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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

## Volume Three, 1995

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 1

13 January 1995

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## January, 1995

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Well 1994 certainly had both its good points and bad, but it is now past and it is up to us to do what we can with 1995.

The political outlook is pretty good, though in our enthusiasm we sometimes overlook the obvious obstacles in a leftover liberal Whitehouse, our inimical press and an overall moral malaise. We have mounted a pretty good horse, and we have a pretty good saddle, but the race has not even begun, much less finished.

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We hope all you good old Orange Gunsiters properly observed Dan Dennehy's birthday. If you take 16 January off, by all means take it off for a good reason.

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We look forward to new and inspiring developments in the firearms parade at the SHOT show coming up shortly. Every once in a while somebody comes up with something good on that occasion. Last year we noted the appearance of the Blaser 93 rifle, which is a true step forward in rifle design, if not the ultimate answer. I heard nothing concrete from Steyr Mannlicher last year, but I have a letter from the company this time inviting me to discover and enjoy the progress that has been made at the factory on the design and production of a true Scout rifle. May it indeed be so! It has been five years since we talked to the design people in Austria, but as the company spokesman told me last year, "These things take time."

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By the time you read this we will have chaired the IPSC Practical Rifle meeting scheduled for 18 January in Las Vegas. The problems involved in the organization of international practical rifle shooting are daunting, mainly because of the voice of the gamesman who does not really care what the rules are as long as he stands a good chance to win. We certainly will give it our best shot.

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"Personally I dread the weighty taxes, grinding inconveniences, and petty indignities of the leviathan state more than I dread violent confrontation with its enforcers."

Paul Kirchner

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We have been simultaneously amused and annoyed at all this media excitement about the "Rhino" pistol bullet. We have had both expanding bullets and armor piercing bullets for pistols for some decades now. On the other hand, it is apparent that the case workers of the media know nothing about either of those things. At least the manufacturer got a lot of publicity, and we wish him well, which is more than we can say for the hysterical newscasts.

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"Speaking for myself, there is only one government on earth I don't feel safe from – and it isn't Russia's."

Joseph Sobran

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In the general disorganization following the change of purpose in Gunsite management, we find that among other nuisances stray cattle loom large. Maybe what we need is an imported pair of lions to keep the pests down.

---

The editorial staff of the Southwest Pistol League magazine has come up with a curious debate about what may be the purpose of the Southwest Pistol League. Well, I do not know what the purpose is now, but I do know what it was when the league was founded, because I founded it.

The purpose of the league, when founded, was to discover, by means of open, unrestricted, diversified competition with the heavy-duty sidearm, just what weapons, what tactics, what principles, and what general equipment would serve best in a fight. I remember that on one occasion the late, great John Plahn exclaimed to me, "Jeff, the rest of us are in this just to have fun, but you are using us as a research tool!" Exactly. That was what I was doing.

It may now be that that purpose was accomplished, though that would be a very dangerous position to take. Certainly, however, the so-called "race guns" that now lead the competition have indicated that a majority of the contestants have simply lost the point. They do not know what the purpose is. That is the reason why the question has come up for debate in the periodical.

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Here at the *Sconce* we have formulated our two New Year's Resolutions as follows:

- For Jeff – finish "*The Art of the Rifle*"
  - For Janelle – uncover a space on her desk large enough in which to sign checks
- 

In our despairing pursuit of precise communication we are continually affronted by the newspaper term "innocent civilians." I am not at all sure what makes a civilian *innocent*, but when war invades populous places there are going to be non-combatants who will suffer from the efforts of uniformed soldiery. Whether they are *innocent* or not is a very complex question. Almost by definition guerilleros are "innocent" in that they are not soldiers paid by any military force. Throughout the beastly wars of the late twentieth century, large numbers of unpaid, ununiformed, non-combatants have been caught up in disaster and slaughtered wholesale. This is, of course, tragic, but it does not imply that the innocents have been murdered by the guilty. Sometimes it has been conspicuously to the contrary. Let us watch that!

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We have up till now received almost no financial support for the Waco Monument to the non-combatants who died there at the hands of the federal ninja. Perhaps this is not a good idea, but we do intend to pursue it.

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A while back we commented upon how popular it is to embellish a point by mentioning that "studies have shown" it to be so. Now we have a really good one. A sociologist group at Harvard has come up with the shocking conclusion that citizens who have received adequate training in smallarms are distinctly more likely to keep their personal weapons at the ready at home. The idea that a ready weapon is automatically a horribly anti-social manifestation seems so obvious to these Harvard types that they published the results of this survey, with a wringing of hands in the *New York Times*.

We of course know that the only proper way to maintain a personally owned weapon in the household is loaded and ready. It would seem obvious even to a Harvard man that an unloaded weapon is totally useless. The interesting thing is that the newspapers who printed this piece and other newspapers who picked it up and reprinted it never seemed to think further about the matter.

I would certainly like to think that those people who received weapons training have profited by it, but we are not up against reasoned argument here. Hoplophobia is after all a true phobia, which means that it is not susceptible to reasoned argument.

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We were interested to hear of the death of Joe Slovo, the evil genius of the INC. It is unseemly to rejoice in anyone's demise, but Joe Slovo was a man we could well do without – from beginning to end. A dedicated Lithuanian Marxist, he rushed off a couple of decades ago to South Africa where he became the guru of the African National Congress. These people would have been better off without him, and by God's grace they are without him now.

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Having nothing to lose, I am going to climb out on a loose limb and make a horrifying statement. To wit: *group size is spinach.*

Well, wash my mouth out with soap! To a large number of smallarms enthusiasts in the world, group size is *everything*. If that is the way they want it, that is all right with me, but I must say that these people are devoting a great deal of attention to an essentially trivial matter. Certainly a very accurate rifle – or pistol – is a satisfying instrument to own and use. Whether it makes any difference in practical application is another matter. Consider for a moment that group size is normally measured by group diameter from the impact centers of the two widest shots in the group. Consider further that even if that is a good measure, group radius is of considerably more interest, since group radius measures the distance between the theoretical point of aim and the worst shot in the group. And let us further consider that in any given group the majority of hits is likely to be located in the center of the group, so we can further cut down the "range probable error" to one-quarter of group diameter. In no case do we know of a man who can shoot well enough to appreciate that. I was told recently by a colleague that he was attempting to do some head-size groups at 500 meters coming up summer. I responded that I had once shot an ornamental 500-meter group with an SSG, using 1962 Lake City Match ammunition, *but that since I had shot it from a bench it did not really count*. I did not wish to hurt his feelings, but I do wish to point out that what the shooter can do from a bench is no measure of how he can shoot.

We are into the chapter in "*The Art of the Rifle*" in which we examine the true nature of marksmanship. This subject becomes more complex the more we study it. It is a humbling exercise.

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"Faced with the pain of freedom, man begs for his shackles."

Gerry Spence, in "*From Freedom to Slavery*"

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This comment from Ken Mitchell in regard to my use of the term "ninja" for our current variety of masked police:

"Your critic is incorrect, and I believe that your use of the term 'ninja' to refer to government agents engaged in violent assault on American citizens is not only appropriate, but historically accurate. The ninja in the Japanese Shogunate era (ca. 1600–1750) were hired assassins, and nothing more. To the extent that they battled oppression or tyranny, they did so at the behest of other tyrant oppressors; imagine an FBI sniper taking out a BATF supervisor, for example."

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Just this week we received yet another report of the dropping of the striker in the Remington action when the safety was eased off. Not that we were in any doubt about this, having experienced these failures ourselves, but we are much annoyed when salesmen and gunsmiths inform the ignorant that this failure simply cannot happen.

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Please note the correction from last year's terminal commentary. Colonel Ulving of the Swedish Army is spelled Sverker rather than Swerker.

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Just now we learn of a buffalo fatality occurring up near Arusha back in September of the year just past. The account is written by the professional hunter involved, and as usual he gives us much detail but not quite enough. For example, he does not mention what cartridges were used. Given the general scene as observed in Africa, I would be willing to bet a certain amount that the rifles used were caliber 375.

The PH, the client, and an apprentice PH, accompanied by two trackers, followed a shootable bull into some fairly thick cover. In an open space they got a shot at some 60 meters. The buff disappeared, and they followed him into thicker cover. Following a wounded buff into thick cover is one of life's great experiences, and in this case it turned out to be the last experience – for the principal. At ranges of perhaps ten paces, two more shots were fired – one to the head, one to the shoulder. When on the next close-range sighting the buff came straight in, the PH fired one more shot and was runover without serious injury by the buffalo, who, now reduced to crawling, made it to the client, got his horns under him and tossed him aside. The client was not mangled, but received a couple of horn wounds to the thighs, one of which to the inside of the right thigh apparently punctured the femoral artery. All hands did what they could to stop the bleeding, but it had gone too far by the time they got the pressure bandages in place and the client was dead on arrival at the hospital.

