever."

John Zen

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Excellence has never necessarily been a factor in popularity. In the matter of cartridge design, we have a number of very good examples which have never caught on with the public. Consider for example the two short Remington Magnums, 6.5 and 350. The 6.5 makes possible what may be called a "Pocket 270," and the 350 provides us with a very superior pocket medium, excellently suited for all heavy game, short of buffalo.

And then there is the 7-08. This does for the renowned 7x57 what the 308 does for the 30-06 – providing essentially similar power in a more compact package. The 7-08 provides slightly better exterior ballistics than the 308, and it has the advantage of being legal in many nations where the 308 is banned as a "military cartridge." The Steyr Mannlicher production scout (if we can ever get it actually on the market) will be offered initially in 308 and 7-08, for this reason. It appears that Australia has now banned all military ammunition, ruling out both 30-06 and 308. The 7-08 then should be a great success downunder, where the shooting situation in general is in dreadful disarray.

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As we have mentioned before, piracy is coming back. It is usually conducted inshore by goblins who pray upon pleasure seekers who have more money – and booze – than brains. I have long maintained that one of the unusual circumstances in which handheld automatic fire is a good idea is repelling borders in small craft at night. Here, unfortunately, we run squarely into *Big Brother*. For a yachtsman or a fisherman to try to obtain legal authorization for an assault rifle aboard his vessel is a hopeless task, unless you are perhaps the Sultan of Brunei.

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Our good friend and professional hunter, Ian McFarlane, informs us that his concession up in the Chobe area is beginning to show an alarming overage of elephants. If this trend continues and enough hunters are not found, it may actually become necessary to cull the elephant population in northern Botswana. Culling is a dismal business, since families must be taken out together.

Thus, Ian is in need of customers, and slots are open immediately. If there are any aspiring elephant hunters among the faithful, they should raise

Ian McFarlane of Vira Safaris (Fax: 011-26-7-660-593)

immediately, if not sooner.

Ordinarily it takes a year's advance notice to set up a proper African hunt, but here we have an exception.

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It seems they have too many polar bears on Svalbard. Svalbard used to be Spitzbergen, and it is way, way up north. For reasons which are not clear to me, these islands have been attracting increasing numbers of

European tourists on summer vacation, and the problem of bears has arisen. The bears and the tourists tend to get into each others way, and no bear is cuddly – despite the bambiists – but a polar bear is particularly not so, being an exclusive carnivore, and a very efficient one at that. So now it has been deemed advisable to rent powerful sporting rifles to tourists picnicking out on the tundra. This is not a good idea. One may rent out rifles, but there is no way he can rent out talent, and a hunting rifle in inexperienced hands is hardly the solution to anyone's problem. So far three people have been killed this summer on Svalbard, two of them by a bear that they had shot with a rented rifle.

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By now the British have fairly written into law the position that a personally owned firearm may only be acceptable for "sporting purposes." Teddy Kennedy used this idea in the 1968 gun law, despite the fact that we in America are protected, at least theoretically, by the Second Amendment, which has nothing whatever to do with sport. Various sorts of legislators are still at it, and the BATF takes the notion of "legitimate sporting purpose" seriously, even though this would appear to be obviated by the supreme law of the land. This is a fight in which we all must continue to participate. Self-defense has nearly come to be a misdemeanor on the face of it in Britain, where the subject is conditioned with the belief that whatever happens he (or she) must not fight back. If the wimps prevail in the next election, you may be sure that America will then gain on Great Britain on the road to serfdom.

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*Family member* and Babamkulu veteran Alvin Hammer sends in the following observation on the concealed carry situation:

"Have taken the required course for Tennessee's new concealed carry law which takes effect in October. Made a perfect score on both the written and shooting tests. Only one in my class of 16 to score 100% on both sections. One other student made 100% on the written and another on the shooting. Our instructor disapproved of the Weaver stance I used and the speed with which I fired the required 48 shots at varying distances. I finished the shooting part, packed up equipment, paid my bill, and left the building before any other student finished shooting. Big targets at close range, my shooting has not really improved since you saw me last. It does feel good to be the best at something occasionally. In a land of blind men, a one-eyed man would be king. It is hard to imagine that among the general populace of shooters that I am that much better than average. Among Orange Gunsite folk, my ranking as a shooter is way down the list."

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Since the revolution in South Africa, random violence has increased by leaps and bounds. One thing that adds to the problem is the ready availability of the AK47 (which is, of course, illegal). Vast numbers of these Kalashnikovs drifted in from Mozambique, and now they are all over the place, and, of course, only in the hands of the bad guys.

On the bright side of this scene is the readiness of the South African police to take remedial action when possible. Recently outside of Johannesburg two highway patrolmen spotted a stolen car, identified by its license plates. They gave chase, and when the thieves stopped to open fire a noisy scuffle ensued. Two of the three goblins were killed outright, and the third carted away to the hospital, while the cops sustained no casualties. Journalism being what it is, we are more likely to hear of the failures of the police than their successes, but this incident establishes again that it is the man, not the gun, that wins the fight. All three miscreants were armed with AK47s, but the police rolled them up with pistols.

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It has long been a principle of mine that a man cannot have too many books, too many wines, or too much ammunition. It turns out that a number of governments in the world manifest considerable distress at the idea of large amounts of ammunition in private hands. They insist that any man who stockpiles thousands of rounds must have some sinister and ulterior purpose which should be investigated by the state. Here we have yet another example of the thought control characteristic of *the Age of the Common Man*. Many on the left



seem to hold that one may be punished not for what he does, but for what he thinks – as with what have come to be called "hate crimes." In this age of thought–control, various sorts of busybodies, in and out of government, feel the need to arrange your thinking for you. In this matter of ammunition, I personally like to keep a large supply on hand, not for any specific purpose, but simply because it makes me feel good. To have a large supply – several thousand rounds – of 45 ACP or 30–06 or 308 is comforting in and of itself, and by no means necessarily because one has some conspiratorial notion about expending it. As you know, there are people such as Senator Moynihan who feel that the subtle way to disarm the people is to cut off the supply of ammunition. We hope that such people do not prevail, but it does not hurt to be prepared for unpleasant eventualities – thus we have seatbelts, crash helmets, life jackets, and pistols.

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"When values are sufficient,  
Laws are unnecessary.  
When values are insufficient,  
Laws are unenforceable."

Barry Asmus

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 10

September, 1996

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## Summer's End

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While four seasons of the year are nice to have, summer – in the temperate zone – has always seemed the least pleasant of the four. Of course, school is out for most kids, and that is generally a pleasure. It may be nice for the kids, but it certainly does tend to clutter up the countryside as families take off for the open spaces. I once heard the state of Florida described as "hot, flat and crowded." That depends on where one may be at the time, but almost every place, with the possible exception of Lapland, is hot and crowded in the summer. Glad to see it go.

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A perceptive graduate of Orange Gunsite decided to come back for more and has taken two Grey courses. He informs me that the new owner of the Gunsite Training Center is proceeding to alter the standard techniques as previously taught. I never felt that the systems I taught here were beyond improvement, but at least they had been proven in serious practical competition. The changes I see made by current practitioners seem based more on speculation than proof. However, as long as the client is willing to pay his tuition, the main objective of the enterprise seems to be fulfilled.

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In this curious age in which we live, where money seems to be everything, it is interesting to note that the highest wage paid to anyone is paid to a member of an "oppressed minority." According to the English newspaper "*Daily Star*", Mike Tyson is paid 500 thousand pounds – that is about 800 thousand dollars – each week.

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In rifles there have been a number of new toys for us. The Blaser R93 is new and it is fully tested and it works. It may not be a scout, but it is a nifty gun. The production scout from Steyr Mannlicher remains on hold, and will remain so for at least a year, despite my most earnest representations to the contrary. When that piece finally hits the market we will have accomplished something.

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Casting back over the century just concluding, we can see a number of overlooked triumphs which were excellently conceived and executed, but did not catch the public's eye. One of the first of these would seem to be the Krag action. If I were to find myself in the big bucks, I would organize the design and production of a modernized high-proof version of the Krag, but no one can predict the market success of any sort of innovation. The Remington Short Magnum cartridges – 6.5 and 350 – were true advances in a field which is overrun with variety with very little true advancement. The flush sling-socket and the spring-loaded butt magazine, which are prominent features of both Sweetheart and the Lion Scout, are astonishing conveniences, but they are seen only rarely. The 7-08 cartridge, offering the compact case of the 308 for use in jurisdictions where the latter is forbidden by law (and there are various examples of this), is curiously neglected. And the fabricators are largely uninterested in the scoutscope – I think probably because they have never used nor seen one.

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Lest we conclude that things are particularly rough in Bosnia, Belfast or Brooklyn, I may point out that in the vicinity of John Gannaway's metal works in Central Phoenix there have been 30 murders committed within a radius of one mile of his shop in the past year. Street crime has been getting much notice in South Africa recently, but they have a way to go before they catch up with us.

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Let us not forget the forthcoming *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial*, to be held at Whittington Shooting Center near Raton, New Mexico, on 19, 20, 21 October. I hope you have noticed my various announcements of this affair, which is refreshing, inspiring, and great fun all at once. It is delightful to observe how much histrionic talent our Orange Gunsite *family* can display, and it is delightful to attend this gathering of *The Family*. Make your preparations now and we look forward to seeing you there.

---

The scoutscope is a luxury for those who understand it. Compact and unobtrusive, it rides snugly down on the barrel and just forward of the action. It facilitates loading and handling, and it eliminates "Kaibab eye." It is distinctly faster to use than the short-eye-relief telescope sights in general use, and it sacrifices nothing in the way of precision. ("If I can see it, I can hit it." It does not matter how big it seems.) Up til now only the Burris people have offered us a satisfactory scoutscope, and all credit is due them for their imagination and ingenuity in this matter. Now Leupold offers a scoutscope, and we thus have a bit of choice. I now have mounted the new and improved Burris on Sweetheart, and the Leupold on the Lion Scout. These two are full-duty rifles and will be going to the field regularly as long as they or I last. Sweetheart has distinguished herself on the range here, in North American game fields, and in Africa, in the hands of half a dozen riflemen. The Lion Scout, of course, took the lion, and it will be accompanying me to Montana for elk in November. These scout rifles (scout-type rifles) excite comment and pleasure wherever they appear, and the scoutscopes they mount are one of the distinguishing features of the breed. The Europeans will not trust to the market for the scoutscope as yet. When production scout rifles appear on the market, that circumstance may change.

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"A hyphenated American is not an American at all. This is just as true of the man who puts 'Native' before the hyphen as of the man who puts German or Irish or English or French before the hyphen. Americanism is a matter of the spirit and of the soul. Our allegiance must be purely to the United States. We must unsparingly condemn any man who holds any other allegiance."

Theodore Roosevelt, 12 October 1915  
(via Bob Roscoe)

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If we have not had much to say in recent months about developments in pistols, that is only because nothing much of consequence has been introduced. Probably the "Baby 10" from Glock is an important innovation, but it is difficult to put it to the test without the passage of considerable time. We shall see.

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Perhaps you have noticed that the United States Armed Forces have pretty much given up on rifle marksmanship – at least that seems true of the Army. The Marines may be trying to hang in there, but under the circumstances they are fighting a losing battle. The word we get back from on high is that rifle marksmanship is too hard, it takes too long, it is too expensive, and most of all it "personalizes killing." (So help me!) To this we have come! When I was a boy I acquired the distinct impression that personalized killing was what war was about. Of course, that was a long time ago. I do remember we were given intensive training on the bayonet, which while not a useful weapon in war, certainly does its best to personalize killing. The Marine Corps went to considerable trouble to instill in us the idea that if each of us personally killed one of the enemy, the war would be over. All of that, of course, is out-of-step with modern times. In a unisex, multi-cultural armed force, one must above all be politically correct.

---

Bear contacts seem to be on the increase throughout the United States, which upsets some people very much. That state of mind which holds that any problem whatever may be solved by passing a law is hard put to think up any sort of law that can be passed about bears. Certainly we do not want to exterminate the beasties, but on the other hand, we do not want innocent non-combatants chomped up. A recent contact is reported from the Kluane district of the Yukon, a country I hunted extensively as a youth. It was then good grizzly country, and I took three prime trophies, as grizzlies were considered vermin at that time, much like the way lions were in

Kenya. Apparently this is still a good region for bears, as in this recent case, a girl was backpacking alone when she ran into a half-grown cub which killed her. (The news account said 130lb. This is not full grown for a grizzly.) Clearly the only action that can be taken is in the mind of the tourist. If this poor woman had been familiar with the Gunsite bear rules, and had observed them, she would have been all right. Modernism, of course, has a lot to do with this. When I knew the Yukon, no woman would have been walking alone in it, nor any man without an adequate rifle. Times have changed.

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It is interesting to note a revival in the popularity of the 35 Whelen cartridge, which may have been triggered by the appearance of the 350 Remington Short Magnum. The two cartridges deliver identical ballistics (depending upon the loading), but where the 35 Whelen requires a long action, the 350 fits into a short action. The length of a rifle action may not be conspicuously significant, but a rifle made up on a short action may be about an inch shorter and perhaps half a pound lighter than one made up on a long action. In addition, the short bolt throw is more convenient. The Lion scout previously mentioned takes the 350 Remington short (slightly long-loaded) and delivers its 250-grain bullet at an honest 2500f/s from its 19-inch barrel. This is a sharp little gun, and is fully worthy of replication.

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The more we observe, the more we note a definite correlation between after-market custom work on a pistol and fragility. Put as simply as possible, "expensive pistols conk out." (Note the rage from the gallery.)

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I have been informed that I have been "mentioned in dispatches." In Tom Clancy's new cloak and dagger opus, *"Executive Orders,"* the hero sends his henchmen to Jeff Cooper's Gunsite Ranch in order to insure the future of civilization. It does seem a pity that he can't do that anymore.

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Let us not let the matter drop. The murderers of Nicole Simpson, Vickie Weaver and Vince Foster are still walking free, and no one proposes doing anything about it. Let us by all means make an effort to lengthen our cultural memory.