This is all very grand, as the sportsman died a man's death in his prime in noble adventure. What impresses me most, however, is the iron courage of the buffalo which, though mortally wounded, pressed home his attack and destroyed his tormentor.

Old *Synceros caffer* – the African buffalo – is not very pretty, but he just may be the grandest game animal in the world, regardless of the size of his trophy.

I do not choose to regard this episode as evidence of inadequate firepower, since to begin with I do not know what gun was used, but the blood from that first bullet hole was light and frothy, indicating a lung shot. Regardless of what cartridge you use, you will not stop a buffalo with a lung shot. It is easy to be somewhat shaken on your first sight of the black bull, but above everything else you must shoot with extreme care. The buff may never start a fight, but you may be sure that he stands ready, willing and able to finish it.

(French horns in the distance.)

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Remember when Kennesaw, Georgia, made it mandatory for all households to be armed, and the media viewed this with dismay? Well note further that in Kennesaw, Georgia, where there used to be very little armed violence, there now seems to be none.

What was it that Heinlein said about an armed society?

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"I am not prejudiced, I am postjudiced. Postjudice is the compliment that common sense pays to experience."

Florence King

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It appears to us now that current American society in general believes that any amount of learning is a dangerous thing. To quote Florence King again,

"The egalitarian left says it isn't relevant, and the philistine right it won't help you earn a living. Probably not, but it makes life liveable."

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Looking at the world situation at this time a number of powerful popular commandments seem to take center stage.

- For the politician, the commandment is: "Empower thyself!"
- For the Third World chieftain: "Enrich thyself!"
- For the populace at large: "Amuse thyself!"
- For the good citizen: "Enlighten thyself!"

Now then let us all choose up sides and see who wins the vote.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 2

31 January 1995

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## Ground Hog Day, 1995

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Well, yes, February. A generally dreary month, but lightened up this time by a chance to visit with Ian McFarlane (our man in Okavango) and Danie van Graan (our man in the Lowveld.) It appears that hunting possibilities in Africa have not yet been seriously obstructed by the communist element in the ANC. General Denis Earp, the IPSC Regional Director for South Africa, tells us that the bad guys in the new government are keeping a low profile, waiting to see how much financial help they can get from the non-communist West before they tighten the screws on their own people. The possession of personal firearms in South Africa has always been favorable to travel there. I have been more comfortable personally in South Africa than in any other country, since I much prefer to travel with my own weapons. Nothing has gone wrong yet, but total gun prohibition has been proposed in some circles, and how this will effect hunting in the future remains to be seen.

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Herewith wisdom of one John Markoff, reprinted in the *New York Times*:

"The American people must be willing to give up a degree of personal privacy in exchange for safety and security, the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation said."

Louis Freeh, meet Benjamin Franklin!

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At the SHOT show we held a long discussion with Herr Ulrich Zedrosser, who is Chief of Design for Steyr-Mannlicher, and we conclude that the prospects for the production Scout are still promising – despite nearly five years of delay. The prototype will make weight (3.5kg, minus.) It will, for the time being, mount the Burris scoutscope, since no other manufacturer will make a glass for the project. The sight will be mounted on a forward extension of the receiver so as to clear the magazine well. Adjustments will remain in the glass, rather than the mount. Both 5-round and 10-round magazines will be available, and the piece will be fitted for the Ching Sling. Stock length will be fully adjustable, and a flush bi-pod will be standard. A spare 5-round magazine will be carried in the butt. A radical bolt-lock system will be featured for greater safety and ease of travel. All of this is good news, and Herr Zedrosser hopes to have a prototype available for shooting when we visit the factory in June.

It has been a long time, but we still hope for the best.

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Note that the date for the next *Keneyathlon* at Whittington is 4–6 June.

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On the matter of Scouts, we are mildly annoyed to discover that the term has been picked up and run off with by all sorts of people who have never seen a true Scout and do not know what it is. Most of these people do not realize that a Scout must make weight, and it must use a general-purpose cartridge readily available worldwide and suitable for any target up to buffalo. This points towards 308, but options include 30–06, 303 British, and the 7–08 for jurisdictions where 30 calibers are prohibited. It does not include the 223.

Anybody is at liberty to call anything whatever he wants, but the Scout attributes were fully discussed at the

Scout conference held nearly ten years ago at Gunsite, and customized versions have distinguished themselves all over the world. I have tried to write the matter up on several occasions, but I am amazed at the number of people who adopt a term without reading into it.

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I just got a fascinating report on the effect of a 30-30 on a police vest. The round did not penetrate, but it took the recipient temporarily out of the fight. We have wondered about that.

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The "double-action" self-loading pistol has certainly grabbed the attention of the law enforcement establishment, presumably because it is "safe." Actually, incidents with the US police over the past few years have demonstrated that the trigger-cocking auto is noticeably less safe than the single-action version, as well as less safe than the revolver. Of course, safety is a curious concept when applied to lethal weapons. To the extent that a firearm is safe, it is useless, but in *the Age of Litigation* everyone seems more concerned about lawsuits than about getting the job done, and since people properly qualified in firearms are rarely found in lawsuits various problems appear.

For example, in Lexington, Kentucky, recently the county coroner ruled that when a police officer making an arrest used the hammer-dropper to make the weapon safe, and shot the suspect through the head, the fatality was "unintentional." It is probably true to say that the cop did not intend to kill the suspect, but what he was doing pointing his pistol at the head while he dropped the hammer is another matter. *That hammer-dropper does not always work.* We thought everybody knew that. Certainly the Walther people, who invented it back in 1935, formally cautioned their users about it *in writing*.

Funny we did not have all this trouble with accidental discharge, either with revolvers or with single-action auto-pistols, in my youth. Apparently nitwittedness is one of the flowers of *the Age of the Common Man*.

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As always we delighted in the Perazzi display. Perazzi shotguns are things of beauty, and one can spend hours in simple admiration. The top grade has a sticker price of about \$85,000, and it is pleasant to realize that there are people who will manufacture such things, and also people who will purchase them. "It's a great world after all!" I certainly have no intention of ever acquiring a Perazzi, anymore than acquiring a McClaran, or a Stradivarius, but it is nice to know such things exist.

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Money is coming in very slowly for the fund for the Waco Memorial. We have a *family member* resident in Waco who can handle the project at such time as we have collected about \$5,000; meanwhile, you may send your contributions directly to me and we will keep them in the appropriate box.

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Contrary to long standing rumor, Leupold is not going to produce a scoutscope. I checked this out with the head man at the Leupold booth and I do not think that he was lying to me.

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Our man in Saudi Arabia, whose name will remain private because of the possibility of his future employment there, tells us that the ragheads have really taken to the concept of spray-and-pray. Their idea of training is to acquire an enormous amount of the least powerful ammunition available and bum it up, preferably on full-auto. When one sheik, after going through several magazines with an MP5, noted that there were no holes in his target, he observed he needed more practice.

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Items of interest noted at the SHOT show include:

A nifty Marlin 45-70 carbine, totally stainless, in takedown. The perfect instrument for bear and lion guides. If you are interested check with,

Jim West, 907-344-4500, fax: 907-344-4005 in Anchorage, Alaska.



A brand new solid copper shotgun slug from Remington, promising superior accuracy and quick expansion.

A Voere 6mm rifle taking the caseless cartridge. They are working up to 6.5, and when they get to 7, I will be interested.

303 British ammunition available from Hansen in quantity. (This for those who have been acquiring the fine war-surplus Enfield No. 4.)

The excellent 45 caliber 230-grain JTC bullet available from Nosler.

An African police shotgun with two magazine tubes, offering instantaneous selection of projectile type.

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Note that Finland's five million people own four million personal firearms. Just wait till Congressman Schumer finds out about that!

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I had a pleasant session at SHOT with the Blaser rifle, Model of 93. It is not new this year, and I acquired one last year for our Babamkulu expedition, but it is a notable instrument with many outstanding advantages. It is not a Scout, and it cannot be made into one, but as a sheep and antelope rifle it is practically perfect.

---

The IPSC Rifle Conference, held the day before the SHOT show began, was interesting, if not conclusive. A divergence in view between those who wish to play war games with 22s, and those who are more interested in serious rifle work, is very evident. When matters on this subject were brought to a vote, it came out consistently at 5 to 4, one way or another. A vote that close is not a mandate, and the rifle committee cannot offer it as such at the general meeting forthcoming this August in Sweden.