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*Family member* Mark Moritz points out that the custom of discounting the worst performance on a triple time series in a pistol match is unsound. I introduced this system some years ago in following a scoring system used in Grand Prix racing where a competitor's poorest three showings in the course of sixteen races were not counted. This was adopted mainly to discount mechanical breakdown, which really is no evidence of a driver's skill one way or another. In pistol matches, however, it is not a good plan, I now admit, since a sandbagger can shoot two reasonably good scores and then go crazy on his third, hoping that luck will bring him in. I never have been prepared for sandbaggers, but we do find them, and this must be acknowledged. A bad performance in a pistol contest may well be terminal, and this should be noted.

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What follows may be the all time ultimate 45 anecdote. It was published in *Air Force* magazine for July 1996 and passed onto me by *family member* George Olmsted. Believe it or not as you wish. I, of course, prefer to believe it.

March, 1943. A flight of B24 based northwest of Calcutta was flying a long-range mission against a railway bridge about halfway between Rangoon and Mandalay. Before arrival at the target the bomber group was intercepted by Japanese fightercraft. An officer in one of the Liberators was co-pilot Second Lieutenant Owen Baggett. His ship was torn up by enemy fire and the crew was forced to bail out. Not everyone made it. Baggett saw four other parachutes open besides his own, at which time the B24 exploded.

The Japanese fighters, as was their custom, set about murdering the crew in the air. One round grazed Baggett's arm, and he thereupon decided to play dead, hanging limp in his shrouds. At this point one of the Nip pilots decided to close in for a good look. He throttled back to stalling speed and mashed up to the vicinity of Lieutenant Baggett as closely as he could. The lieutenant was understandably annoyed by Japanese behavior (which brings back memories to many of us), so he hauled out his 1911 and fired four shots in the

direction of the open cockpit of the Japanese airplane on which the canopy had been raised. The airplane stalled and spun in.

Baggett and two others made it safely to the ground but were captured by the Burmese, who delivered them over to the Japs.

Not unexpectedly, Lieutenant Baggett nearly died of malnutrition and abuse, dropping from 180 to 90lbs, but he did survive and was able to glean some information. The story was that the pilot that Baggett had fired at had been thrown clear of his aircraft when it crashed and was found dead of a single bullet hole in his head. A certain amount of corroborative information seemed to have established that Lieutenant Baggett did indeed shoot a fighter plane out of the air with his pistol.

Today, Retired Colonel Baggett in San Antonio is disinclined to discuss the matter since he does not want to sound like a gun writer. One can understand that. Nonetheless, we have here a sea story of the first magnitude and one that should not be forgotten.

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Just back from the Colorado Rockies, we discover that the plethora of white goats (*Oreamnos americanus*) has posed a minor and curious problem. Those people will eat your soccer ball if you don't watch out. I have this on the authority of grandson Tyler. More detailed information is available on demand.

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To those of you who are contemplating the African adventure, I can say that my experience suggests that one rifle is the answer – unless you are going to hunt buffalo. My time in Africa is way short of the old pros, but I have studied them at length and have added my own impressions to theirs. "Dangerous game" – excluding the leopard – calls for heavy, and by a heavy I mean 45–caliber, 500 grains, 2400f/s and up. Apart from that, your 30–06 will do just fine. If you are going to specialize in eland you might want something more than your 06, though obviously it will do if you put your bullet in the right place. However, I do suggest you take a spare telescope. Your rifle is very unlikely to break. Your telescope sight just may. Remember that when you are hunting you can only use one gun at a time, and the question arises as to what you are going to do with the other one. There is also the complexity of carrying two separate rifles through various sorts of customs controls and airports. My personal choice for Africa is the Lion Scout, backed by Baby for buffalo and hippo, if such beasts are on the program.

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From the *Sunday Times* of Kwazulu Natal, August, 1996, we get the following fascinating Q&A exchange.

*Q:* Why have the sound pips between radio news items? Why are those sound pips five now when they used to be six?

*A:* Previously all employees of the South African Broadcasting Company were able to count to six. This is no longer so.

So much for the progress of the revolution.

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We discover that when Theodore Roosevelt was signing up his regiment of Rough Riders for the Spanish–American War he included very little, if any, rifle marksmanship. This would seem disquieting until we realize that TR signed up only "qualified" people for his regiment. We used to do that in the Great West for the police service. A man was not signed up until he had already established that he was fully competent with his weapons. The whole notion of training soldiers in weaponcraft after they have been enlisted is somewhat questionable, but, of course, in today's world it is customary.

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Since you ask, "*The Art of the Rifle*" has now been photographed and put to bed. How soon we see it in publication form is now out of my control.

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This "boss tuner" gadget now available on the front end of certain rifles has proved to be of a certain interest. It turns out that if the vibration nodes of a rifle barrel are tuned by rotating this weighted sleeve at the muzzle, absolute accuracy can be improved. I think this is pretty fascinating, since I have often wondered if that forward sleeve on Scout II is a factor in its astonishing accuracy. The gadget evidently works as advertised and can appreciably squeeze group size. When one considers, however, that without the gadget the rifle already shoots far better than the shooter can appreciate, except possibly from a bench, one wonders if the extra bulk accomplishes anything significant.

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An *Associated Press* item mourns that the USMC has on hand 3 million rounds of 50-caliber BMG ammunition – and will not let it go. Despite the pressmen, this is not bad news. Reports we have back from the Gulf War indicate that the great 50-caliber machinegun continues to be the soldier's best friend. We pray that the Marines will take excellent care of that excellent stock of cartridges.

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As the *age of litigation* continues, we run into continuing problems with innovation in weaponry. The liability agents hold that anything that is unfamiliar is automatically dangerous, and therefore, suable. We have been wrestling with that problem in connection with the Mitchell pistol, on which the safety system is different from that of the 1911. It is better and it is safer, but it is unfamiliar; therefore, it is a product liability. That is the way some people think.

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Since I have long taught that long-range shots should be apologized for rather than bragged about, I went over my own record to see under what circumstances I was forced to fire a long shot – 300 meters or more. There were six such shots, three on mountain sheep, one on a pronghorn, one on a caribou, and one on a blue wildebeeste. My excuse in five of those six cases was that the terrain did not permit a closer approach under any circumstances. In each of those five cases the target was stationary, unsuspecting, and I was in a rock-solid firing position using a weapon in which I had complete confidence. In the other incident, the target had already been hit by my partner and was in the process of getting over a ridge beyond which we would have been hard put to pursue him. I am a little embarrassed about that excuse that I could not get any closer. As I recall it, I really could not, but that excuse is used too often by people who could indeed have closed the range if they had set their hearts on it. On one other case, I took what must be considered an excessively long shot – 175 paces – on a running buffalo. You do not shoot buffalo at that distance, but he had been hit twice by a 375, and here again it was necessary that I prevent his reaching an impenetrable patch of bush. The shot was taken from open-legged sitting using the CW sling on Baby, and while I certainly would not have attempted it on an unwounded beast, I feel I was justified in this case.

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Many years ago when we were introduced to the "Practical Pistol Course" of the FBI at Quantico, one stage required the discharge of five shots, a reload, and a discharge of five more – all in one time interval. I bought that idea and when the practical shooting game became popular I introduced various courses in which reloading under fire was required. This was probably not a good idea, as extensive study has failed to turn up any instance in which a man ran his piece dry in a pistol fight, reloaded and continued the action successfully. This is not to say that such a circumstance could not happen, but rather that it should not be emphasized in training or competition. Today, reload speed is vital to IPSC competition, and I think we have expended a great deal of effort in pursuit of an unreasonable goal. Great volumes of fire were doubtless useful back in the days when "civilized" men found themselves obliged to repel hordes of screaming savages. That day seems to have passed, as today's screaming savages prefer the AK47. Thus I believe that no pistol course of fire should require the firing of more than six shots from any one firing position. Actually, there is no reason for that many; however, a great many revolvers which are still in use are limited to six rounds and they do very well as defensive instruments.

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The British, as well as the Australians, have been so upset by the misuse of firearms by certain madmen that they are scurrying around endeavoring to pass laws in amelioration of this nasty phenomenon. If the situation

gets much worse, they may eventually decide to pass a law against murder, but that is too bizarre a solution for the *age of the wimp*.

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They are approaching a new election in England, too. Currently the legislative position of The Left is "no pistols at all," and that of The Right is "much tighter control than we have now." Well, that is where the Magna Carta was signed, but that was a long time ago. One obnoxious commentator recently observed that "If you have any desire to own a firearm, that is positive evidence that you should not be allowed to have one."

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Those who think that legislation is the answer to firearms violence should consider Bogota, Colombia. As you know, Colombia is a fairly violent community at this time, where shootings are almost as prevalent as in South Phoenix. Note, however, that while everybody is armed and everybody is aware of the problem, there is a social taboo about shooting anybody in the bull ring. This is not a matter of statute, as I understand it, but rather of custom. On Sundays during the bull season there has to be a place where people can go and concentrate on things apart from watching their backs. You cannot concentrate on the matador or the bull if you are continually watching over your shoulder. Therefore, all hands – good and bad – have accepted the idea that you do not shoot people in the bull ring. It seems a viable consensus is what is needed.

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Considered opinion is now that 12-gauge shotgun slugs are completely practical to a range of about 100 meters on light game. This distance is not realistic, however, in bear defense situations. You can certainly hit a bear at a hundred yards, but our Alaskan friends tell us that you probably will not hurt him much with a slug. Remember that the bear cannot hurt you unless he can touch you, and that means that you should restrict bear defense shots to 25 paces or less. Well-made slugs will penetrate at that distance, and there is enough mass there to do the job.

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"It never troubles the wolf how many the sheep may be."

Sir Francis Bacon

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 11

September, 1996

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## Zeroing Time

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All of the faithful maintain perfect zeros all throughout the year. But for those of us who are not perfect, now is a good time to get out to the range and get those rifles to hitting exactly to where they are pointing. It is true that when our chance comes the range may be so short that an inch or two one way or the other is not important, but we must not count on that; and besides, zeroing is fun. We must remember, of course, that zeroing at home does not preclude zeroing at base camp. Scope-sighted rifles can easily go cockeyed between residence and hunting camp.

The technique of proper zeroing is too extensive to go into a newsletter, but for those who are interested, I cover it in proper detail in the forthcoming *"The Art of the Rifle."*

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And the first touch of fall is a lovely time to be abroad in field, stream and mountain. The leaves are beginning to turn, there is refreshment in the breeze, and we have our fall hunt to anticipate with renewed delight.

The joys of summer are fresh garden tomatoes and corn right off the stalk, but the joys of autumn are enough to replace those of summer.

So raise the glass and sound the horns – a hunting we will go!

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At the meeting of the NRA Board of Directors just past it was pointed out that the legislative victories of 1994 appear to have created a certain smugness amongst our friends who think they have won the fight. They, and we, have not. Our adversaries are well organized and wealthy, and they are confident that they can win back both the House and the Senate. Your vote can make a difference, and don't forget it. In addition, remember to write your Congressman, your Senator, your newspaper editor and your television station no less than once a week. A loss in the November election may be impossible to recoup.

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We note with amazement that Bill Clinton has had the chutzpah to pose as a devotee of Theodore Roosevelt. For a draft dodger to presume to align himself with the hero of San Juan Hill is possibly the crowning impertinence of the 20th century.

As it has been mentioned, the Clinton administration may be quaintly characterized as "the evil of two lessers."

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Thomas Sowell, whom we consider to be the most perceptive of current commentators, states that the majority of his hate mail comes from school teachers and "conservationists." The material from the school teachers makes the least sense, and that from the bunny huggers is the most vituperative,

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The lefties have been making a great to-do recently about this matter of separation of church and state, which appears nowhere in the Constitution except in the sense that the federal government is prohibited from establishing a state religion. Mr. Jefferson seems to have invented the idea of a "wall of separation" which he



thought desirable in avoidance of something such as the Church of England.

Considering the present state of our educational system, it might seem that a wall of separation should probably be erected between school and state. At the present time, our schools appear to be run essentially by the teachers unions, to the disastrous ignorance of our young people. It is by no means clear that the church could do worse than the state in running our schools. About the only way they could go would be up.

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You may have heard about the cop who was killed in a training accident in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was shot with a pistol that was presumed to be unloaded. *See Rule 1.*

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You noticed that Federal Cartridge brought out a line of what might be called "hopped up" rifle cartridges at the SHOT Show this year. By means of "magic loading", the 308 is raised to the power of the 30-06, and the 06 is raised to the power of 300 Magnum. Now Hornady has entered the lists with a hot loading for the 375. This is curious in view of the fact that for our last 30 years commercial cartridge companies have been loading their ammunition down, presumably to avoid litigation. You may remember that before the war one could purchase a hot 45 ACP load from Remington that claimed to reach 960f/s with the 230-grain bullet. At that time the standard 30-06/150 loading left the barrel at an honest 3000f/s.

I have investigated this matter and the answer seems to be that one can obtain higher velocity without increase in pressure by means of a flattened power curve, in which peak pressure is maintained over a longer interval. We assume that neither Federal nor Hornady would have touched this problem with a 10-foot pole without first checking safety limitations at great length.

The thought that occurs here is "*Why?*" All cartridges so far developed in this line have sufficient power as they stand, without accentuation. The 308 may be an exception, but it does not appear to me that either the 30-06 or the 375 stand in any need of boosting. Naturally the idea that "more is better" is accepted as a patent sales item, but in an era of hysterical litigation, it does raise a question.

Be that as it may, we intend to take the Federal 30-06/180 – as presumably hopped up – on our forthcoming elk trip. I very much doubt if we will discover anything exciting, as I have satisfied myself completely over the years that the 30-06 will do anything that needs doing in North America, in standard loading. It will do fine for Africa as well, but I would like to see the 220-grain bullet revived and used in connection with the newly developed hot loading system.

Another cartridge which could stand a bit of acceleration is the 458, which might get it up to the useful level of the 460 G&A – of song and story.

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We are informed by presumably good authority that 90 percent of the young men now recruited by the Marine Corps have never handled a rifle in their lives. If I were king, the Marines would not recruit anybody until he could shoot "expert" in a prescribed course with the service rifle.

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Ah, yes, "Assault Guns." The first piece I saw that was called an assault gun was a self-propelled and lightly armored 6-inch Howitzer which the Germans used in street fighting to blow away urban strong points with short range direct fire.

Then the Germans came up with a term *Sturmgewehr*, which was sort of a cross between a battle rifle and a machine pistol, and which was the direct parent of the now renowned Kalashnikov family.

Then, of course, the hoplophobic media latched onto it and started calling anything that they could think of an "assault gun." They even invented a term "assault pistol," whatever that might be!

Today, therefore, we have a series of hybrid weapons which are neither rifle nor pistol, but something in between. The designers have totally abandoned the idea of stopping power in favor of the notion of armor penetration. In the military chancelleries of the world armor penetration has taken the place of jogging as the bureaucrat's most popular sport.

Where all this leaves us is unclear, except that as we realize that we cannot predict the nature of future formal combat, any fancy we may come up with will probably get produced. Some of these things may even work.

In World War II we had the magnificent M1 rifle, and later on we acquired the misbegotten M1 carbine. Whether handheld gunfire contributed to our victories in Europe and the Pacific is not clear, but look at all the fun we have had playing with it!

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Please note that the official dates for the *4th Annual Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* are scheduled for 18, 19, 20 October, that is Friday, Saturday and Sunday. (Regardless of what errors I may have made in previous announcements.)

In response to a couple of queries, I must point out that while all Orange Gunsite graduates are welcome, we may not allow people to shoot weapons on which they have not been trained. If you have not taken the pistol course, confine yourself to rifle, and if you have not taken the rifle course, stay with the pistol. This injunction does not apply to the shotgun, since we will be shooting recreational shotgun rather than tactical shotgun. We understand that sign ups for the Reunion are coming on a main. If you have not booked any reservation yet, please call

Brad Schuppan at Whittington Center, (505) 445-3615.

There is no entry fee for the event, but you are expected to provide your own ammunition, musical instruments, and printed original literary work, if any.

(No one has yet spoken up for "Over There!" or "The Soldier's Chorus" from Faust. All sorts of goodies are still open.)

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For those who are proud of their lifetime shooting record, we learn of an old geezer, aged 96, who at the end of his life in the Transvaal boasted that he had taken 341 elephants, 187 lions, 40 kaffirs and two Englishmen. It will take some doing to top that.

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From *family member* Paul Kirchner of Connecticut we receive the following anecdote:

"I recently had an interesting conversation with a Polish immigrant who was driving a cab. I have met about a half dozen Polish immigrants in recent years and I have been consistently impressed by them – they are better educated and more politically sophisticated than the average American. When I asked this fellow what surprised him most about the United States he said, '1. Affirmative action, 2. Bad manners, 3. The fact that we are more relentlessly propagandized by our mass media than he was in Communist Poland.'"

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From what I read in the hunting magazines, we are entering an age of giant kudu – a giant being one bearing horns with a 70" curl. Such have been encountered in Mozambique and reported from Namibia and Botswana. When we remember that Ernest Hemingway would have given his fortune for a 50" kudu back in the early part of the century, it does seem that some things have improved, and game management is among them.

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As the century draws to a close piracy alters its location and technique. It has diminished in the Caribbean, stayed about the same in the Mediterranean, and grown radically in the South Seas. On any water between

Palawan and Java any small or medium craft, or light transport, is a ready target. It is doubtful that any *family members* intend to go yachting anywhere between the Solomon Islands and Hong Kong, but if they do, they should be properly armed and in Hot Yellow the whole time.

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*Family member* and pistol master Gabe Suarez of California has now released his second book, this one on the "*Tactical Shotgun*." His previous work, as you know, was the "*Tactical Pistol*." He has two or three other pieces in progress and is being coaxed by his wife to take up the writing of fiction. Certainly he has enough personal action experience to fill out the plot. Both of Gabe's books are available from Paladin Press, and we hope to see more of them in the future.

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Orange *Family Member* and Rifleman John Gannaway has dredged up some very interesting material on the so-called "Battle of Adobe Walls," which took place in June, 1874.

You will recall that on this occasion Billy Dixon, the buffalo hunter, was observed to take a Comanche off his horse, shooting from a rest with his 50-caliber rifle at some fantastic distance which has never been precisely established. You can go to the site today and find the position from which Dixon fired, but just where the Indian fell is now impossible to determine with precision. What we know is that it was a very, very long shot – "Way out past Fort Mudge."

The distance of record has often been printed as "7/8 of a mile." That would be 1,320 yards. Another figure we often see reprinted is 1,538 yards. Another is "some 1,400 yards." A minimum estimate has been given at 800 yards.

Clearly one cannot use the sights on a buffalo gun to hit an individual human target at any such distance. Dixon could hardly see an individual Indian at that range, but this problem was somewhat simplified by the fact that the Indians were riding in a bunch. What Dixon did was to hold somewhere in the sky above the saddle where the Indians were riding and squeeze off. He always maintained that it was a lucky shot, but it did nothing to damage his reputation,

In an unhappy appendix to that tale, we learn that the only woman on station during the incident – the wife of one William Olds – saw her husband killed by a negligent discharge of a rifle in the hands of her husband as he was coming down from a lookout post. We cannot recreate the tragedy at this late date, but obviously there was a violation of *Rule 2*, and possibly *Rules 1* and *3* as well.

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On a considerably less tragic line we may consider a case which happened not long ago here in Arizona in which a felon undertook to engage the police from a sixth floor balcony. The police smothered the target (with their Glocks) who came down airborne to his death. When it was attempted to find out how many shots the felon had taken, it was discovered that it was the fall that killed him – no bullet wounds.

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I have been referring people who have inquired about the availability of my book "*Another Country*" to the NRA book service in Virginia, but now I discover that a better source may be

Blacksmith Corporation, PO Box 1752, Chino Valley, AZ 86323, (520) 636-4456.

I consider this work to be my best up till now, and since it is narrative rather than technical, it will certainly remain more amusing than "*The Art of the Rifle*," which has yet to be released.

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According to our official informant from the Smallarms Development Division, we learn that the proposed personal arm of the individual soldier will be a two-phase, handheld weapon basically equipped with night vision. Its lower barrel will be a semi-automatic 223 for use against individual targets up to perhaps 200 meters. Its top barrel will be a 40-millimeter grenade launcher utilizing laser sight setting and good for

proximity hits out to 1,000 meters.

This is just one of many proposals which may be due for experimental adoption, and all of which seem to run on batteries. Our informant, who spent much of the Gulf War racing around trying to keep people supplied with batteries, advises us to invest in Duracel. (Which was just recently purchased by Gillette.)

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With all these uppity bears chomping on people in all parts of North America at this time, we are treated to all sorts of bear remedies, varying from playing dead to rattling keys. In a recent issue of *Time* magazine a woman correspondent pointed out that she had the answer. She had read all of the various measures to be taken when confronted by a bear in the woods, but when she finally ran into one she forgot them all and shouted to her daughter, "Oh look, a bear!" The bear split with exemplary alacrity, so obviously the system works. When next you stumble upon a bear (presumably because you were thinking of something else) and are foolishly unarmed, simply remember to shout, "Oh look, a bear!", and all will be well.

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"I have never seen my civilization as clearly as on the plains and in the jungles of East Africa. There, in a few remaining wilderness areas, life exists in evolutionary balance much as it did millions of years ago. The values of traveling to the wildness first appear in a mounting awareness of the senses. I notice that especially when I select my campsite. Sweating, I search for shade from the sun. Wanting a night's sleep, I look for drainage in a rain. Hungry, I need deadwood for a fire for cooking. How fresh are the tracks on the animal trails? Is a water source nearby?"

Charles Lindbergh, via *family member* Bill O'Connor

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*Family member* Ric Wycoff promises to bring his 8-year-old daughter and his autoharp, together with other musical instruments, to the Reunion. The faithful will take note and emulate.

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Einstein's dictum was that everything should be kept as simple as possible – but no simpler. Following that lead we may say that a race driver must always drive as fast as possible – but no faster. For the marksman this becomes one should always shoot as quickly as one can – but no quicker.

Cases in point will occur to you. One that I remember involved a contest in which I became matched against Thell Reed, who was a true master of the quick draw. I was pretty quick myself in those days, but it did not seem possible for me to catch Thell on speed.

It came to pass that we were matched on the "FBI Duel," which is a man-to-man contest in which the two contestants advance side-by-side against a recording target starting at a range of 25 meters. It is entirely up to the match director to call the firing signal at any point he chooses on the advance, except that there are to be three firing signals at each bout.

So we started at 25, at which distance I thought I might be able to catch Reed; and I did so, since the first came very suddenly – at about 22 yards. The second call came at about 12 yards, and I lost that one. So we were one apiece as we continued the march. The match director was John Plahn, and he decided to put the matter to a brutal test. Ten, nine, seven yards – and no signal. I felt that there was no way I could catch Reed at arm's length, but I had to try. The interesting thing about this was that the pressure got to Thell too. The firing signal must have come at about 3 paces. I went as fast as I could and got a hit. Thell went just a hair faster than he could – and he missed. He came out of the holster like an electric spark, but his shot went well over the head of the target.

Nerves get to all of us, but at that time and that place they got to the quicker man more severely.

Moral: *Go as fast as you can – but no faster*

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I am glad to report notable progress at the meeting of the Education and Training Committee of the NRA last week. The committee decided to update the Personal Defense Program of the association by rewriting and expanding the current training manual. This work will need editing and revision at several levels before it becomes official, but the direction seems right at this time, and the momentum is considerable.

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Winston Churchill is quoted as saying: "if I had charge of the education of the young people of England, I would first teach them English. Then I would teach them Latin as an honour, and Greek as a treat." I am not properly grounded in either Latin or Greek, though I have some nodding acquaintance, but I can certainly say that if currently produced reading matter is a guide, even our well-educated people seem to have lost the knack of English. Oddly enough, if you want to see the language properly used you only have to go back to material published in the first half of the 20th century. Even pop writers understood our tongue better then.

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"Man is a predator whose natural instinct is to kill with a weapon. The sudden addition of the enlarged brain to the equipment of an armed already-successful predatory animal created not only the human being but also the human predicament."

Robert Ardrey, *"African Genesis"*

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Rifleman John Pepper – one of the five riflemen in the world – is beginning to notice the onset of the years, and iron sights are beginning to give him trouble at distance on unmarked targets. He has been helping the Swiss Embassy recently in setting up a means for them to qualify on the Swiss target at 300 meters annually, which is necessary for a Swiss citizen, whether or not he is residing in Switzerland.

When John set up the Swiss qualification target on the rifle frames at Fort Mead, he found that he could not make out the delineations of the target, which is colored grey, brown and green in a sort of camouflage pattern. John had the answer. He mounted the targets in the frames so that the 4" ten-ring was exactly centered within the frame. Then, knowing where the target was, even though he could not see it clearly, he proceeded to shoot high score for the day with the M1 Garand.

Rather as in artillery practice, you do not have to see it if you know exactly where it is.

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From Chechnya via *Time* magazine:

"They are simply afraid of us. We saw it in their eyes during battle. They have very strong weapons – but not very strong spirits."

As always, it is the man, not the gun, that wins.

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You may remember the attributed demand from President Jefferson for "men to match my mountains." In today's scene, the politically correct version of that might be "Send me mole hills to match my men-and-women!"

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"Deep thinkers who look everywhere for the mysterious causes of poverty, ignorance, crime and war need look no further than their own mirrors. We are all born into this world poor and ignorant, and with thoroughly selfish and barbaric impulses. Those of us who turn out any other way do so largely through the efforts of others, who civilized us before we got big enough to do too much damage to the world or ourselves."

Thomas Sowell

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 12

October, 1996

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## Hunting Season

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We realize that all shooters are not hunters, and that all hunters are not shooters. This division of activity, while understandable, should be reduced insofar as possible, since the enemies of one group are also the enemies of the other, and they take advantage of this to divide and conquer. Target shooters are frequently not interested in hunting, but that should not lead them to denigrate hunting on principle. The innumerable hunters of whitetail deer east of the Mississippi, particularly noticeable in Pennsylvania, frequently express the notion that they are not affected by disarmament legislation, since it does not apply to them.

The hunter and the shooter need not become bosom buddies in order to realize that the foe of one is the foe of the other. A hunter who is not a member of the National Rifle Association is an ostrich.

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Available on-campus accommodations are now fully booked up for *the Reunion*, but there is plenty of motel space available in Raton, which is only a few minutes away.

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This new 9x23 pistol cartridge is an interesting idea, but one must question its basic purpose. To achieve more knockdown power one needs more mass, rather than more velocity, as anyone who has studied the matter is fully aware. But marketing is what dictates these things, as we all know, and when it comes to cartridge innovation velocity is what sells.

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We heard of a road sign outside an inn in North Carolina announcing

"CCL's Welcome, Come On In, We All Have Them!"

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Digby Anderson, who is the inhouse epicure for Bill Buckley, has come up with some very agreeable observations about this matter of "Lite" alimentation. To quote, "'Lite' is insipid, weak, denatured, flat, deluded, and easy: food for cowards and children." Producers produce what consumers desire, or what they think they desire. According to Anderson, the currently fashionable consumer of food is ignorant, timid, squeamish, and childish, and these tastes wash over into other methods of thought. For the most part our morality is light, childish and diluted. Our religion is insipid and undemanding. Schools make things easy for their pupils. Entertainment is fluffy and flimsy. "Is a foreigner allowed to suggest that the obvious description of the Republican candidate for the presidency is not 'Wrong, but lite?'" Dismally enough we are going to have to go to the polls next month and vote for a "lite" Republican.

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*Family member* Bob Shimizu of Prescott suggests that violation of safety rules has become so prevalent in the popular press that we might make something of a game out of pointing out these errors to editors. It may be useless to attempt anything in the general press, but when gun magazines continually illustrate violations of *Rule 3* in particular, they are doing the shooting public a dangerous disservice. Perhaps we should all make out a supply of form postcards and mail them to the proper desk whenever we see the need. Perhaps we shall set up a contest awarding a gold star to the reader who sends in the most postcards in any one month.

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Among the other shortcomings of our current school system appears the evident fact that decimals are no longer taught. The division of quantities into tenths makes for very convenient thinking, but only for people who think about it. We find, for instance, that even presumably educated people today do not understand that the verb "decimate" signifies reduction by precisely one-tenth. It was used in the Roman army as a punishment for units which did not measure up in battle. The troops were lined up and every tenth man was killed. This act was repeated much more recently at Goliad during the Texas War for independence. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna (who was one of the unusual historical figures about whom no good word has ever been spoken) required the survivors on the Texas side to reach into a bucket and extract one bean, there being one black bean for nine white. Every man who came up with a black bean was shot.

The point of this is that "to decimate" does not mean "to devastate." To decimate means to cause exactly 10 percent casualties – not nine and not 75. This proportion is easily determined by counting up the digits on both hands, for those who have difficulty with arithmetic.