1. We did agree upon a weight ceiling of 5 kilos, which is better than meaningless, but only a little.
2. A range limit of 500 meters for international competition.
3. No minimum caliber.
4. Major and minor power factor.
5. Two divisions: manual and self-loading.
6. No limit on action type.
7. No limit on electronic sights.
8. All equipment to be fitted to the weapon throughout the match and not changed.
9. Scoring methods may be used at the discretion of the course

director to include Comstock, One Shot Virginia, and Kahn-Hamilton (as used in the *Keneyathlon*.)

Nick Alexakos, Regional Director for Canada, was designated as the sub-committee on target design.

Our hope lies in course design, and we are very fortunate in having General Denis Earp, Regional Director for South Africa, in charge of approving all courses to be used in international competition. If courses of fire are realistic and well-designed, nearly all of our difficulties will be solved.

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Through Randy Umbs, our man in Wisconsin, we have finally acquired a practical explanation for golf. It turns out that dog droppings freeze iron-hard in the Wisconsin winters, and one can make excellent practice with his 4-iron lobbing these remnants onto adjoining property. Chipping one down the neighbor's chimney is the equivalent of a hole-in-one.

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Back in *the Dark Ages* when I was first interested in riflery, I was fascinated with hopping up the 30-06 cartridge. I, along with many others in the shooting world, was sold the notion that "more is better." Early versions were the 30 Newton, the 300 Holland and Holland, and the 30 Halger. It did not occur to us

innocents to ask why one would want more than what the 30-06 offers to the riflemen.

Well, it shoots flatter. (A bit, and that bit is so small that it makes no difference, since on the back curve of the trajectory differences in drop do not matter as long as they are known in advance.)

Well, it hits harder. (Yes, a bit, and to what purpose? If you sock any sort of beast short of buffalo in the proper place with a 30-06, you have him.) A friend, who was demonstrating the Blaser rifle at SHOT, told me that his most popular caliber is the 300 Weatherby Magnum. It turns out that he sells his rifles primarily to rich Texas cowboys who figure that they cannot do it with a 30-06, so they better have a 300 Magnum. Personally I am unconvinced.

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Those who insist that the citizen has no chance against the army must be pondering the situation in Chechnya. Of course the Russians will win, if they have not done so already, but the Chechens are still there in the hills and their efforts so far have almost upset the Russian government. When it comes to pass that citizens must take up arms against their own government, the results are uniformly dreadful, but the outcome is not necessarily foregone.

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"When law and morality contradict each other the citizen has the cruel alternative of either losing his sense of morality or losing his respect for the law."

Frederick Bastiat

The "new criminalization" is perhaps the most disgusting feature of the leviathan state. It results from the criminal enforcement of regulations against citizens who are doing nothing wrong other than violating a regulation of which they had no knowledge. This lets the regulators run wild and gives the citizen no recourse to his representatives because they, the representatives, have nothing direct to do with the regulation.

It is time to come down hard on these regulators. I have been waiting for the news that the new boys in Washington are planning to do something about the BATF – so far with no results. I continue to wait. You continue to wait. Let us not wait indefinitely.

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A couple of the faithful have pointed out that we have not had really enough of Roosevelt at the Roosevelt Memorial, and I agree. Let all the faithful make an issue of bringing up quotes from TR for recitation at the next reunion. They do not have to be in verse, as TR did not write much verse, but his prose is outstanding and well suited to declamation. Everybody bring a short punch line to the next meeting in October.

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The recent annual report on accident facts published by the National Safety Council in the Fall of 1994 reveals some very interesting data. The rate of accidental deaths for motor vehicles came to around 42,000, as opposed to 1,600 attributable to firearms. Thus, you are approximately 26 times more likely to die in a motor vehicle accident than you are from a firearms accident. You are twice as likely to die from "medical misadventure" than from a firearms accident. The firearms fatalities in 1903 came on at 3.1 per hundred thousand. The rate is now 0.6 per hundred thousand.

Interesting, what!

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I have been doing my best as a member of the Education and Training Committee of the National Rifle Association to standardize firearm safety rules worldwide. I have not met with any conspicuous success. Every time I point out that the four general rules of gun safety have been promulgated, observed and proven over the past three decades, I get static from employees who wish to complicate matters in order to justify their salaries. However, the four suffice. They do not need editing, amplification, or complication. Simplicity is what we need. Whether we get it or not remains to be seen.

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In the publication of the Southwest Pistol League, which I founded so long ago, there was a recent exchange between editors regarding the purpose of the organization. I found this interesting and submitted the following letter to the editor in consideration thereof:

"I was much interested to read the editorial 'Competition Notes' on the third page of No. 11 and 12 of the Journal."

"At issue is the purpose of the Southwest Pistol League – an interesting question."

"I once worked for a superb general at Quantico who posted up over the exit doorway of every office in the school complex the question, 'What are you trying to do?' written in gold letters upon a scarlet background. That is truly a shocking question for the majority of the human race, which really has only a vague notion of what it is trying to do."

"I cannot say what the purpose of the Southwest Pistol League is at this time, though I certainly know what it was when I founded it. That purpose was to discover, by means of open, unrestricted, diversified, realistic competition, the best weapons, equipment and technique to fulfill the lifesaving mission of the combat pistol. (Some may remember that the original title of the organization was the Southwest Combat Pistol League, the word Combat extracted by the California Secretary of State when we became incorporated.) My thoughts, along with those of the other founders, was that only competition can develop excellence, but this is true only as long as the mode of competition reflects the purpose of the exercise. Once the goal of competition becomes simply winning, all sorts of irrelevant challenges may be substituted for relevance – as with, for example, checkers, frisbee or croquet."

"What we wanted to find out was how best to use a pistol in combat, and what the best pistol was. All of us had been previously trained by the military and/or the police and had always been faced with the problem of bringing a large number of people up to some minimum standard with the least time, trouble and expense. All you had to do in the public sector was shoot 'expert,' but in competition you had to shoot better than your opponent. This kicked the lid off practical pistolcraft and turned the handgun from a rather trivial badge of office into a serious weapon."

"The revolution we created in the pursuit of that original purpose seems to have been achieved. Jack Weaver showed us how to shoot. John Plahn systematized the technique, and I explored the proper means of imparting it."

"However, as soon as competition became an end in itself, forgetting its purpose, the activity became trivialized and further progress came to a halt. This is not necessarily a disaster, since what we had learned is still there for those who wish to learn it, regardless of the bizarre impracticality that has set in. "Practical" pistol shooting certainly can be fun – every bit as much fun as impractical pistol shooting – but fun is not the purpose of the exercise. I remember once that John Plahn addressed me with some force saying, 'Jeff, the rest of us are in this to have a good time, but you are using us as a research tool!' Just so, I learned what I needed to learn, as did many others, by the same process, and now we know how to use the combat pistol. The purpose has been accomplished."

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The following penetrating paragraph is from *family member* Ed Detrixhe of Clyde, Kansas:

"The first thing a conservative notices about leftists is how afraid they are. Any conversation

with them soon, no immediately, leads to something they fear, and they fear almost everything. They fear food, tobacco, the sun, clothing, cars, open discussion, life, death, etc. Because of many of these deep fears it is not surprising that they are passionately interested in making life `safe.' Life must be renewed. If something incidental, such as this freedom or that freedom, must be given up in order for life to be `safer,' than so be it. (Perhaps this makes perfect sense because when someone is consumed by fear he is in effect imprisoned. Accordingly, the meaning of freedom changes.)"

As the proverbial old Indian said:

"The first thing is to overcome fear. When that is accomplished everything takes care of itself."

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As our calendar fills up for the coming year, the Countess and I are tempted to cancel the month of June for lack of space.

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 3

22 February 1995

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## Winterset, 1995

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It is with profound sorrow that we must report the death of Bruce Nelson – old friend, distinguished marksman with both rifle and pistol, pioneer designer of leather gear, and one of the conspicuous leaders in the introduction of the modern technique to the American law enforcement community. Bruce's untimely death at 47 was apparently caused by a blood clot in the lung. Among his other attributes, Bruce was a champion of American liberty in his crusade in support of our right to keep and bear arms. He served the NRA on both the Action Shooting Committee and the Law Enforcement Assistance Committee, and he was married to Sandy Froman who is at present a member of the Board of Directors of the Association.

Too often the good die young. God's will be done.

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At the recent Safari Club conference at Las Vegas we heard General Schwarzkopf address the multitude. The General is a soldier of renown and is also an ardent hunter, but he is not as strong on the subject of political liberty as we might wish. We must keep that in mind if he decides to run for public office.

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Those who feel the need of a heavy rifle – a need confined almost exclusively to buffalo hunters – may do well to consider the A-Square line available as production items. What is wanted in a heavy rifle is a fairly large bore (45 to 50), 500 grains of bullet, and 2400-foot-seconds of starting velocity. The A-square actions are essentially 1917 Enfields, and those need not defer to anything else. They use ammunition which need not be handmade, a point of some importance, and they retail in the three-thousand-dollar range. Perhaps the most promising caliber in the group is the fairly new 470 Capstick, a blown-out relative of the 45 Lott. The 1917 action will accommodate five rounds in the magazine with this cartridge, and thus would appear to be a very happy combination. (The 460 Weatherby, for example, holds two plus one.)

(I strongly advise against putting glass sights on a heavy. A buffalo is easy to see, and some of the time you may have to put him away at spitting distance. Under those circumstances a telescope sight is not only unnecessary, but possibly in the way.)

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Also at the convention, it appeared to us that the Safari Club membership includes almost no Democrats, and very few riflemen, while counting on perhaps 60 percent naturalists. A high point of the gathering was the taxidermy exhibit – the best thing of its kind that I have ever seen.

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We discover that a new version of *"Meditations on Hunting"* by José Ortega y Gasset is set for re-issue. This will be a luxury item rather than a paperback, and should definitely be included in every sportsman's library. Ortega's *"Meditations"* have been classified by people of discernment as among the few really great books of the twentieth century. The philosopher totally destroys the emotional position of the anti-hunter and provides all of us with ammunition at the ready whenever the rabbit people raise their furry heads.

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Recent news suggests that the Russians get simply furious when you fight back – just like our federal ninja.

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I have discovered a new use for air guns. Anchorage, among other places, seems to be overrun with moose. These moose fancy city-dwelling because the streets are ordinarily plowed and thus make movement easier. The local authorities frown on busting moose in your front yard within the city limits and without a license. If you sting this moose on the fanny with your air gun, it may occur to him that he is not welcome. Best not try this system on a cow with calf, however, for a cow moose with calf is one of the fiercer animals, and will generally choose attack over retreat.

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If you think the Clinton cabinet resembles a freak show you might examine the San Francisco City Council. (Well, what did you expect?)

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In South Africa's *Magnum* magazine we recently encountered an astonishing photograph. This was an X-ray of a man's head which included not only a 32 caliber bullet, but also a 32 caliber case. Now, how it is possible to fire a round into one's head, and then have the empty eject with such violence as to penetrate it also, is beyond us. But there is the photograph, and all we can do is stand amazed.

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*Family member* John Schaefer, from the Peoples' Republic of New Jersey, informs us that his Star Wars number is 73654,2514. This is a very significant number, and all computer freaks amongst the faithful should have it at the ready.

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A while back we reported the widely-held view that a crocodile, after drowning his prey, seeks to stash it away under mangrove roots and such so that it may rot and come apart more easily, since he has no chewing mechanism. In going further into this we discover that a crocodile frequently shakes his prey apart, strewing fragments hither and yon. In Australia not long ago a victim's leg was found nearly fifteen feet out of the water. Additionally, a small croc in the 6 – 8 foot size will frequently grab a loose limb and simply twist it off by rolling violently in the water.

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"Campaigns to bear-proof all garbage containers in wild areas have been difficult because, as one biologist put it, 'There is a considerable overlap between the intelligence levels of the smartest bears and the dumbest tourists.'"

Richard Wabrek

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"There is no moral obligation for any of us to obey immoral or unconstitutional laws, but if you are caught be prepared to pay the price."

Walter Williams

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Who now speaks with authority on pistol technique? This question is almost impossible to answer. No one thought much about it up until the conclusion of World War II, and since that time the subject has been complicated by divergence and objectives between the public and private sectors.

When we opened the Pandora-box of practical pistol shooting in California back in the late 50s, we did not realize that a definite split would develop between those who shot a pistol in search of excellence and those who shot a pistol simply because they had to. The feeling, which we sometimes hear from the mouths of idiots, that "only the police and the military should have weapons," ignores the fact that the police and/or the military are not likely to achieve any generalized level of excellence (though they indeed may turn out champions of highly specialized efforts). In any exercise in sporting competition only a limited number of champions will develop. It is possible that the techniques they use are not applicable to mass audiences.

We sympathize with the law enforcement people who are faced with the need to train increasing numbers of increasingly incompetent recruits forced upon them by politico-sociological conditions. For example, the late

Bruce Nelson was once criticized when demonstrating the modern technique to some cop groups in California on the grounds that he "practiced a lot." I did not realize then, and neither did he, that people who practice a lot with their weapons may be excoriated as "politically incorrect."

At the other end of the line we find the contests now put on for the pistol by the Intentional Practical Shooting Confederation have got so far afield from the street application of handgunning that the techniques of the current IPSC champions may with some justification be denigrated by those who feel that the pistol is a primary means of defensive combat.

And then we get into journalistic discussion where "gun writers" have a strong tendency to assume authority that they do not legitimately possess. All too frequently one reads flat statements made in magazines by unknowns who have no real experience in combat, competition, or even in pistol hunting, which is, of course, a specialty all to itself.

The Special Services of the military and the federal ninja also get into the act, though they try to keep the matter pretty much to themselves. On what basis they claim expertise is again open to discussion.

So we get back to the question, "Who really knows how to use a pistol?" I am not prepared to accept the counter question, "To do what?" I am going to stick with the proposition that a pistol is primarily means of saving a life – stopping a fight that somebody else started. The best pistol shot to my mind is the man who can best stop a fight, and his equipment must not be restricted by the half-baked regulations of procurement officers.

I see really good pistol shots perform now and then, but not often, and not in ways that necessarily re-enforce the realism of the technique employed. Truly, pistolcraft has taken tremendous strides in the past thirty-five years, but we have not achieved the perfect solution even yet – mainly because there are two few people asking the right questions.

---

Those who are preparing to attend our April rifle class, as well as riflemen in general, should remember the general rifle test for weight. Hold your rifle out shoulder high, at arm's length, by the small of the stock, muzzle up, and hold it for 60 seconds. If this test is painful for you, you are either badly out of shape or your rifle is too heavy for you.

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And now we have still another account of a rifle's firing when the safety was placed on "ready." By this time I do not think it necessary to tell you what brand of a action that was.

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Do you know about the standard 3-shot signal? If you do not, here it is: When you are lost in the wilderness or disabled so that you cannot travel, you break out your watch and fire three shots spaced exactly 60 seconds apart. Then you wait for 15 minutes and repeat the same procedure. Then stop. The idea is that a single shot, or three shots spaced quickly, might be inadvertent, but that three shots spaced precisely apart suggest that communication is being attempted. If anybody hears and heeds, he will note your second series of three and home in on you. If no one hears, it is best to wait a couple of hours until your absence has been noticed and then repeat the procedure.

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This is why a hunter should carry more ammunition with him in the field than he will probably need to bring home his venison.

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There is talk now of an IPSC reunion (the 20th) to be held in South Africa in March of next year. Those of you who can plan that far forward will want to put that date down for serious consideration on your 1996 calendars.

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"Power is nothing without control."

Pirelli Tyres Limited

(And fully as applicable to weaponcraft.)

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Among the many dimwitted suggestions of our leftist administration is the one that we hire one hundred thousand more cops. It would seem obvious even to a Rhodes Scholar that one cannot buy high-quality personnel. To be a good cop calls for more, and more varied, attributes than can be expected among the top 25 percent of the population. The figure is probably nearer 10 percent. This is one of those social programs which cannot be improved by merely throwing money at it. However, because the liberals do not believe that there are any such problems, they will doubtless keep attacking them with the wrong solutions, as has been the case for the last forty years.

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Those of you who saw the television ads in connection with the Super Bowl may remember that the Wilson program purveying sporting goods reached some sort of new low in idiocy (as well as blasphemy) – by attributing David's victory over Goliath as due to his using a "Wilson rock."

This was a joke, I guess. But a bad one. Advertising must prevail, but for those of us who have struggled amain to establish that it is the man, rather than his equipment, which conquers, this sort of salesmanship is repulsive.