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We have put the new Federal "High Energy" rifle ammunition on the clock and we discover that it performs as advertised. The standard 30–06/180 has always showed consistent 2700f/s in a 24" barrel. The new Federal HE from the same barrel averages 2909f/s. From the 20" barrel of Lindy's Springfield the same bullet departs at 2850 – for a loss of just 50f/s in four inches of barrel length. This provides the performance of a 300 Holland and Holland Magnum (24") in a Springfield pseudoscout. Very interesting! I doubt if the elk will be able to tell the difference, but from the technical point of view the project has been so far an unqualified success.

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In the decades we have spent teaching the arts of shooting it has been apparent that a shooter will ordinarily perform better on a target which reacts to the shot than on one that does not, and on exercises which are otherwise similarly challenging. The rifleman will nearly always smack a steel target which rings on impact more reliably than he will put his shots into a paper target of the same diameter. The pleasure of hitting seems to be a definite incentive, the results of which can be measured on the course. John Gannaway once told us bluntly that he does not enjoy mere shooting nearly as much as he enjoys hitting, and on reflection I discover that I feel the same way. Breaking things up and knocking things down may be childish pleasures, but they are nonetheless pleasures, and while the psychologists may disapprove they cannot deny the manifest results of controlled observation.

I cannot speak from personal experience, but I do believe the greatest shooting pleasure known to man must be the placing of a controlled burst from a gun into an enemy aircraft in a prop-driven dogfight. Now that such things are no longer possible, I would guess that the closest thing available now is the stopping of an angry lion in full charge with one round.

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Back in the good old days (before the invention of the flour tortilla), the British came up with what they called a "Howda pistol," which was a 577 caliber double handgun intended for repelling tigers which were trying to climb up on one's elephant's rump. To me this instrument made a certain kind of sense, but I am darned if I can see where the giant pistol of today is heading. In the current issue of the *Deutsche Waffen-Journal* a revolver taking the 600 Nitro cartridge is featured. By exchanging barrels one can have this same item in 458 Winchester. The piece, which is featured on the cover of the magazine, appears to be about double the bulk of the 454 Casull, while not much longer. One might be tempted to ask just what this item is for, but I find that asking people what things are for can get one into trouble.

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We learn from *family member* Barry Miller that at the forthcoming "Heritage Day" celebration at the Kings Park Rugby Station no firearms will be allowed. Specifically permitted are assegais, knobkerries and battle axes. It is good to know that the new administration in South Africa is giving multicultural weaponry the attention it deserves.

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At the Reunion we will again discuss the fascinating question of why men fight. *Family member* Barrett Tillman's new book "*Hellcats*" has got us to thinking about that once again. Certainly men have always fought well in defense of their homes, and this does not require much explanation, but over the centuries men have fought equally well in foreign wars. It is fatuous to suggest that men can be expected to die for an ideological cause. Ideology is all very well, but it is of little interest to a corpse. It may be said that men have put their lives on the line for religious beliefs which provide eternal bliss as a reward for a hero's death, but the religious motive is certainly not ever-present in warfare. I was thoroughly involved in the war in the Pacific from before the beginning until after the end, and I never met a man who felt he was fighting for any sort of cause. And he certainly was not fighting for defense of his home. Moreover he was not fighting because he had to, since I am speaking here of heroes rather than reluctant dragons. I have seen men perform feats of valor which were quite astonishing, and I have heard accurate accounts of hundreds more. The question still stands as "Why?"

The Countess has a simple answer – "testosterone." Men fight because that is what men do, and while no one enjoys the hardship, the boredom, the privation, or the pain, most men light up like a Christmas tree when the guns crash and the trash flies.

We hear inspiring speech about giving "The last full measure of devotion," but I do not believe that many men actually do that. In battle they do not give up their lives voluntarily, they take as many lives as they can, and – dreadful as it may seem to say – they enjoy it hugely. This is the nature of mankind, and there is no purpose in wringing one's hands about it.

The subject is worth going into at great length, and I look forward to it with pleasure.

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In a recent issue of this paper I called your attention to the appearance of the überflieger in Europe. The development appears to have crossed the Atlantic, and now we have the Lazzeroni Arms Company in Tucson which is offering a whole new line of fancy rifle cartridges claiming wild velocities using conventional bullets. The list includes the 7.82 "War Bird," the 8.59 "Titan," the 6.53 "Scramjet," the 7.21 "Fire Hawk," and the 10.57 "Meteor." These glamorously titled innovations would seem to answer a whole series of questions I have not thought up yet. Now you are aware of the ideal Christmas present for any of your shooting friends who have everything.

---

Now then, our fellow board member Rex Applegate has been coming forward in various publications with a conspicuous backward step. He has long been an advocate of unsighted pistol fire, and without trying to put the man down I must insist that this question has long been settled. Certainly one can learn to hit reliably with a pistol out to considerable distance providing he starts with a lot of talent and has unlimited opportunity to practice. I, and the other old timers who originated practical pistol shooting, used to do a lot of belt-level point-shooting, and we enjoyed it very much. Ray Chapman, Elden Carl and I used it and demonstrated it at length, but the acknowledged master of the art was Thell Reed. Thell's specialty was not exactly "hip shooting," since he fired with the pistol at belt level and a forearm's length forward, but he could do amazing things that way. I do not expect you to believe it, but I have seen Thell hit that iron chicken at 50 yards consistently, without sights. I certainly admire his amazing talent, but I must point out that when Thell entered competition against any of the original masters he shot from the Weaver Stance.

The idea that one is quicker without sights has been thoroughly disproved. In the time it takes you to get the pistol out of the holster you can raise it to eye level. The fastest single shot I ever saw hit under controlled conditions in competition was shot in .45 seconds, and it was shot from Weaver. The only sensible reason for shooting without the sights is under conditions where the adversary is so close that he may deflect your pistol with a hand block, and here we are talking about a range of 2 or 3 feet – not yards.

Col. Rex is a good old boy, and I enjoy reading him, but this is one topic on which we definitely disagree.

---

Another pundit for whom I feel great empathy but with whom I must disagree is Ross Seyfried, who scorns my treasured Lion Scout. I have been working out with this piece at some length recently in anticipation of my forthcoming elk hunt in Montana, and I think a 36-caliber 250-grain bullet at 2500f/s is "enough gun" for anything short of buffalo. It will shoot crosswise through a moose, in one side and out the other, and it will shoot lengthwise through a lion from stem to stern, expanding to 60-caliber on the way. It will shoot tighter than I can out to what is essentially an unsportsmanlike range. It is short, light, handy, and a great pleasure to use. The only faults I can find with it are that I cannot replicate it, and it is a bit difficult to feed, but Riflemaster Gannaway has just prepared for me 200 fastidiously loaded rounds using the excellent Swift partition bullet. It is a treasure, and if Ross does not like it I just won't ask him to use it.

---

*Family member* and hot pilot George Olmsted is cheering on our work on the course design pamphlet. As he puts it

"If people continue to test using the wrong questions they will truly continue to come up with wrong answers. After all, if the answer is a 40lb bolt gun with two bipods it must have been a very stupid question."

---

I spend little time in big towns so I am not introduced to trends and fashions gradually, and they rather rock me when I encounter them for the first time. Just a week or so ago in the local big city I encountered a reasonably presentable woman of young middle age who was standing there awaiting a car with a flask of bottled water in one hand and a cordless telephone in the other. She evidently felt that a couple of minutes without water would be hazardous to her health, and without instant telephone communication with the rest of the world she would be left hopelessly behind. I did not mean to stare, but this episode caught me rather aslant. If she had been carrying a bottle of wine in one hand and a mandolin in the other I might have deemed it eccentric but understandable. As it was I felt more like retiring to the bar to steady my nerves.

---

In the past I have written up my experiences in firing the mighty 120-millimeter smooth-bore gun of the Abrams tank. This pleasure was provided me by Colonel Clint Ancker, an Orange Gunsite *family member* with a distinguished record in the Gulf War. In case you missed the account of that excellent experience, I presume to repeat it herewith:

The gunner sits on the starboard side of the tube, facing some 20 degrees to the left of the axis of the bore. To sight the weapon he places his head into the rubber-bordered face-piece which gives him a 10x view of the target in daylight mode, and a green-on-black duplication of it when the switch is turned to night mode. In his hands the gunner holds a double yoke, each side of which is fitted with a spring-loaded actuation lever, a finger trigger, and a thumb button on top.

When he goes into action, the gunner squeezes the lower three fingers of either hand, or both, which sends power to the turret. If he rotates the yoke to the right the turret traverses to the right. If he elevates or depresses the yoke, he elevates or depresses the tube. The view through the face piece displays an orange dot which the gunner can place upon the target by rotating either or both hands. If the tank is in motion this motion is compensated electronically.

Having placed the orange dot on the target, the gunner is ready to fire. If the target is moving he follows the movement by gently rotating the yoke in the direction of that movement. When the orange dot – usually called the "pipper" – is placed amidships on the target the gunner depresses a thumb button which actuates the laser which reads all necessary information into the shooting mechanism and corrects accordingly for range, wind and relative movement. When he has pressed the thumb button the gunner may assume that his piece is precisely on target, whereupon he squeezes the trigger with his index finger and the weapon fires.

I asked how long it took for the laser to transmit the necessary information into the tracking system. The answer was "You can't catch it!" Thus, the instant that the pipper is on target, the gunner presses the laser button, then the trigger, and he has a hit. He can fire visually or via the infrared mode, which may be actuated by a switch to his right. I was privileged to fire this mechanism six times under varying conditions of motion and illumination. I got six direct hits on a simulated tank at 2000 meters. We use the adjective "incredible" too often, but this shooting mechanism is just that. I literally cannot believe the technology that makes this possible.

Inside the tank, "buttoned up" and with talking helmet in place, the experience is surprisingly mild. The report of that huge gun is daunting to anyone standing outside within a mile or so, but inside the noise of the report is about like that of a 12-gage shotgun fired 25 meters away, and the jolt is rather similar to the slamming of a large old-fashioned two-door coupe.

To the right of the gunner, when he is in position, a bank of nine light switches lies easy to his hand. When he actuates the turret he glances at this bank of lights to see if all is well. If nothing is wrong no light will turn on. If any of the nine lights shows green, that means that that particular circuit is not working. This is corrected by depressing that switch and the green light goes out. If that same circuit breaks again an orange light will come on, which is corrected in similar fashion. All circuits are triply redundant, and may be cured internally by the touch of a finger until the same electric circuit has been interrupted three times. This means that when the tank rides over a mine or is struck by a shell, any disturbance caused to its firing mechanism may be corrected instantly without interrupting the action.

I was somewhat troubled at the thought that the whole system is so easy to use that anybody can use it. I mentioned this to the officer-in-charge and he said that a shooting background was nonetheless an aid to the gunner. He said he liked to use farm boys when he could get them – lads who were used to shooting at rats or squirrels with the family 22. I cannot see what difference this might make, but I was assured that it does.

This device was put to enormous use in the Gulf War, and it leaves one almost with a feeling of pity for the enemy. Those poor fellows out there in those Russian tanks in the dark did not even know they were in danger until they were dead.

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We congratulate *family member* Darin Nelson of California for her recent success hunting with Ian McFarlane in Okavango. Husband Bob could not accompany her, since he was under the weather at the planned time, but this gives them a fine excuse to go back and try again next year.

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Our adversary press misses no opportunity to throw rocks at the National Rifle Association, which with whatever faults it may have, still stands as the largest and most efficient civil rights organization in the world. When we are asked what our opinions are following the recent directors' meeting in DC. I can do no better than to repeat the official position of the association on its current condition:

"With a giddiness all too often seen in the establishment media, press reports are claiming that a restructuring of NRA operations means the Association is weak and no longer able to block their 'gun control' agendas. But once again, the reports seem to be based more on wishful thinking than fact. Only in the minds of the anti-gun media could efforts to streamline our Association to better deliver [sic] our educational programs and services to our members be seen as a sign of financial ruin. In truth, to increase efficiency and meet the growing demands for youth, safety and education programs for our members, NRA has created a new division – the Community Services Division – to help empower members at the grassroots level to deliver safety and education programs in communities where members live. The decision to place greater emphasis on grassroots efforts was based largely on the success of NRA-ILA's Grassroots Network, which has helped bring about dramatic changes

in America's political landscape with the help of concerned NRA members across the nation. NRA is as strong as ever, operating on a balanced budget, and ready to guarantee our members the best programs available will be delivered in the most efficient means possible."

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This series of honorary postage stamps now being issued has included some rather dubious heroes, and perhaps we should do our little best to put forth suggestions for improvement. Specifically, a move is afoot to print up an issue commemorating Chesty Puller – the "Marines' Marine." I can certainly support the idea. Headquarters for the campaign is

First Sergeant B. Medina, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines, 1902 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, Texas 77054, (713) 796–1260, or 1261, or 1262 (ext. 251), fax: (713) 796–1263.

Sergeant Medina will be pleased with your support.

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Our revered Founding Fathers revealed by their writings that they were cultivated, classically educated, penetrating philosophers. What they sought to give their new country in its constitutional forms was the optimal political measure of liberty without license. Now, two hundred years later, their unworthy descendants seem to have reached exactly the reverse. This is evidence of what happens when pearls are cast before swine.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 12a

November, 1996

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## Interim Supplement

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This is a special interim issue of the Commentaries since it has nothing to do with guns or shooting, but rather with the various entertainments we enjoyed at the *Fourth Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* at Whittington.

We had a splendid and inspiring time, as usual, and it was grand to be totally surrounded with good people of like persuasion. We face dark times now, and the example of *the Great TR* lends courage to us all.

---

Husband of The First Lay-dee  
(with apologies to both W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan)

When I was a lad I served a term  
As office boy in an attorney's firm  
I shredded papers and I hid the dirt  
And I'd flirt when I could with a shapely skirt.

He'd flirt when he could with a shapely skirt.

I hid that dirt so carefully  
That now I am the husband of the first lady.

He hid that dirt so carefully that now he is the husband of the first lady.

Of legal knowledge she acquired such a grip  
That she got us into a partnership.  
We'd sell some land, keep the broker's fees  
And swindle money from retirees.

Swindle money from retirees.

We stole that money so efficiently  
That now I am the husband of the first lady.

They stole that money so efficiently that now he is the husband of the first lady.

While Governor in Little Rock  
She got us a tip on some cattle stock.  
And that cattle stock grew so drastically  
It warranted attention of the SEC.

It warranted attention of the SEC.

But we covered our backs so skillfully  
That now I am the husband of the first lady.

They covered their tracks so skillfully that now he is the husband of the first lady.

When my wife grew tired of the country hicks  
She schemed with the CLAMS, got us out of the sticks.  
Said, "Now Billy, here's the way it'll be.  
You do the smiling, leave the thinking to me."

He'll do the smiling, leave the thinking to she.

I thought so little they rewarded me  
By making me the husband of the first lady.

He thought so little they rewarded he by making him the husband of the first lady.

My term they say has been quite weird  
With the Bureau Freeh-ed and the Army queered.  
If you think it's the work of a liberal fool  
You better pay attention to my golden rule.

Better pay attention to his golden rule.

Ruin the country, blame the GOP  
And you all may be husband of the first lady.

Lyrics by and sung by John and Maureen Nicholas at the reunion

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### The Train

On a cold October night a train  
Left Grand Central Station  
Carrying a load of TNT  
To the capital of our nation.

The deadly cargo had been ordered  
By Hillary Rodham Clinton.  
In order to blow up every file  
She had a fingerprint on.

It was an Amtrac train, of course,  
Government subsidized...  
If you knew the name of the engineer  
You just might be surprised.

Yes, Rodney King was at the wheel  
An Affirmative Action hire;  
If he'd been rejected, the ACLU said,  
Consequences would be dire.

As always when he drove, Rodney  
Had buddies at his side –  
Johnny Walker, Jim Beam and the Brothers Gallo  
Had all come along for the ride.

The track was clear, the signals green  
The journey was a snap,  
So as the train hit eighty–five  
Rodney took himself a nap.

Roaring down through Newark  
It didn't stop to get acquainted  
With three poor lads that it ran down  
Who'd been hoping to spray paint it.

Now the news spread far and wide  
We've got a runaway train!  
Headed straight for Washington  
Where the Clintons feel our pain.

A meeting of the cabinet  
Was called in desperation –  
Slick Willie asked for its advice  
To resolve this situation.

Albert Gore put in his two cents,  
Droning on for half an hour  
About a scheme to stop the train  
Using solar power.

Warren Christopher knit his brow  
Pondering the situation,  
And said "A case like this requires  
Careful negotiation."

Robert Reich stood and spoke at length  
As only he is able,  
But no one heard him, as his head,  
Did not quite clear the table.

When Donna Shalala's turn came  
She spoke with indignation,  
Of the train as an obvious symbol  
Of male domination.

Secretary of Defense Perry  
Spoke his piece at last  
"Our flyboys in their F–16s  
Can clean this mess up fast."

A fist slammed hard upon the desk

And Hillary rose from her chair;  
The assembled leaders quivered  
As she swept them with her glare.

"We're running hard against Bob Dole  
She said, "just thought I'd warn you.  
If the Air Force takes out Rodney King –  
There goes California."

Bill Clinton frowned and bit his lip  
To get his thoughts in line,  
But he just couldn't get that cute  
Peruvian mummy off his mind.

Suddenly a voice rang out,  
Raspy, deep and bold,  
"I'm not afraid to take a stand –  
The rest of you can fold."

Toward Janet Reno no heads turned  
Not a single eye turned to,  
"If there's no man among you, then  
I guess I'll have to do!"

Janet strode out of the room  
Leaving none in any doubt,  
That she'd been nowhere to be found,  
When the estrogen was passed out.

So as that train came speeding  
Toward the capital of our land  
Like Horatius at the bridge  
Janet Reno took her stand.

She planted a size twelve shoe on  
Either side of the railroad track.  
The train came hurtling straight at her  
But she stared boldly back.

Its headlight lit up with its glare  
Her lanky six-foot frame,  
And its wheels began to grind and screech  
As if they were in pain.

Her body looked a lot like that  
Of an ill-fed Appaloosa,  
While her face was like a Grecian goddess  
– The one they call Medusa.

And when the headlight hit that face  
Which could surely stop Big Ben,



Or send a warthog squealing  
In terror back to its den –

Sparks they flew, iron screamed,  
And there came a thundercrack,  
As that train gave up and stopped dead cold  
Upon the railroad track.

Poor Rodney King, I'm sad to say,  
Did not survive that night,  
Having woken just in time to see  
Ms. Reno in the light.

Those of us who've likened her  
To the Roman Emperor Nero,  
Will have to admit that just for once,  
The woman was a hero.

A statue was cast in her likeness,  
To honor her glorious deed,  
And in case another runaway train  
Should cause a future need.

By Paul Kirchner

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Since this is not a regular issue, we can alter policy and go a bit commercial.

Daughter Lindy (who distinguished herself on *The Rifle Bounce*) is publishing her first book – *The Soul and The Spirit* – which happens to be her biography of me.

I find it a bit embarrassing to read my obit before I am dead, but I did no editing and I am not responsible.

The book is at the printers, and should be ready by Christmas. Price is \$35, inclusive, and orders can be addressed to

Wisdom Publishing, Inc., 1840 E. Warner Road, Box 238, Tempe, Arizona 85284.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 13

November, 1996

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## Venison Harvest

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While we here in Arizona have not yet actually put any venison in the freezer, we are about to – with luck, of course. We have had the first freeze and the first snow, and the season of the happiness of pursuit is upon us.

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Bear incidents continue to proliferate. One of the better ones is related to us by *family member* Bill O'Connor. He tells of a lawyer (this is not a lawyer joke) who told one of his law school classmates that he was heading for the Brooks Range in Alaska on a fishing trip. When asked how he intended to be armed he sneered Disney-wise at his friend and said that there was no need for that sort of thing. As you may have read, he and his friends ran into a mother grizzly with a cub and he was quickly killed. Friend O'Connor paraphrases Kipling thus:

"But the female thus accosted  
rends the lawyer tooth and claw  
for an agitated grizzly  
is more mighty than the law."

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Among the new 10mm pistol cartridges, the "Cor-Bon .400", as reported to us by Dick Davis of Second Chance, is supposed to put out a 165-grain bullet at 1300f/s. Dick comments: "If we open it up to a 45 caliber and increase the bullet weight to, say, 230 grains, we might have a real man-stopper."

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We hear from neighbor Colonel Bob Young that the penalty for possession of a hollow-point bullet in the great state of New Jersey is \$1,000 per bullet. Sometimes it seems that New Jersey should be treated as suggested for Somalia – surrounded by an impenetrable wall and allowed to stew in its own juice.

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This is indeed a bad time for the Republic. We on the right have the issue of character available as our Sunday punch, and yet our party leaders decline to use it. You can't win if you don't fight.

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I wish to thank all those good friends who signed petitions for my nomination to the Board of Directors of The National Rifle Association. As it turns out, I have been nominated by the Nominating Committee, somewhat to my surprise since I have been rejected by that body in the past. I have a feeling that I am viewed somewhat askance in Washington, since I have never been one of the boys, and I do not have a Washingtonian mentality. However, I am now up for election again, and we shall see how the membership feels about this.

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Dr. David Kahn continues to struggle with the promotion of the *Keneyathlon*, or "Hunters' Rifle Course." The basic problem seems to be that this type of contest does not appeal to hunters, but rather to SWAT team members who insist on using target equipment in what is not intended to be a target shoot – but using it well. David feels that he may re-organize the whole enterprise into what amounts to a SWAT contest, since that seems to be what people want.

We have an interesting philosophical problem here. We know how the hunter uses a rifle (though he often

uses it very poorly), but what exactly does a policeman need with a rifle? The only scenario that comes to mind is that of hostage rescue, since the rifle is not a defensive weapon and the police should use it only to save the life of an innocent being held at gun point. The totally egregious use of the rifle by the law enforcement arm looms as that of Lon Horiuchi, who appears to have murdered Vicki Weaver in cold blood when he himself was in no danger, and who now walks free and draws his salary on the taxpayers.

Be that as it may, Dr. Kahn plans to re-organize the *Keneyathlon* under the new title of *Proskopathlon*, signifying approximately a tactical shooting contest, of varying and unstandardized format. Tentative dates for the first offering are 28 – 30 June, 1997, and the location is Gillette, Wyoming. We wish it all success.

It has been suggested by *family member* Dan Predovich that it is about time for another Scout Conference. If we hear sufficient enthusiasm for this project, we shall try to set upon a date and a place. It would certainly be nice if we had the production scout from Steyr Mannlicher to show off at this occasion. I will agitate for this again at SHOT.

Among the various events conducted at Whittington during the recent *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* was the *Rifle Bounce*. This is an excellent enterprise and deserves standardization, being simple, quick and easy to administer. As the Presidente may be used as a quick and general test of pistol skill, the *Rifle Bounce* can be used as a quick measure of general rifle competence.

The test is conducted on steel *Pepper Poppers* placed at 100, 200 and 300 meters from the firing line. Three firing points are specified, three paces apart, and the shooter attempts to hit each target from a different firing point. The shooter starts outside the first firing point with his rifle at "Ready" and carrying six cartridges. On signal he leaps into the first firing point, knocks the 100-meter target down, bounces to the second firing point and takes down the 200-meter target, and then bounces to the third firing point and engages the 300-meter target. He is allowed six shots only, and if he does not take down all three targets with six rounds he has no score. If he does knock down the three his score is his time in seconds. An elapsed time of 30 seconds is good. Twenty seconds is excellent.

If the *Rifle Bounce* is used as a contest, shooting is entirely free-style in accordance with the principles of practical shooting competition. If it is used as an evaluation of rifle skill, the 100-meter target must be taken standing erect, the second target from kneeling, squatting or sitting, and the third target from prone. A shooting sling is permissible, but a bipod is not. As a point of caution it should be noted that a *Pepper Popper* will not be knocked down by a low hit if it is properly calibrated, thus a clang does not necessarily signify a valid hit.

If you regard yourself as a good rifle shot, I suggest you give this one a try. The world's record was held by Russ Showers at 18 seconds for quite a long time, but this has now been lowered to about 15. If you can produce a 25 on demand, you can join the club.

"Can it really be true that two-thirds of American women do not care whether or not the President of the United States is a habitual liar? If so, what is the chance that they will teach their children to value the truth? If a person is not truthful, then reliable communication with him becomes impossible. If children do not tell the truth, why teach them to talk and write? Yet, children learn primarily by example. If their mothers successfully support a liar for President, why should the children be expected to be truthful?"

Dr. Arthur B. Robinson in "*Access to Energy*"

Napoleon may have got off to a scruffy start as a Corsican corporal, but he did develop a good deal more class than Bill Clinton. When the Emperor wanted a special girl in Warsaw he sent a Field Marshal to pick her up.

Clinton sent a couple of enlisted men.

---

I have gradually come round to the conclusion, over several decades of endeavor, that marksmanship cannot be taught "in bulk." To be an expert marksman the shooter must first of all possess the desire to excel. No matter how much the public sector may try, the individual may not be ordered to do so. If he does have the desire, he may be tutored individually by a skillful instructor, and he may, through diligent practice, eventually become an expert, but no training system designed for departments or armies can hope to develop artists – and marksmanship is definitely an art.

The study of history shows us that really good combat riflemen come from a cultural base in which rifle shooting is practiced as both a sport and a means of sustenance. See what the Boer farmers did to the British regulars at Majuba Hill! Those farmers had no discipline, no organization, and no training, but they had been conditioned from childhood to hit what they shot at. The Redcoats, on the other hand, were fetched off the streets of London and Manchester and taught what they knew about shooting in regimental drills.

It appears to me that fighting men are best recruited from people who have proved their weaponcraft in advance, as with Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, or the law enforcement officers of the Old West. I should avoid getting personal, but I must point out that the very first time I fired the Marine Corps rifle course at Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania I scored 13 points above Expert.

As our civilization decays, we have lessening opportunity to acquire young men for our public defense who know anything about guns or fighting. Our consolation may be that our prospective enemies are no better off.

---

If machismo is lost, only money is left. One wonders if time may be ripe for a "male backlash" such as suggested in Sir Henry Rider Haggard's famous novel "*She*." Those of you familiar with that excellent fantasy will recall that "the people of the rocks" portrayed therein were a matriarchal society in which women made all the decisions and inheritance was traced entirely through the female line. According to the story, this procedure got totally out of line every second generation or so, and all the females except the very young were put to death. This seems rather extreme, but after all, the race portrayed was one of the "lesser breeds without the law."

The Countess treated us to an excellent quotation from Longfellow at the reunion, to the effect that man and woman may be likened to the bow and the bowstring – "useless one without the other."

---

Some years ago we encountered a young man who inherited from his father's estate the modest sum of \$600 and a semi-sporterized 1903 Springfield. This was not much of a legacy, of course, but on examination it took on a certain charm. The line occurred to me: "They're ain't many troubles that a man can't fix with six hundred dollars and a thirty ought six." The monosyllable "six" needed addition, so I tried "seven." The line had a nice lilt to it and I thought it might serve as the basis of a somewhat nostalgic poem. I did not feel up to writing the whole poem myself, so I suggested the task to our number three child Lindy, and she came up with "*Grandpa's Lesson*." Herewith:

*Pappy took to drinkin' back when I was barely three.  
 Ma got pretty quiet. She was frettin', you could see.  
 So I was sent to Grandpa and he raised me up real good.  
 He taught me what I oughta and he taught me what I should.  
 I learned a heap 'o lessons from the yarns he liked to tell.  
 There's one I won't forget because I learned it 'speshly well.  
 "There jist ain't many folk who live a peaceful, carefree life.  
 Along with all the good times there'll be lotsa grief and strife.  
 But ain't many troubles that a man cain't fix*

With seven hundred dollars and a thirty ought six."  
*Grandpa courted Grandma near the town of old Cheyenne.*  
Her daddy was cantankerous – a very greedy man.  
*He wouldn't give permission for a fancy wedding day*  
'Til grandpa paid a dowry—biggest ever people say.  
*Her daddy softened up when Grandpa said that he could fix*  
Him up with seven hundred dollars and a thirty ought six.  
*Grandpa herded cattle down around Jalisco way.*  
Ended up behind some iron bars one dusty day.  
*Seems the local jefe craved my Grandpa's pinto mare.*  
Grandpa wouldn't sell her so he lit on out of there.  
*Didn't take much doin' 'cept a couple special tricks*  
plus seven hundred dollars and his thirty ought six.  
*Then there was that Faro game near San Francisco say.*  
Grandpa's cards was smokin' hot and he took all one day.  
*He woke up nearly naked in a ditch next early morn'.*  
With nothin' but his flannel shirt, and it was ripped and torn.  
*Those others were professionals and they don't play for kicks.*  
He lost seven hundred dollars and his thirty ought six.  
*He begged some woolen trousers off the local storekeep there*  
Who loaned him both a pony and a rifle on a dare.  
*He caught those thievin' cardsharks at another Faro game.*  
He got back all his property and also his good name.  
*He left one bleedin' badly and another mostly lame.*  
My grandpa's trusty rifle shoots just where you choose to aim.  
*Grandpa's slowin' down a bit and just the other night*  
He handed me his rifle and a box sealed up real tight.  
*He fixed me with them pale grey eyes and this is what he said,*  
"You're awful young but steady too and I will soon be dead.  
*I'll bet this here old rifle and this honest money too*  
Will come in mighty handy just as readily for you.  
*There jist ain't many folk who lead a carefree, peaceful life.*  
Along with times of happiness, there's always woe and strife.  
*But ... aint many troubles that a man cain't fix*  
with seven hundred dollars and his thirty ought six."  
Lindy Cooper Wisdom

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We hear from the British press that it is now "too late to disarm the US public." God save the mark!