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It is a pleasure to learn that the bongo has been reclassified from genus *Boocercus* to genus *Tragelaphus*, thus placing him in the same platoon as the kudu, nyala, situtunga, and bushbuck where he belongs. Ian McFarlane, our man in Botswana, has long held that the bongo should be referred to as the "giant bushbuck," and now it appears that the lab technicians have finally caught up with him.

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We have good reports now from Africa on the efficacy of "Black Talon" ammunition. Of course it has not been out for long and field experience so far is not extensive, but results as of now are good.

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The new concealed carry program in the State of Arizona has called for a great deal of hastily improvised education, and that, of course, has resulted in the publication of a number of training pamphlets with the level of excellence one might expect under these somewhat emergent conditions.

A friend was recently subjected to one of these training programs and was shown a text which insists, "Do not load your pistol until you are ready to shoot." And further, "Always unload your pistol when you have finished shooting."

A little thought please, Professor! These injunctions are the equivalent of saying, "Never wear a life-jacket unless you are sure your boat is going to sink." Or, "Never put on your armored vest unless you are sure you are going to be shot." Or, "Never fill your tank with gas until you are ready to drive."

Until the handgun is recognized properly as a life-saving instrument, we can expect more of this sort of administrative garbage.

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Note that you can now get factory Remington ammunition in 30-06 and 270 utilizing the excellent Swift partition bullet. I have been using Swift bullets in 358 caliber for many years now and can report complete satisfaction. In my experience they should be confined to bulky animals offering serious resistance.

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The country we came to know and love as South Africa may not disappear overnight, but according to the Western media the handwriting is on the wall. If you have any notion of going while the going is good, do not



wait until you can afford it – go now and pay later!

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"There is nothing more odious than the majority; for it consists of a few powerful leaders, a certain number of accommodating scoundrels and subservient weaklings, and a mass of men who trudge after them without in the least knowing their own minds."

Goethe

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The decay of the late, great country of South Africa is beginning to become apparent. The name of the Transvaal has been officially changed to "Gauteng." (One of our friends has suggested that in view of this its inhabitants in the future should be referred to as Oranggautengs.) The furtive attempt to eliminate the Afrikaaner language continues. Recently some four thousand Bantu children showed up at a school capable of handling about four hundred in search of "an education." I doubt very much if they had any idea what an education is, though they probably considered that it consists of a Mercedes Benz. And now there is a move afoot to wreck the Kruger National Park, one of the wonders of the world, on the notion that a good bit of its land was "taken from the blacks." This idea is somewhat akin to giving Yellowstone Park back to the Blackfeet.

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At the recent convening of experts at Vegas the question was flung around, "What is Africa's most dangerous animal?" The instant response of the senior hunter available was, "A hippo on dry land." I have my application in.

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We have noticed a great deal of journalistic basura on the subject of our using the atomic bomb to end World War II. That is what we used it for and that is what it did. And now we see a whole raft of junior-grade handwringers excoriating the people who fought that war (in their defense) by claiming that the Japanese would have surrendered anyway. Now, nothing in the past can be recouped, but let us get one thing straight – those of us who fought that war and met the Japanese face-to-face, from Guadalcanal to Okinawa, know full well that *the Japanese would not have surrendered anyway*. I could give you a good number of personal examples of that proposition, but my experience was just that of one man, so I will fall back upon the support of such notables as Douglas MacArthur, Howlin' Mad Smith, Chester Nimitz, and Harry Truman. To cause the Japanese to stop fighting, an inconceivable shock was necessary. The fire bombing of Tokyo would not do it. The destruction of their air fleet would not do it, and the landing on their home islands would not do it. The atomic bomb would do it, and it did do it, and the whimpers of literary rabbit people who were not even born at the time are not worthy of serious consideration.

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"No experience is so conducive to steady and accurate shooting as the knowledge of the impossibility to escape by speed."

Sir Samuel Baker

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 4

9 March 1995

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## March Winds

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Truly it has been said that to err is human, but to screw things up completely it takes a computer. For those who noted the mis-attribution on the back page of our previous Commentary, we must hasten to say that I do not pretend to be Goethe. The quote at the top of the page was from Goethe. The piece at the bottom, about the war in the Pacific, was mine.

Furthermore, I cannot blame the computer for not checking itself out before distribution. I was in a hurry, and I left for Texas without checking. My fault.

*[Editor's note: this error was corrected before Vol. 3, No. 3 was placed in the archive.]*

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"Saving is a very fine thing, especially when your parents have done it for you."

Winston Churchill

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The nilgai hunt, down in the King Ranch, was a complete success, thanks in large measure to the good offices of our distinguished colleague Finn Aagaard, who punched all the right keys.

As we all know, a year without hunting is like a dinner without wine, and this episode with the blue bull filled in our 1995 slot to a nicety. I used the Lion Scout, loaded by John Gannaway with the excellent Swift partition 250. This combination is possibly a bit much for the task, although a big nilgai may run up to 700lbs, but I suppose it is better to be over-gunned than under-gunned.

We gathered up about 145lbs of prime venison, and in due course I expect a handsome black and silver rug.

---

I am sometimes asked plaintively why I do not include more pistol dope in my Commentaries. I must respond that there seems to be all too little new information of interest about handguns. I might repeat myself by insisting that one must never trust the hammer-dropper on the self-loading pistol. It works most of the time, but not always. Recently in Kentucky a cop killed a suspect while "decocking" his Beretta while the piece was pointing at the head of the suspect. There was a large uproar in the press, which finally concluded that one must never try to lower the hammer with the thumb, but rather always to use the decocker. This conclusion is exactly 180 degrees out. I thought everybody knew that, but apparently there are a lot of people who do not.

So much for pistol information.

---

While in Texas, seeking further information upon the fatal incident with the nilgai last year, I ran across a newspaper clipping which stated that the victim had been "slashed" with the "antlers" of the "African antelope." As it turned out, the nilgai is an Indian antelope, which stabs with its horns. Apart from that, the reporter got it right.

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Sit Rep from South Africa:

"There is a lot of internal friction in the ANC. Winnie is close to being evicted. There are numerous corruption scandals being investigated. Our budget comes out next week, and we are concerned at possible consequences. A change has been made in the tax structure with immediate effect. All tax rates for married men, married women, and single people have been changed to a universal rate, as the Constitution forbids discrimination on the grounds of sex, etc."

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"Intellect without will is useless, whereas will without intellect is dangerous."

Carl von Seek

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We recently ran across a statement attributed to an old Western sheriff which fills us with delight. He stated that he wished his deputies to respond to the threat of lethal violence with "disconcerting alacrity." What a great phrase! For years I have taught mind set and defensive tactics to thousands of students when almost everything I sought to impart could have been included in exhortation to disconcerting alacrity.

Disconcerting alacrity. There you have it.

---

Have you noticed that Swarovski is now producing a rifle sight with a built-in laser range-finder (for about 6,000 Marks). The instrument is almost as big as the rifle it is to be mounted on, and it may indeed have some utility, though for the moment I cannot think what that might be.

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At a recent National Press Club dinner Prince Phillip was asked to reconcile his dedication to conservation with his love of hunting. The questioner asked if the Prince really enjoyed killing animals. The Prince responded that the beef that the group had enjoyed for dinner was presumably slaughtered by someone who was paid to do that job. Since the butcher was paid, one may further presume that he did not particularly enjoy his work or he would have done it for free. The Prince then asked if any members of the audience felt that the butcher was immoral or inconsistent. If not, he remarked, then presumably adultery would be moral as long as one did not enjoy it.

---

We are glad to see that the Ruby Ridge atrocity is not going to go away. Our friend and fellow board member Senator Larry Craig is insisting on a just outcome to that affair. The Department of Justice has refused to show the senator its reports. Now we will see just how much clout a United States Senator has when it comes to disciplining the ninja.

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"Only the dead have seen the end of war."

Plato

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The Cossacks are abroad in Montana in pursuit of the Montana Militia. They have been acting with their customary ferocity in the abuse of suspects. (Being held face down, handcuffed on a concrete floor for five hours without being charged with anything would seem a bit extreme.) These are not "Gestapo tactics," since the Gestapo was a secret organization, but bad guys can turn up in all sorts of uniforms. I intend to look further into this.

---

Monty Meikle, who is an Orange Gunsite instructor, a *family member*, and a member of the *Gunsite African Rifles*, had a most interesting adventure to report from up in Mugabestan. His target was buffalo, and in preparation for the trip he discovered that the wooden stock on his buffalo gun had split. He therefore took off for the adventure with his 375. When he arrived on station he found that by a curious coincidence his professional hunter had just recently split the stock on his buffalo gun – a 505 Gibbs – so the two of them

went buffalo hunting each armed with a 375.

Contact was made on a very superior specimen at about 60 paces, target angle 345. Monty, who is an excellent shot and widely experienced, placed his bullet exactly on the chalk mark, whereupon the bull spun and vanished. Monty and his PH tracked for about an hour. The wounded buff had pulled a classic 270 to port and was waiting for them on his back trail at some 30 paces. He came straight in as they emptied both rifles and died heroically spraying "blood on the shoes."

This was a very grand adventure, which Monty will not forget, and it points up our conclusion that the 375 Magnum is simply not a buffalo gun. It will certainly kill buffalo, as will almost any of the 30 caliber family, assuming proper bullets, but it should never be taken as first choice. For buff you need a big gun, which the 375 is not.

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In connection with the foregoing, we were shown a sobering photograph of a buffalo head by Danie van Graan, our man in the Low Veldt. This buff had been hit below the right eye by a 458, which proceeded to exit under the left ear. One would think that would be enough, but the buff turned and ran some 60 paces before he was brought down by eight more rounds from two different guns.

The buffalo is fantastic. When you take him on you challenge a noble adversary.

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At the SHOT show we examined Don Mitchell's new 45 pistol at some length. At first glance it appears to be a 1911 clone, but its ignition system has been completely redesigned so that now it can be had in manual-cocking form, trigger-cocking-only form, or double-action, at the choice of the purchaser. It is also extremely versatile in regard to its magazines, which can be made to conform to any of the strange restrictions either now in force or proposed by the various bureaucrats of the nation.

This is an ingenious instrument and deserves detailed examination.

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You will be pleased to learn that the citizens of the Old Dominion state have recently achieved a concealed carry law, somewhat similar to those now in effect in Florida and Arizona. May the trend continue nationwide!

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I guess you all heard about one Mary Burtzman, who as a Marine officer candidate has doubts about her acceptance of a commission. She is quoted as saying in the *National Review*,

"It's a shame such a great organization has such a low purpose."

Miss Burtzman certainly has a right to her opinion, but one wonders about the officer who recruited her. A Marine of any rank is, first and foremost, a killing machine. One who does not like that idea should certainly be in some other line of work. When I was a junior officer we used to declaim,

"If you want to learn a trade, join the Army. If you want a clean bunk every night, join the Navy. If you want to fly, join the Air Force. If you want to fight, join the Marines."

The Countess has suggested that Miss Burtzman has a great future as a member of the Clinton cabinet.

---

We now have some \$250 in the *Waco Memorial Fund*. If you have contributed, please know that your money is safe, but until we have about \$2,000 to work with, it may not be wise to commence design or construction.

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I sit here and purr over the fact that the three best rifles in the world are mine. Actually I have not seen all the rifles in the world, but I feel I have grounds for my opinion. Here in the *Sconce Armory* dwell "Sweetheart"

and "Lion Scout," and in Durban there is "Baby." These three pieces have done so well so often, and they are so delightful to handle and to use, that I must place them at the top.

Sweetheart is Scout II, possibly equaled by successive efforts, but certainly never surpassed. The Lion Scout is the perfected Fireplug – the best medium I have ever seen or heard described. And Baby is, of course, the mighty 460 Special, the buffalo gun par excellence.

This is a trio that I present as an example as how things should be and seldom are. It is a wonderful feeling!

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You may have noticed that the ninja still insist upon going masked. A masked man is obviously ashamed of what he is doing. I can see why these people should be ashamed of what they are doing, but I do not see why they feel they must continue to do it. A great many people will do anything at all for money. There is a name for that.

---

We now approach April Fool's Day, 1995, the anniversary of the date on which I was pushed off the end of the plank by people I had previously regarded as trusted friends. As the song has it,

"Learning to trust is such a juvenile fancy!"

Despite the disaster, I still believe that it is better to think well of people than ill. I committed the mistake of my life, and I now watch my life's work being trashed by unprincipled merchandisers. I cannot say I enjoy it, but I must pay the price of my foolishness. Time will correct this, but we hope it does not take too long.

---

I recently commented about an amazing X-ray I saw of a skull in which both the bullet and the case seemed to have been embedded. A medical friend has explained to me that almost certainly what happened was that as the victim was placed on the gurney the empty fell under his head and showed up on the film as if it were inside it. That would explain it, and I cannot think of any other explanation.

---

Did you all notice that Tanya Metaksa, the chief propagandist of the National Rifle Association, made it to the editorial page of *USA Today*? That is broad coverage, and Tanya writes an effective essay. Let us devoutly hope that a lot of those people "in the middle" got the word.

---

I discover that there is a certain element in the law enforcement establishment which finds my writing abusive. Certainly I have never attempted to please everybody, but I do not endeavor to knock the cops, except when they conspicuously deserve it. A recent letter from a detective in the District of Columbia Police Department treated me to a couple of pages of insulting language without really getting to his point. I am sorry that he feels insulted, but I could respond to him better if he made more sense. When I am factually wrong, I greatly appreciate being corrected, but when it is just a matter of hurt feelings, all I can say is that I am sorry – though often not very. Consider, for example, what follows.

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In New York recently a cop took after a pickpocket in a busy subway station. In doing so, he shot himself in the leg (not seriously.) All hell broke loose! Subway service was suspended while police responded to something on the order of a riot call. Five officers were slightly injured when a police van crashed on the way to the scene. Seven people were taken to the hospital with heat exhaustion, and one girl thought she was shot in the leg, but was not.

It seems to me that there was a rule which says you keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target. It seems to be too much to ask New York City's finest to observe such things.

---

People of good will frequently send one off with the injunction to "Have a safe trip!" There is no such thing as a safe trip. Safety is an illusion. It must always fail in the end. That does not mean that we should not consider

safety, but never to cry "Safety first!" Safety, while something we should seek, must always be placed second to getting the job done. One who places safety first is, quite specifically, a coward. We do not go to war to be safe, neither do we climb mountains, or race cars, or hunt buffalo, to be safe. We hear commentators explain that we should not resist violent crime because we may get hurt. This is the advice of the rabbit people who live all their lives in fear and never know the joy of danger. There are people like that, and while we may feel sorry for them, we must never take their advice seriously.

---

Here in Arizona recently a motorist stopped to help a stranded female who was flagging him down. In return he was beaten to death by the woman's accomplices who were lying in wait. Rule: when you do not understand the scene, go to Condition Orange. If you are flagged down on the highway, regardless of how innocent the flagger may appear, get your pistol at the ready.

---

We note with some annoyance that the usually sound columnist, Joseph Sobran, has come out sympathizing for Lon Horiuchi on the grounds that Horiuchi shot Vicky Weaver "by mistake." Horiuchi says he did, Rogers says he did, Freeh says he did, Janet Reno says he did, and now Joe Sobran says he did. Let us get it straight. The only way Horiuchi could have shot Vicky Weaver by mistake would have been a circumstance in which she was standing behind an obscuring device, such as a sheet of plywood, or for that matter a bed sheet. Unless Horiuchi was an utter fool and totally incompetent with his weapon, and firing at random at the house, he could not have shot Vicky Weaver by mistake. How all those people could give credence to such a story is absolutely beyond belief!

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## Caption Contest



It is a very unusual picture of Serbia's Commander Arkan firing a revolver into the air through the sunroof of his limousine after his wedding to Ceca while one of his bodyguards ducks.

*Family members* are invited to caption this picture. Contest winners to be announced.

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"A man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on."

Winston Churchill

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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. 3, No. 5

31 March 1995

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## Rustles of Spring

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Spring has indeed sprung up all over Southwestern low country, after a very mild and moist winter – though it is still having trouble up on the Continental Divide. The pleasant aspects of the season are being overlooked by the carpers, who insist that this sort of thing produces overmuch pollen for those who suffer from hay fever and promises a summer of grass fires and bugs.

And then there are the snakes. Down in the desert the people are complaining about the unusual proliferation of rattlesnakes, which is being investigated by the media based on the number of phone calls the police are getting. I find this bothersome. It simply does not occur to me that one calls the police when he finds a rattlesnake in his backyard. Why is a rattlesnake the business of the state? And in what way is the state better qualified to handle a rattlesnake than the householder?

There are various things to be done about a rattlesnake in one's garden, but I do not see that the cops are in a position to do them. The first thing to do about a rattlesnake is let it alone. Unless there are small children about, or particularly dimwitted pets, a rattlesnake may well be allowed to go about his business. If, on the other hand, it is necessary to get this beast out of your vicinity, he is probably best scooped into a large jar and spirited off to the nearest high school biology lab as a demonstration.