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Michael Howard is "Home Secretary" of the UK, sort of a national chief of police. In his words, "Gun ownership is a privilege, not a right, and the use of firearms in self-defense is not acceptable for civilians in this country" (presumably it is okay for a soldier). So much for The Land of Hope and Glory! Die if you must but do not shoot back.

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Mr. Lincoln's famed dictum is doubtless correct, but we should remember that "You can fool most of the people, most of the time."

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All the talk about "self-esteem" in kids is beside the point – when what they need is self-control.

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Perusal of the current crop of outdoor magazines emphasizes the crying need for the release of *The Art of the Rifle*. Maybe all those "gun writers" in the illustrations really do hit what they shoot at, but if so they are

certainly going about the task the hard way.

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"Never do your enemy a minor injury."

Machiavelli

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The question has arisen as to why we seek all the power we can possibly control in a handgun but do not demand the same from a rifle. The answer hinges upon the difference in principle between the two instruments. A pistol is an emergency defensive weapon designed to turn someone off who is trying to kill you at close range. This is an emergency for which you cannot reasonably expect to be prepared. You will normally be extremely excited and possibly not entirely in control of your nerves. Your first shot must hit hard. It must prevent your assailant immediately from doing what he is trying to do – which is usually trying to kill you. Pistol cartridges are not very powerful, and to meet the violent emergency demand of a lethal, close range confrontation you should choose a pistol cartridge that will give you the best possibility of an instant stop, even if the hit is not perfectly placed.

The situation is entirely different with the rifle, which is essentially an offensive weapon used at a time and place of the shooter's discretion. The rifle shooter "freezes himself cool" and places his shot with surgical precision. If he has properly studied the anatomy of his quarry, he knows exactly where the vital zone lies, and he plants his bullet just there. Therefore it is rather pointless to push for excessive power in rifle cartridges, since almost any popular center–fire round will do a good job on either game or enemies if it is properly used. (I make an exception of the buffalo, whose extraordinary resistance to gunfire puts him in a special category.)

Thus when I hear, as I did at Whittington, that the 375 is the lightest cartridge which should ever be taken to Africa, I jeer long and loud. History tells us that it seldom has been lack of cartridge power that caused grief in Africa, but rather lack of shooting skill. Our daughter and our grandchildren have cleaned the slate in Africa, mainly with the 308/180. Jack O'Connor did likewise with the 270, as did our cousin Steve Lunceford.

I do not claim that rifle power is inconsequential, but rather that it is less important than the salesman would have you believe. Anyone who can't do the job with a 30–06, using proper bullets, probably just can't do it with anything.

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By the time you read this we will have elected the government we deserve, or at least the government that a majority deserves. A view of the current scene, as depicted by the press and the tube, suggests that those people really do deserve what they got, but that does not make it any easier for you and for me to accept. As always, the important thing is to keep one's sense of humor – without which one had best never have been born.

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*Please Note. These "Commentaries" are for personal use only. Not for publication.*

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 14

December, 1996

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## Thanksgiving

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Yes, we do have something to be thankful for! We hung onto Congress, and it is Congress, not the White House, that makes the laws. Things could be worse; we could be living in Britain, where, as you know, Parliament has chosen to turn the streets over to the bad guys. Henceforth in Britain, handguns are totally outlawed, so only the outlaws will have handguns. It is heartbreaking to learn of my English friends who now have to trot down to the nearest police station and turn over their family heirlooms and faithful comrades to *Big Brother*. Well, it is not that way here – not yet – but there are plenty of quasi-Americans who really wish that it were so. We keep up the fight. We are beset, but we are not defeated, and we will maintain the struggle as long as there is breath in our bodies.

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I was recently enchanted to learn of mounted pistol competition, which is being conducted on a fairly regular basis down along the border in southern Arizona. If you wish to enter, you must provide your own horse and two 45 caliber Peacemakers. I found this stipulation pretty advanced, since it is something of a problem to get your horse to behave when you are shooting only one pistol off his back and controlling him at a gallop, while shooting with a pistol in each hand is a difficult exercise. Upon investigation I found the contestant only shoots one pistol at a time, but he must have the other ready at hand in the event he runs dry. I also discovered that only blank ammunition is used, the targets being rubber balloons which can be burst by a blank.

Not having a properly organized horse available to me at this time, I am excluded from this competition, but I think the idea is just great. The possibilities open to a horse-oriented society are limitless. Sword and lance may add to the excitement. We must examine this whole business in depth.

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To my considerable disgust I note a press release sent out by the Internal Revenue Service to the effect that they got one George C. Brant of Snowflake, Arizona, a 3-year sentence for not declaring his sale of woodshavings from his carpentry shop on his tax return. Now obviously we have to have tax collectors, and we have to have prison guards, along with several other sorts of shoddy public servants, but I think these people would have better taste than to brag about their activities.

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"Statistics can never determine excellence."

The Guru

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Our friends in Africa tell us that now that the Bantu peoples feel that they are in full control, their underclass have taken to the unpleasant habit of trying to drive white farmers off the land by breaking their fences, burning their crops, and killing their cattle. Fortunately, there is good answer to this, and that is witchcraft. The farmer hires the local witch doctor to do this stuff, and the harassment stops. This is plain old extortion, well known and practiced in such exotic places as New York, Chicago, and Sicily, but it works. We are told it is not nearly as expensive as one might suspect.

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Certainly we have enough different kinds of cartridges, but while I have never been able to take much interest in the 9mm family of pistol cartridges, 9mm rifle cartridges have much to recommend them. The selection is

very broad, ranging from the obsolete 35 Winchester all the way up through the 358 Norma. The better examples of this family are properly categorized as "medium-powered." They will work well enough on deer, of course, but they are somewhat excessive for that purpose. They appear at their best when they are used to take good sized four-footed game – anything short of buffalo. The most efficient bullet mass seems to be about 250 grains, and when a 36 calibre, 250-grain bullet of proper design is launched upon its way at about 2500f/s its killing power is most authoritative.

One of the most venerable of the breed is the 35 Whelen, which is simply a 30-06 blown out to 9mm. This round has been with us since well before World War II, and I find it surprising that it never achieved the popularity that it deserves, having been overshadowed from its inception by the 375 H&H Magnum. The 35 Whelen is not quite up to a 375 ballistically, but the difference between the two is not great.

The 9mm rifle cartridges have long been thought limited to short-range; a viewpoint I consider to be erroneous. The widespread belief that a rifle cartridge is of no use at long distance unless its projectile starts at 3,000 feet or better is simply not corroborated by field experience. In my opinion, Colonel Whelen's dictum that 300 yards was an effective working maximum for sportsmanlike use in the field still holds, despite an enormous amount of trash writing to the contrary. I am not inclined to be falsely modest about my personal experience with field shooting – I have a lot of my own, and I have studied the experience of others at great length and over a long period. While I am satisfied to extend the practical maximum from 300 yards to 300 meters, I am convinced that shots taken beyond that distance are evidence of bad sportsmanship. We need not go into details about animals improperly hit. It is enough to say that anyone who has ever seen a deer wandering in the woods with its lower jaw shot off may be impressed enough to give up the whole idea of big game hunting for the rest of his life.

So we are talking about hitting well, and that means hitting solidly into the boiler room of the target beast under field conditions, including excitement, hurry, wind, bad light, and unstable shooting positions. Before you take the shot you should be sure of your ability to hit a dinner plate – every time – under the circumstances applying at the time. It takes a very good man – a very unusual marksman – to handle that problem beyond 300 meters, and the better members of the 9mm rifle family may be counted on to do better than the shooter can.

My own personal pet in this category at this time is the excellent "350 Remington Magnum," which is essentially the Holland magnum case shortened to 308 length and necked to 9mm. I have discussed this nifty little round previously at some length and I must say that its lack of general appreciation puzzles me. Using the excellent Swift A-frame bullet of 250 grains, this load will shoot right through both shoulders of a moose from side-to-side, and right through a lion from end to end. Packed into a compact, short (20-inch barrelled) handy scout-type piece weighing just over 8 pounds, it will group better than I can (6 centimeters center-to-center at 200 meters) and it facilitates the aerial snapshot fully as well as the bench rest.

It has its drawbacks. It is not a deer gun, since it is over-powerful and over-penetrative for 200-pound targets. It is hard to feed. Proper factory ammunition for it is practically impossible to find, and handloading that short case can be tricky. It kicks. When it first appeared the 350 Remington Magnum was castigated throughout the industry as a tooth-rattler. I do not know how this fancy got started. The little gun does kick, but no harder than any other cartridge of similar power. For any shooter who is up to a 338 or a 375 to be bothered by the kick of the little "350 Short" is inexplicable – at least to me.

While the ballistic performance of the 35 Whelen and the 350 Remington (short) Magnum are practically indistinguishable, I prefer the Remington cartridge to the Whelen simply because it is short. There are certain advantages to a short bolt throw.

Obviously I like the 35s. I particularly like the 350 Short Magnum. Its only trouble is that you cannot get one, at least not easily, but then I have mine (Semper Fi!).



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Have you noticed that even some fairly well informed people may still be found referring to Vince Foster's death as a suicide? So blood runs up hill?

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To our considerable amazement we learn of a formal sporting competition recently held in Germany in which the weapon employed was the atlatl. The people concerned referred to their instrument as a "spear thrower," but I prefer the Najuatl term as being more exotic and mysterious. I tried fabricating devices of this type when I was in junior high school. My efforts were frustrating, but clearly this gadget did work, and over a long period, because it has been found amongst the artifacts of primitive men all over the world. I cannot quite see the future of an atlatl association seeking entry into the Olympics, but the Germans have always been ready to form in groups to play around and drink beer, which is, of course, a cheerful national characteristic.

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We have mentioned the painful story of the high school cheerleader who was set upon by a bear in the White Mountains of Arizona and very badly hurt, though not fatally. Much as we sympathize with this girl, we find our sympathy sorely tried when we discover that now she has fallen into the hands of the ambulance chasers, and is proposing to sue everybody in sight because of the bad behavior of this bear. She cannot sue the bear because it is dead – and besides it did not have any money when it was alive – but she can sue the Forest Service and the Department of Fish and Game, and, for all I know, the CIA, KGB, and the National Zoological Society. Here we are in *the Age of Litigation!*

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The antics of the sleazemaster reached a new peak just before the election.

- He stated for the record that he thought Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was included in the Constitution.
- He paid special attention to the death of a police officer incurred in the line of duty and insisted that his bullet-banning policies would have saved the officer's life – and it turns out that the officer was killed in an auto accident.
- He paid specific honor on Veterans Day to the war dead at Arlington Cemetery. There must have been a great rumbling noise caused by all those dead soldiers turning over in their graves.

And yet the people went right out and elected him. As Harry Hopkins, FDR's sidekick and exec, put it: "The people are too damn dumb to understand."

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Suddenly we hear of a new form of misconduct known as "stalking," which apparently is the custom of following people around without any apparent purpose. This brings a story to mind of a school chum of mine who got into the diplomatic service and found himself on the Moscow station for one tour of duty. Naturally if he went out at night his hosts put a tail on him on the assumption that he must be some sort of spy. My friend and a buddy came up with the answer. They turned down a side street and quickly into an alley. When the stalker showed up, they jumped him, took away his pistol, and threw it down the main drain. They never saw him again. That is not the sort of thing you report to your superiors in Moscow.

I have always been given to understand from childhood that the best defense is counterattack. The principle still holds.

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During our Marine Corps time we were privileged to serve directly under General Merrill Twining, who was Vandegrift's G3 on Guadalcanal. Just this year General Twining, who is getting on, finally got out his account of the Guadalcanal operation. Among the many excellent first-hand battle accounts that have come out of the war, this one stands out because it is very difficult to understand a battle if you are just fighting in it rather than operating it. As G3 of the division (referred to as D3 in those days), Merrill Twining was exactly in the center of the entire Marine Corps operation on "Death Island." The book fascinated me personally because it speaks of many people whom I know. (Or knew. Time marches on.). But to the general student of

weaponcraft a couple of things stand out vividly.

When the Japanese sent their elite "Sendai" division into the sector held by the battalions of Chesty Puller and Herman Hanneken, they attacked at 2 o'clock in the morning in a driving downpour. They outnumbered the defenders about six to one, but they were so roughly handled that the division was never reconstituted. At that time the Marines were armed with the 1903 rifle, the 1911 pistol, and the Model 1917 water-cooled heavy machinegun. You cannot see anything much in the middle of a dark and stormy night, so contact was largely at arm's length. That grand old Browning machinegun, in caliber 30-06, was the mainstay of the defense, and even without any observation to speak of it was used to pour into the flanks of the attacking Japanese waves. An interesting supply problem showed up in the lack of water for the water jackets. If you do not keep a water-cooled machinegun water cooled it will freeze up and crack. Water simply could not be provided forward to the machinegun positions in sufficient quantity. The Marines solved this problem in the time-honored fashion renowned in song and story.

Garands would have been better for the defenders than the 03s, but here is where the historically venerated 1911 came into its own. In the dark and in the rain the sword and the bayonet were no match for the Colt 45.

(Our old buddy Mason Williams has been holding forth recently to the effect that the 1911 will not hold up under prolonged use, but Mason was not there at Lunga Point.)

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All this talk we hear about the need for self-esteem in our children seems beside the point. These badly behaved kids seem to have plenty of self-esteem, when what they need is self-control.

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When you analyze it, it becomes evident that the combat marksman, whether his antagonists are human or bestial, possesses a psychological antidote to fear. When he must shoot to save his life, he is so completely preoccupied with the need to place his shot well that there is simply no room between his ears for fear. He feels no fear as he shoots because his concentration precludes it. This is true, of course, only of the marksman who understands marksmanship. This man knows, because he has proved it to himself, that correct behavior on his part produces the results he needs to save his life.

The inferior marksman, however, has no such protection. He does not understand what he must do and therefore he does not do it. In the famous case in which one of the Tsavo man eaters was trapped inside a boxcar with three armed coolies from which he was separated by an iron grill work, the men expended about twenty rounds apiece at arm's length or less without achieving even one hit on the beast.

It may be asserted that they were "terrified," and this is doubtless true, but they were terrified because they did not know how to shoot.

The skilled marksman has no room for fear when he is shooting, thus his mind constitutes his shield.

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Esteemed *family member* Chuck Lyford is now heavily involved with Craig Breedlove's efforts to exceed Mach 1 on the ground. Chuck has always been a dedicated, hard-core, card-carrying adventurer, and this new operation appears to be fully as perilous as anything he has heretofore undertaken. Getting up to 600 or 700 miles an hour on the deck is not so much a matter of power as of aerodynamics. The vehicle, named "The Spirit of America," is just too close to the ground, and all sorts of exotic design techniques are necessary to keep it from getting adrift at hitherto unexplored speeds. There is also the very considerable problem of keeping it point-on, since you cannot very well spin it like a rifle bullet.

All honor to these vehicular pioneers, but I much prefer flesh and blood adversaries to unpredictable aerodynamic hazards.

## High Point!

My good friend is a lifelong hunter. Now well into middle age, he has led a complicated life, with a full share of trials and tribulations, but his joy in the hunt has brought significant compensations.

He has mainly pursued quadrupeds, but some years ago he took up the serious study of the shotgun, and has now devoted much time, effort and money to the arts of wing shooting. He has sought mastery, and he has attained it.

On opening day of the current dove season I had occasion to telephone him on matters ballistic, and he pleased me intensely with his account of the dawn just passed. He was out in the fields well before sunup and the birds were plentiful. Just as the red sun cleared the horizon he downed his sixth dove with his sixth shot! A speeding dove is very hard to hit. I speak from a deal of experience in Central America, where I have been treated to much dove shooting by various hosts and clients. In my opinion, "six-for-six" is a triumph! Luck is not involved here, but rather the reward of talent perfected by extensive and assiduous practice.

Oakeshot has wisely written that happiness may never be pursued as an end in itself, because happiness is the by-product of achievement.

My friend was a happy man that day – and thanks to his own efforts rather than good fortune. I am deeply grateful for having been able to share in his experience by proxy. That phone call made my whole day.

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We learn from Keith Dyer, one of the editors of South Africa's *Magnum* magazine that the shot-cock system, as used with the *crunchenticker*, is by no means new – having been used in Europe almost since the appearance of that sort of weapon back before World War II.

(In case you missed it, the shot-cock system employs the round in the chamber primarily to cock the piece for the second shot. The shooter flings his first shot in the general direction of his adversary and then concentrates on a proper sight picture and squeeze for his second shot, which follows almost immediately.)

It is funny to consider how bitterly I have been excoriated by certain police trainers for even mentioning the shot-cock system. I have never taught it, as I consider it to be a sloppy technique, but I know it exists and I have seen it work. I do not like flour tortillas either, but there they are.

---

Our old buddy Gene Harshbarger from Guatemala reports a recent episode with the 25 ACP pistol cartridge. It seems that Gene's cousin was set upon by a trio of car thieves who shot him once almost dead center with that dinky little pistol. The bullet entered at a very flat angle, however, proceeded laterally just inside the pectoral muscle, and exited after about 5 inches of traverse, continuing on into the target's left arm.

The cousin hit the deck and started shooting back, whereupon the assailants split. When he stood up the bullet slid out of his left sleeve and bounced on the pavement. It penetrated the jacket, but not the skin of his left arm.

As we used to teach in the spook business, carry a 25 if it makes you feel good, but do not ever load it. If you load it you may shoot it. If you shoot it you may hit somebody, and if you hit somebody – and he finds out about it – he may be very angry with you.

---

*Family member* Norm Vroman recently went down to a cop gathering in Mesa attended by about 400 lawmen. Norm's 1911 was one of only two in evidence on the range, and was the object of considerable wonder, as many of these young people did not know what it was. Norm entered the shooting, and, not surprisingly, won his class. Then they knew.

Dick Davis, proprietor of Second Chance, tells of a case when one of his customers, wearing Second Chance Level 2 vest, accidentally drove into the middle of an impending gang war. The customer was hit 11 times with 9mm pistols. Four hits were on the front of the vest, one on the back, six were outside the vest area, the most serious one being a leg wound. I wonder if you will be astonished to hear that an ambulance chaser contacted by the victim called up Dick to ask about "compensation." Apparently the attorney concerned felt that even though Dick's vest saved this boy's life at least five times, Dick was expected to pay off simply because the guy got into a fight. Again, we are living in *the Age of Litigation!*

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Well, we took a heavy hit on 5 November, but though we lost a battle we did not lose the war, nor will we if we keep up the fight. "These are the times that try men's souls," but such times have occurred before and will occur again. Enjoy the turkey feast, and Nil desperandum!

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 15

December, 1996

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## Winter

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Now the chilly season is upon us. We ran up to Montana to evaluate this and found it was indeed so. For three of our days up there in the Belt Mountains the daily high temperature did not rise to zero, Fahrenheit. According to our hosts, however, this is not cold weather for Montana – that sets in at 30 below and colder.

We can claim with some professional justification that we went hunting in order to test certain cartridges and their loadings. Five hits does not form much of a statistical base, but both the 350s and the 30–06 worked out just fine (to nobody's surprise). As expected, the "360 Special" was somewhat excessive for mule deer, but the Federal 30–06 "High Energy" load, using the Trophy Bonded Bear Claw 180 bullet, proved out more than just adequate for elk, going clear through on a raking shot Way Out Past Fort Mudge for a one–shot stop.

For the statistically inclined, one lot of Military Match 168–grain 30–06 clocked 2691f/s from a 24–inch barrel. Out of the same barrel the 180 Federal High Energy averaged 2909. Out of the 20–inch barrel of Lindy's pseudoscout the FHE 180 clocked 2850. It is not clear to me that a hopped–up 30–06 is going to prove more efficient in the field than the garden variety ammunition we have been using for several generations, but I am told that this improvement will show up well in the sales figures – and that's were it counts.

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Note that the Billary gang back in the White House is now attempting to ban re–importation of US military firearms from Europe. And with their customary twisted reasoning these folks seem to feel that only high tech assault weapons are dangerous, implying that World War II material is obsolete. Perhaps they know, but will not admit, that the M1 Garand and the 1911 pistol still lead all the rest in combat efficiency. It may be adduced that if each household in this country was equipped with one of each we would have no need to worry about either the crime rate or "the jack–booted terrorists."

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Now is the time to start making your hunting plans for 1997. A year without hunting is like a dinner without wine.

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Have you seen the ads for that gold–plated Winchester 95 being introduced to honor Theodore Roosevelt – at \$3,750 a throw? This would certainly make into a grand prize for our next *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* next October, except that it is in the wrong caliber. TR's lion medicine was issued in caliber 405 Winchester, while this successor comes in 30–06. There is certainly nothing wrong with the 30–06, but it is nonetheless the wrong cartridge for this particular collector's item. (Just for that, we will not buy one.)

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Did you all see "*The Ghost and the Darkness*," a sort of wacky cinematic treatment of the famed man–eaters of Tsavo? It bore only the most casual relation to the truth, but the photography was marvelous. Among other things, the movie caused a good many aficionados to go back and re–read the true story again.

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"The brave and generous have the best lives. They are seldom sorry."

Havamal, "*The Sayings of the Vikings*" via Finn Aagaard

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A great deal of excitement and fury has been arising out of public notice of the recent federal bill depriving those convicted of spouse abuse of their civil rights. When this matter comes to court the law may be characterized as an ex post facto bill of attainder, forbidden in this country. Essentially one cannot punish a man for an act which did not prescribe that punishment when the act was committed. Of course, this brings up the essential problem of our time in the United States, and that is what is to be done when the government sees fit to break its own laws. That may be the principle question before the house in the 21st century.

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Barry Miller, our man in Africa, is now serving on the executive committee of the Natal Hunters' Association. In his opinion too much of the attention of the Association is devoted to competitive prize-giving. He is of the opinion that this is in conflict with ethical hunting, not dissimilar to the problem faced by practical shooting, wherein objectives are lost sight of in the race for prizes. In response to his request, I faxed him the following statement:

"Dear Barry,

We are entirely in accord on the subject of hunting-trophy prizes. In my opinion, hunting is not a competitive occupation. Rather it is an essentially "inner-directed" activity in which success is achieved by and for the individual hunter, without regard for the opinions of his peers.

Among other things, trophy size is almost never a function of hunting skill. Normally the hunter just happens upon a record head. (I have several record heads, all encountered by chance.)

The trophy is a souvenir of a memorable experience, and its importance is unrelated to competitive judgement.

This is an unpopular viewpoint, but it should be enunciated."

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We hear from our British periodical *The Week* that "Americans have ceased taking their Presidency seriously." Could well be!

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As you know, there is no numerical speed limit in Montana at this time, motorists being required to drive their cars at a rate which is "reasonable and prudent." We discover there is a movement in the state house up there to re-instate the numerical speed limit. As a reason the highway patrol spokesman maintained that without a speed limit Montana drivers do not now sufficiently respect the highway patrol. Shucks!

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In a very peculiar recent incident one of the faithful reported that the marine guard on duty at the memorial honoring the Marines who died in the car bombing in Beirut had no magazines in their rifles. A possible cause for that disaster was the fact that the sentry on duty in Lebanon did not have a magazine in his M16.

It has been said that once the government does not trust you, you may be disinclined to trust that government. Expanding that, it may be said that when the government does not trust its own soldiers, it has no need of soldiers.

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In a recent adventure appearing in one of the science fiction magazines, the author postulates time travel and suggests that his protagonist, when wafted back into the late Stone Age, was able to bring along his own personal fancied-up Colt Commander in 45, and that his subsequent adventures gave rise to the legend of Mjöllnir, the Hammer of Thor. That's an entertaining thought, as it re-states the question that many of us have

considered in our reading of time travel fantasy in general.

Knowing what you do about smallarms, what piece that you now own would you choose to accompany you back into days gone by? This may be worth a small bull session.

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In the development of the scout rifle concept I am embarrassed to admit that I have never given proper consideration to shooting in conditions of reduced light. Since the scout rifle is by essence a general-purpose weapon, it should be suitable for as many different sets of conditions as possible. I have used the scoutscope on several occasions in conditions of dim light, but I have never submitted the matter to careful testing. The Europeans are partial to huge telescopic sights suitable for shooting in the dusk. Since one is never justified in shooting at anything he cannot see, it is not entirely clear to me if these "moon scopes" actually do increase the hitability of the rifle. It is thus interesting to note that the receiver of the production scout prototype from Steyr Mannlicher is slotted for conventional scope mounting to the rear. If the new owner of this projected instrument wants to fit it up for night shooting, he can do so without recourse to a gunsmith.

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In an age of gadgetry, it is common for the inexperienced to put their faith in gadgets. The problem with that is that the gadgets don't always work, and we now have all too many cases in which the uneducated shooter assumed that once his weapon was placed "on safe" it absolutely would not fire, and the result was death or serious injury.

Manual safety devices must never be trusted absolutely. Firearm safety rides between the ears, not between the hands.

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In a recent case reported to us the 40 caliber Hydra Shock bullet came apart at impact, leaving the jacket on the near side of the target, while the core penetrated the body to the opposite hip. Bullet integrity is not ordinarily an important factor in pistol cartridge loadings, but this does suggest that, in this one case at least, the Hydra Shock bullet was too fragile for dependable performance.

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We are now informed that the new South African constitution bans the death penalty. This is explicitly contrary to the wishes of the great majority of South African citizens – of all colors and races.

But we could make the same observation about England, where all polls indicate that the people want the death penalty re-instated, but their parliament puts itself above such lower-class agitation.

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It appears in New Orleans recently the citizens became upset because of the proliferation of murder in the French Quarter. Groups gathered in the street to protest. Just how an activist group protests against murder is unclear. These people evidently feel that the New Orleans police department is both undermanned and underpaid, but murder is not a problem to be solved by throwing money at it.

In the big cities we put up with violence because we wish to. There are two options, neither of which we are prepared to take. One is a police state, and the other is a totally armed citizenry. If we do not like either of those two choices we can take to the streets and wave our arms. This may relieve our feelings, but it will not help the situation.

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Daughter Lindy expects us to sign some pilot issues of her new book on this coming weekend. I find it hard to believe that the publication will be ready at that time, but I am looking forward to it nonetheless. Lindy is taking orders at

Wisdom Publishing, Inc., 1840 E. Warner Road, Box 238, Tempe, AZ 85284.

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It has been suggested that in my rifle teaching I place too much emphasis on the snap shot, and not enough on recoil.

As to the snap, I am certainly ready to admit that it is rare in the field. A hunter might spend his entire experience in the field and never have occasion to use it, but then a man could drive all his life without a seat belt and never have occasion to use it. In my opinion a qualified rifleman should be able to bring off the snap reliably, whether or not he ever needs it. I have had need for it twice, and it was vastly comforting.

As to recoil, I do tend to dismiss it. It is there and it can be measured, but its effect on the shooter is about 85 percent mental. Once that is explained, the shooter simply does not let it bother him. This is within certain limits, of course. There are pieces which actually do kick more than is practical for serious use, but such pieces are very rare, and when I see people putting muzzle-brakes on light and medium rifles, I conclude that the shooter involved is the principle cause of his own problem. Over re-acting to booze is called "gun decking" in the Navy. Maybe that term applies elsewhere.