If this idea does not take your fancy, he can be beaten on with a stick and dropped into the trash. Better, however, he may be beheaded, skinned, eviscerated, cut into one and a half inch chunks and deep-fat fried. (This works best for pretty big ones.)

His skin makes into a nice hat-band, and his rattles into a nifty presentation piece for travelers from abroad.

In no case, however, is he a matter for the state. If we truly have got to the point where the citizen's first response to anything he does not understand is to call the police, we are probably too far gone down the road to serfdom

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"No one but he who has partaken thereof can understand the keen delight of hunting in lonely lands. For him it is the joy of the horse well-ridden and the rifle well-held; for him the long days of toil and hardship, resolutely endured, and crowned at the end with triumph."

Theodore Roosevelt

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I was recently asked by a magazine editor what sort of sidearm I would suggest for "the elderly." This caught me somewhat aslant, since I am pretty elderly myself and I do not feel a need for a firearm especially attuned to my aged condition. For one who has handled firearms since early adolescence, as most of us have, it is hard to discern any age differentiation when it comes to shooting. Certainly eyesight tends to degenerate with the advancing years, but as long as one can see at all he ought to be able to use Gun A as well as Gun B.

An exception to this, however, may be the "pistol ghost-ring" devised by Steve Wickert of Wells Sport Store in Prescott. Several old timers now have reported that this sighting system does wonders to make up for the

increasing stiffness of the cornea that normally comes with age. This arrangement is somewhat more obtrusive than conventional rear sights on a pistol, but not enough to invalidate it as a holster weapon. If you find it increasingly hard to pick up that front sight in a hurry, you might well give this arrangement some thought.

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We are holding your checks for the *Waco Memorial* with extreme care. When we reach \$5,000 we will establish a resident chairman in Waco and an appropriate bank account. If we do not reach that figure, your money will be returned with thanks.

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Those of you who have hunting trophies on your walls will be glad to learn of a new service based in North Carolina which will undertake to renovate, fumigate, and bug-proof your prizes. It appears that there is a particular sort of trophy-eating moth that eats hair, skin, and horn, and it usually does so before one discovers it at work. We had a crew here at the *Sconce* following the Safari Club show and now we feel much better about the whole thing. For further information call:

Miller Trophy Room Preservation, 704-436-2001.

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We seem to be off to Guatemala for a teaching week in early June, and then off to Austria at the end of the month. In the middle I have speaking engagements in both Denver and Salt Lake. (Maybe I will finish the book in my free time.)

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We hear from Africa of a gent who reversed the 50-caliber boat-tail bullet of the Browning machine-gun cartridge and inserted it backwards into the throat of the 510 Wells Express. He claimed it was a real walloper. I should hope to snort!

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The core of the "hitability factor" in any hand-held weapon is its trigger action. At one time factory rifles were furnished with quite good triggers. I have a Model 70 Winchester dating from 1937 on which the trigger has never been touched by a gunsmith and yet will stand up to any of the after-market inserts I have tried. Today, however, in *the Age of Litigation* we find that this situation has changed, and when one acquires any domestic rifle the first thing he must do is to take his piece to a gunsmith and have something done about that trigger. (And this goes for about fifty percent of European competition, too.) This is not only a nuisance but it is unreliable, since not every gunsmith knows how to improve a trigger properly.

As colleague Ross Seyfried recently pointed out in an article, the factories will not put good triggers in their weapons because,

1. the handwork required is expensive, and,
2. a really good trigger might be regarded as a liability in a lawsuit.

This problem is not found in the higher-grade European actions. The Mauser, Mannlicher and Voere rifles normally come over the counter with excellent triggers. And then, of course, there is the Blaser, of which I have spoken before. Conventional triggers may be said to operate as a pair of interconnected hooks, one the striker and the other the sear, which have to be scraped off in order to release the firing pin. This means that metal must be dragged across metal, and this calls for a very high polish of extremely hard, wear-proof surfaces in order to function well. The Blaser trigger, however, operates on a different principle. When the piece is cocked the sear proper is placed under powerful spring tension, which will pop it loose when permitted. It is not permitted, however, as long as the trigger pedestal resists this spring tension. When the trigger is pressed this pedestal is lowered out of contact, without friction. Nothing need be polished or tuned and every trigger comes off the line the same as every other. This is a beautiful arrangement. I wish I could say, "Don't leave home without it!" but as of now it comes only on one gun.

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Oldtimers will be interested to learn that the county has now filled in Tillman's Bog, which used to lie between us and the highway. On one hand it was a nuisance during the rainy season, on the other it did serve to keep out the riffraff.

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Someone called the front office at Burris and was told by the girl on the phone that the Scoutscope was being discontinued. This was a matter of much concern, and I called in person to verify it. The production manager, who should know, told us in no uncertain terms that production on the Scoutscope would be continued through '96. I assume that I can take this as truth, but nonetheless I counsel you to buy two of the Burris glasses as soon as you can come up with the scratch. It makes one uneasy to depend upon one manufacturer who alone can or will furnish the product you desire.

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"Watching the unfolding political debate, it occurs to me that liberals feel the same way about truth that Dracula feels about sunlight."

Paul Kirchner

---

Sometime back we wrote our annoyance at those who did not understand about our use of the atomic bomb. Since that time we have been further annoyed by a group of people who wished to observe the 50th Anniversary of the Battle for Iwo as an occasion for sorrow. Of course any man's death is sorrowful to his family, if not necessarily to him, and a great many good men died on Iwo, but the battle itself was not a tragedy. It was, on the contrary, a triumph. The Marine Corps wrote its name yet again in letters of gold across the pages of history, and the heroes who died there will remain heroes as long as our culture endures.

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Bob Cushman, my boss on several occasions and later Commandant of the Marine Corps, told me face-to-face that he as a battalion commander went through three sets of lieutenants in the course of that battle. There are upwards of twenty lieutenants in a battalion, and all of those who went ashore with Colonel Cushman were either killed or medevaced – and all of their replacements were either killed or medevaced, and almost all of their replacements were dragged off the field on stretchers. "There was a meat grinder!" the general told me. And so it was, but we accomplished our mission, against what appeared to be insurmountable odds, and that is what should be taught in the schools and celebrated in the parades.

As we discovered later, Iwo was practically defenseless when we were busy down in the Mariannas eight months previously. Saburo Sakai, the great Japanese fighter pilot, wrote in his book that the island could have been taken by two destroyers and one company of military police when he was flying off it to attack us down at Saipan. If there is tragedy involved here, it is that, and not the battle for the island, which was an occasion for glory such as is not understood by the current administration of the United States of America.

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One piece of information that the media are not likely to emphasize these days is that the homicide rate in Florida is down 29 percent since the enactment of the concealed weapon permit law. Some people take notice, however, as state after state passes new legislation allowing decent citizens to go armed.

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Caption entries in our great caption contest keep pouring in, though a number are a bit too gamey for a family magazine. It will be a month or so more before we close the entry list.

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We had occasion to report not long ago upon the untimely death of the Honorable Anthony Fraser on the horns of a buffalo in Tanzania. We noted that Mr. Fraser was the son of Lord Lovat, and now it seems appropriate to mention the recent demise, at the age of 83, of "the handsomest man who ever cut a throat," as Churchill put it.

Brigadier the 17th Lord Lovat, 24th Chief of Clan Fraser, was a legendary commando leader in the Second

World War. He was what may precisely be termed "a gentleman of the old school" who fought with the dash, style and elegance befitting a hereditary aristocrat. No only did he bear the Military Cross, the Distinguished Service Order, and the Croix de Guerre, but the Germans did him the honor of placing a reward of one hundred thousand Deutschmarks on his head. He was a champion fencer, horseman and marksman, and did all the things expected of a man of his lineage. He hunted all over the world, and for thirty–five years he was chairman of the Shikar Club. Since the one son was killed by a buff and the other suffered a heart attack while riding to hounds, the peerage is now succeeded by grandson Simon, the 18th Lord Lovat. Now there is a lad with a lot to live up to.

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"Equality may perhaps be a right, but no power on earth can ever turn it into a fact."

Balzac

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Amongst the continuous irritations foisted upon us by government is the impertinent assumption that one must prove to the state his need to be armed. In a recent feature in *Time* the author found it surprising that in various jurisdictions the applicant for a firearms license was not even asked to establish a need. A free man should not have to show any need for being armed, and a public official is almost never in a position to pass judgment upon any such need. "I want it because I want it." That should be enough.

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(Please note that our new telephone code here at the *Sconce* is (520) – replacing (602). This goes for both phone and fax.)