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Roy Coneen was our host on our recent elk hunt in Montana. After observing the Lion Scout and John Gannaway's Fireplug, he decided he must have one of his own. He is going to start with a short-action Winchester 70 and take it from there. This is a delightful project, and we wish him well. (His finished piece will still have that idiot swinging door safety of the Model 70, but we cannot have everything.)

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Bear in mind that "*Meditations on Hunting*," by José Ortega y Gasset, is the Old Testament of the hunter. You must look for it in old bookstores, unless you want to go the presentation route, in which case you should apply to Wilderness Adventures in Montana who will supply you with a gift copy at \$60 a throw

PO Box 627, Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730, 1-800-925-3339.

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I have not as yet been particularly impressed with the idea of a field range-finder for the rifleman. When the target is in sight I always have more important things to do than to take range readings on him. However, I have discovered another use for the gadget, and this is to determine the exact range at which the shot was taken – after the target is down. We could not step off the distances on the two longish shots we took in Montana, and a modest instrument carried in the hunting car would have been nice to have.

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In perusing my youthful journals in connection with daughter Lindy's new book, I discover that our Yukon hunt in 1940 cost us the daunting sum of thirty dollars a day.

Today the same service runs about one thousand. That is the normal procession of socialist economics.

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We have been informed that the Glock sales people maintain that the Parabellum cartridge is effective to a range of 20 to 30 feet, underwater. I am not about to put this to a test, but at Catalina Island as a boy I shot into water with all sorts of cartridges, and I very strongly doubt this Glock statement.

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We noted that 7 December was remembered, if at all, as a day of mourning. I have never thought of it as such, though it is indeed proper to honor all of our war dead on Victory Day. I prefer to think of Pearl Harbor Day as *The Day of Awakening* – the birth of the era in which all Americans worked together. Admiral Nagumo put it right – "We have awakened a sleeping giant!"

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"Without a homemaker, there is no home.  
Without a home, there is no marriage.  
Without a marriage, there are no morals.  
Without morals, there can be no civilization."



The Guru

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 4, No. 16

December, 1996

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## Year End

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Well, 1996 was a pretty interesting year. It is unsatisfactory to match the ups against the downs, but we must always make every effort to accentuate the positive and ignore the negative as best we may. The election is water under the bridge now, and it is up to us to keep fighting. The greatest harm that the Billary people can do the republic is in the appointment of "constitutional activists" to the federal bench. The best we can do as individual citizens is to make sure that our senators know where we stand on this when it comes to the confirmation of appointments. We have not worked hard enough on this in the past. We must mend our ways in the future.

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In reflecting upon a recent all-cop pistol session we conducted over in California, it is apparent once again that cops, as a group, are pretty hard to train. Those who are stuck with the *crunchenticker* – and these are many – will persist with the slow-crunch technique in spite of all advice to the contrary. This system is almost universal in the law enforcement establishment. If it is done accurately it is too slow. If it is done rapidly it is inaccurate. It is possible that I am paying too much attention to unrealistically high levels of performance, which are really not necessary in gun fighting. Still, I like to see people do as well as they can. It is bothersome to see them make no effort to do so.

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"He who goes unarmed in paradise had better be sure that that is where he is."

James Thurber, via Mike Baker

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There has never been much question about it, and it is indisputable after decades of observation that the single-action self-loading pistol – the Colt 1911 and its clones – is the easiest, heavy-duty sidearm with which to hit. The *crunchenticker* is the most difficult, and the Glock is somewhere in the middle. Shooting a Glock is simply shooting a single-action self-loader with no safety and a very poor trigger. If real excellence is not the objective, this is a satisfactory system to employ.

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In case I forget to mention it in the next issue of this paper, I remind all hands that 15 January marks the birthday of Dan Dennehy, and should be observed as such. In view of the fact that Dan has now gone on the wagon, this date may not be as significant as formerly.

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The results of the recent bloodless revolution in South Africa are gradually becoming felt. The dominant ANC party has terminated commercial relationships with Taiwan (free enterprise), and opened diplomatic contact with Peking (communist tyranny). This need not surprise us, in view of the fact that the majority of influential people in the ANC are unabashed communists.

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Objection to that sneaky piece that was slipped through at the last congressional session, depriving anyone convicted of "spouse abuse" from forever owning a firearm, is rising to a crescendo. Certainly no one defends wife beating under any circumstances, but permanent recision of civil rights is not the answer. I have always held that the proper punishment for the wife beater is the public whipping post, but certainly not permanent deprivation of basic civil rights.

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Recent developments in Washington establish that Janet Reno is the one who knows where the bones are buried. In view of what became of Vince Foster and Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, Ms. Reno will be well advised to watch her back carefully at all times henceforth.

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We learn with sadness from J–P Denis, distinguished outgoing president of IPSC, that the revised rifle rules for international competition have driven the last nail into the coffin of practical shooting. This was not unexpected, of course, since the whole idea of practicality has been absent from the operations of the Confederation for at least ten years now. As an example, a weight ceiling of five kilograms can only be seriously suggested by a man who has never packed a rifle in the field. The rest of the program is similarly oriented. Practical shooting was a good idea. It is too bad we never seriously tried it out.

This does not mean that local clubs throughout the world may not organize serious competition according to their own individual ideas.

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I find it fascinating that the re–establishment of the cougar as a legitimate and prominent example of American wildlife is now greeted with all sorts of hand wringing by the very bunny–huggers who sought for so many years to pamper our preeminent pussy cat. I think a proliferation of cougars in American wilderness areas is a fine thing. The fact that they can be, under certain circumstances, hazardous to the health of joggers, is one of those things that ought to be taught in schools, but is not.

Cougars, along with bears and wolves, are large, strong, dangerous animals. If wimps find this distressing, they had best stay home in front of the tube where they belong.

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And now it appears that we also have too many deer and too many elk. Isn't that great! Proper game management is one of the things that the entire human race has learned to handle better in recent years than previously.

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Our good old friend Ian McFarlane, who has taken us hunting various times in Africa, reports that his new concessions up in northern Botswana are opening up vistas for hunters of truly big game. As you know, the African elephant must be kept under some sort of control, as he is a very destructive beast otherwise. It is now legal and zoologically respectable to hunt elephants in Botswana, and Ian's people took 15 over this last hunting season. Some had pretty good ivory – like 80lbs on a side. Personally I have no desire to bust an elephant, but for those sportsmen who have, I know just the man to call.

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The people at Bruno have now introduced a new bolt–action very similar to the renowned ZKK series, but somewhat smoothed up and streamlined in the area of the cocking piece. This item should be available for examination at SHOT next month.

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We got our full share of Christmas letters from friends and well–wishers throughout both the United States and the world, and we thank you all very much for the information. Some people had items of much interest to report, while others did not measure up so well. Sad to say, a good many of our friends didn't even get to go hunting last year. Evidently, the gloom was on the sage.

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"America is at that awkward stage. It is too late to work within the system, but too early to shoot the bastards."

Claire Wolfe

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The conclusions seem inescapable that in certain circles a tendency has arisen to fear people who fear

government. Government, as the Father of Our Country put it so well, is a dangerous servant and a fearful master. People who understand history, especially the history of government, do well to fear it. For a people to express openly their fear of those of us who are afraid of tyranny is alarming. Fear of the state is in no sense subversive. It is, to the contrary, the healthiest political philosophy for a free people.

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As our English friends continue to fuss around with racial, social and legal problems in "the new" Britain, they have now decided to legalize search without warrant. Even our old friend George III did not have the chutzpah to pull that.

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"Use enough gun," said Robert Ruark, and he had a good deal of wisdom on his side. However, what is enough is a pretty subjective judgement. On our recent hunt in Montana I concluded that all three of us may have been somewhat overgunned rather than otherwise. The question, of course, is whether being overgunned is somehow unsportsmanlike or unsound. Recently our good friend Finn Aagaard blew away a chubby, little Texas deer with his trusty 30-06, and certainly no harm was done (except, of course, to the deer). Our great good friend General Denis Earp of South Africa is a one-gun man, and his is a 458. From the standpoint of the purist I suppose it is possible to say that killing deer with a 30-06 is an extravagance, but it is certainly as humane a practice as one may encounter in the essentially inhumane practice of hunting. I confess a certain affection for "neat little guns," which colleague Ross Seyfried is inclined to call "dinky little guns." As long as clean, reliable execution is achieved, the whole discussion remains essentially academic.

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The general level of pistolcraft in the law enforcement establishment is certainly not helped by the proliferation of high-capacity magazines. While we were over there in California we had a fairly typical example of a law-and-order gunfight. It seems this fellow had murdered his wife and thereupon declared war upon society. When it was over, six police cars had been involved, and 48 rounds had been expended. The felon was hit twice. So much for "fire power."

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Our friend the Count Randaccio-Lodi informs us that this business of "politically correct" communication has begun to affect the Italian language too. The Italian word for such talk is *sinistrese*, indicating its origin on the political left.

"Certain words are replaced by others giving a bad thing a nice sounding appearance (like gay for sodomite or progressive for communist). Trouble is that this game never ends since sooner or later the meaning catches up with the sound and a new word must be issued."

I know this curious affliction still afflicts the English-speaking world, despite its obvious foolishness, but I had not thought it had gone abroad just yet. We do not hear of it in German or French, but I suppose the time will come.

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Recently at the airport I sat between two middle-aged and evidently well-to-do ladies waiting for our flight to be called. We exchanged notes on the quality of airline service and its continuing decline. I mentioned that service on South African Airlines continues to maintain a very high standard, and these ladies expressed surprise at the idea of touring South Africa. One mentioned to me that she had understood that Johannesburg was now the "most dangerous" big city in the world. I responded to the effect that such things are very hard to quantify, but certainly the prevalence of violent crime has increased in South Africa since the revolution. I pointed out that regardless of statistics, a nice thing about South Africa is that one is legally entitled to fight back, unlike Britain. The question hit me, "With what?" "Well, with your pistol," was my answer. "But you cannot take a pistol abroad!" they exclaimed. I had to point out that it was odd that I had never noticed that, and that taking one's personal firearms into and out of South Africa has never been a problem – at least, up til now.

Touring South Africa remains, as they put it, "the world's best kept secret."

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In the previous issue I mentioned that Lindy's new book, "*The Soul and the Spirit*," might with luck be ready for distribution by Christmas. It was. It is now out and selling, and you will be able to see it at the SHOT Show.

The bad news is that my own piece, "*The Art of the Rifle*," has hit a couple of production snags and will not be ready for SHOT. We will keep pushing, however, and let you know how things develop.

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In a previous issue we reported on the failure of bullet integrity in the case of the 40-caliber Hydra-Shock cartridge. We did not report, however, on its stopping effect because we did not have that information. We checked further and discovered that the subject, while seriously wounded, was not taken out of the fight. He could have returned fire had he been so inclined.

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Clearly propaganda is more potent than truth. Take this matter of Guernica, for example. Pablo Picasso, one of the more significant propagandists of the left, made a very successful point in claiming that the town of Guernica had been flattened from the air by the German Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War – this being an atrocity since the town had no strategic value. This point was accepted by the world press, and is now considered a fact, even for inclusion in encyclopedias.

For those who have access to the official records it is clear that the Condor Legion had been grounded for two weeks prior to the occupation of the city by the Nationalist forces. Moreover, the German light bombers did not have the technical capacity for "carpet bombing," as later practiced by the Allies in Europe. Most conclusive, however, was the fact that there were no bomb craters in the streets. The buildings were pretty well demolished, but this was done from inside them. It is obviously impossible to flatten a town from the air without hitting any of the streets, but now, to the amazement of the well-informed, the German government is proposing to pay an indemnity to Spain for an atrocity never committed. Such goings on!

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In continuing observation of what might be called the "hoax effect," Texaco has caved in to Jesse Jackson, even after both parties have discovered that the tapes responsible for the racial uproar were fake. Jesse Jackson, himself, has claimed he does not want to be bothered by the facts.

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A *family member* recently returned from Bolivia points out that they do not seem to have a gun problem in that country. They have what may be the ideal gun control laws – there are none. Additionally, cocaine in various forms is available on the open market, and they do not have any trouble with drug lords.

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Prince William, the Queen's grandson, recently went forth and slew his first deer up in Scotland, complete with all the ceremonies of the hunt – this being a tradition of the British royal family, as well as other royal families elsewhere. As you might suppose, the uproar from the bambiists was deafening. (As if Her Majesty did not have enough troubles without that.)

As it happens, Elizabeth herself enjoyed this same right of passage in her own youth, and was completely carried away by the whole event, but that was long ago.

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Did you hear about the woman who recently was rather badly bitten by a bear and is now undergoing extensive rehabilitation psychotherapy? It never occurred to us that being chewed upon by a wild beast called for the attentions of a shrink. I mean, what's to talk about?

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In a previous issue I cast doubts on the rumor that the Parabellum pistol cartridge (Glock) could be effective at a distance of 20 to 30 feet underwater. *Family member* David Morningstar researched this matter and discovered (in "*Hatcher's Notebook*") that the army ran some tests back in the twenties that established that

48" of water was enough to stop the 30-06 M1 bullet, at 90° impact angle (24" at 45°). People were more honest then.

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To my great delight, I have now been designated an honorary citizen of Kennesaw, Georgia, the constitutional capital of the US; where, as you all know, every householder is required by law to maintain a personal firearm in his home.

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And from Kenya we hear that a lady birdwatcher was recently killed by a buffalo, and her estate is now suing the outfitter on the completely fantastic grounds that her guides had not told her that buffalo were dangerous. I cannot imagine what anybody is doing in Africa who does not know that buffalo are dangerous, but then as our culture proceeds down the drain, we are rapidly approaching that point predicted by General Krulak at which nobody knows anything about anything. The date of the Brute's computer is predicted as late fall of the year 2016.

(Incidentally, this buffalo had not been wounded. Unprovoked attacks by buffalo are rare, but they are not unheard of.)

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We have been reading "*Unlimited Access*," by Gary Aldrich. This work is absolutely required reading for every responsible US citizen. If we accept the word of this veteran FBI agent, as we are inclined to do, the court of Caligula did not match the Clinton White House for iniquity.

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Well, so much for 1996. We all noted that this was a year in which the moon was full on Christmas Eve, and that will not occur again in the lifetime of those now living. Let us record that as an excellent omen for the future, and continue on into good times.

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