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It is interesting to examine the rationale behind the awarding of military medals. The cynic will say that medals are awarded in order to improve the morale of the home folks, regardless of the justification, and there is just enough truth in that to make it bothersome. The spate of Victoria Crosses issued at Rorke's Drift is one example, and the US handed out a couple of Medals of Honor at the beginning of the war in the Pacific which, upon detailed examination by historians, seem to have been mistakes.

Nevertheless, military medals can be respected as tributes to heroism on various pretexts, and at both ends of the scale, varying from acts of the grandest performance of duty to acts of momentary hysteria. In the American tradition a man earns a Medal of Honor for throwing himself on a grenade, whether or not this accomplishes anything but his own death. Presumably this represents sublime self–sacrifice, and certainly such behavior ought to be recognized. However, it is not comparable with behavior which achieves dramatic military results by the demonstration of brilliant military capacity at risk of one's life.

We read recently of the death, from natural causes, of Brigadier General James Howard of the Air Force, who earned the only Medal of Honor awarded to a fighter pilot in the European theater in WWII. The story has it that this officer was a member of a formation of P51s assigned to protect bomber attacks over Germany. He became separated from the rest of his group, but when he located the bombers he discovered they were under attack from no less than thirty German fighters. By himself, he dove into the German fighter formation, disrupted its attack, and shot down four of the enemy aircraft.

This behavior demonstrated matchless devotion to duty, sublime physical courage, and total mastery of his weapon. This is the sort of thing for which the Medal of Honor really should be awarded.

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You know, of course, that the current head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is Louis Freeh. In noting our comments recently concerning Mr. Freeh and Benjamin Franklin, correspondent Jordan Kossack of Stafford, Texas, has sent us a card paraphrasing the motto emblazoned upon the Alamo, to wit:

"Freedom isn't Freeh."

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Now we hear that the president and head honcho of the company manufacturing the Czech 75 pistol, of distinguished note, was effectively defenestrated at the international arms fair in Nurenburg. If true, this is one more example of the fact that the natives of Eastern Europe are growing increasingly restless now that they no longer have the Soviets to keep them in line.

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And it seems "the Greens" in Germany have successfully mandated the use of "environmentally friendly" firearms by police and the military. Projectile, propellant, and priming are all subject to regulation to make sure that when one shoots at a bad guy he does not pollute the environment. Silly as it may seem, this development is naturally greeted with enthusiasm by the manufacturers, who can now replace everybody's equipment at a nice profit.

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Note that the date for the *Third Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* has been advanced to the weekend before the Great Man's birthday, thus landing on 19, 20, 21 October of 1995.

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Our recent hypothesis about the gent who wound up with both the projectile and the case in his head was evidently unsound. We hear now, from the horse's mouth in Italy, that this loony attempted to kill himself with a 32 auto-pistol, but he loaded it with a 25 auto cartridge. How the firing pin popped the primer is unclear, since the case should have dropped freely through the barrel, but somehow it did go off and since the relatively low-powered explosion did not have sufficient energy to work the action, both case and projectile were fired out the muzzle. There was not enough power left to do the job properly, so the loony walked off with a couple of band-aids and is now free to try the operation again.

I find this perplexing. If I one day wind up in the presence of a 32 auto-pistol, and have access to a 25 auto cartridge, I am going to try to duplicate this trick (not on myself, of course) just to see if it is technically possible.

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Senator Larry Craig has taken cudgel and addressed the Attorney General a specific and public letter questioning the need for official American stormtroops. I do not see how she can avoid answering this. It will be very interesting to see what she says.

As of right now, there is a rumor to the effect that federal marshals may arrest Lon Horiuchi and deliver him to the State of Idaho. Perhaps this is only a rumor, but it certainly is a good one.

(If I keep writing this sort of thing, I guess I can expect the ninja any quiet morning about 0300.)

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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. 3, No. 6

25 April 1995

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## Maytime, 1995

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Our session up at Whittington with the rifle was completely satisfactory, thanks to the skillful administration of *family member* Rich Wyatt and the marvelous assistance of Riflemasters John Gannaway and Larry Larsen. The ranges at Whittington do not include everything I am used to, but they are quite adequate and we have a couple of additional features planned for the next session, which is tentatively scheduled for the third week in August of this year.

A mild problem was caused by the radical divergence in background of the students, many of whom had been certified by me at Orange Gunsite. By contrast, daughter Lindy had never held a rifle in her hands before and had to play a fierce game of catch-up.

Mike Ballew and Brad Schuppan arranged the weather perfectly, providing us with one perfect week in between two spring storm sessions. Actually this caught me somewhat aslant because I had planned a good bit of class work between squalls, and when there were no squalls I felt we should spend our time on the range.

I awarded four classic Hawkeye badges to Kurt Miller (who won the shoot-off with an M1a,) Tom Graziano, Steve Hendricks, and Scott Larsen. These people are very superior marksmen, of a sort you would rather not compete against.

We were astonished again at the profusion of game at the Whittington Shooting Center. We were continually observed by the numerous local mule deer, and spotted as many as 60 elk in a bunch. Our tactical rifle exercise was run up a canyon preempted by a flock of turkeys who were conspicuously unintimidated by rifle fire. Evidently they liked that canyon and did not see why they should move simply because of occasional sudden loud noises.

The clay bird shooting was again impressive, with over half the class scoring on the first session. There are not many places where you can indulge in this advanced activity, but when you have convinced yourself that you really can powder a clay in the air, you know a feeling of comfort that is hard to surpass.

Whittington is a long way from anywhere, but the trip is worth it.

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Barry Miller informs us that the situation has changed very little so far in South Africa. Crime is still an issue. The economy is okay, and hunting is getting better.

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The Scout project has "charged off madly in all directions." I guess I should not be surprised. Nobody owns the word "Scout," and anyone is free to call anything whatever he wants except on American university campuses, of course. Nonetheless, I should point out a couple of rather important criteria:

1. The Scout really should make weight, and weight is 3kg (6.7lbs) including sights.
2. The Scout caliber is 308. This is because the 308 ammunition is universally available worldwide (so is 223, but let us not go into that.) One cannot make a classic Scout out of a 30-06, simply because the cartridge, and thus the action, is too long.

3. A classic Scout must be short. Start with one meter (39 inches) and work down from that.

There are other considerations, but the foregoing are vital. The basic problem is that one must actually shoot a Scout rifle over a period and under field conditions to understand it. There just are not enough Scouts around for a large number of people to appreciate them.

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"A golf course is the willful and deliberate misuse of a perfectly good rifle range."

Bill O'Connor

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We have now had the opportunity to savor the nilgai bull taken earlier this year on the King Ranch in Texas. Very savory indeed! It is wild meat, however, and as might be expected, somewhat tough. The Countess prepared it initially without any attempt at tenderizing or seasoning so that we could understand its properties without disguise. It does not need seasoning, but henceforth we will use one of several forms of tenderizing on the cutlets, but take on the tenderloin as fondue.

---

From my experience up Colorado way I would advise all and sundry to avoid the new Denver airport. A better choice is to fly into Colorado Springs and hire a car. The new facility is certainly elaborate and luxurious, but as a means of getting from your car into an airplane, or vice versa, it simply does not work well.

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This from Paul Kirchner, our resident philosopher in New England:

*"I rate my mail according to the following scale:*

- +5 unexpected checks
- +4 personal correspondence from interesting people
- +3 expected checks
- +2 magazines
- +1 interesting catalogs or junk mail
- 1 entreats for money from causes of which I disapprove
- 2 entreats for money from causes of which I approve (because I either have to kick in or feel guilty)
- 3 anticipated bills
- 4 unanticipated bills
- 5 any correspondence from the IRS."

Here is a man who has his priorities sorted out.

---

Remember the Guru's Gold ring to be awarded at the *Keneyathlon* at Whittington on 10 June! This prize is to be awarded to that member of the five highest scoring shooters who uses the lightest rifle.

---

Grandchild Amy Heath, a member of the Gunsite *family* both literally and figuratively, has decided that her 1911 is excessively bulky. So we set her up with a Firestar. I regard the Firestar as a carrying weapon rather than a shooter, but in due course I will get a report back about how she likes it.

(Incidentally, when I refer to a "family member," the implication is an Orange *family member*. The question as to whether a Grey Gunsite graduate can be a Gunsite *family member* remains open for discussion.)

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In view of this queasy multi-culturalism with which we are continually affronted, it occurs to us that Western Europeans gave the world to the human race and there is nothing harder to forgive than a favor.

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Note the new bumper sticker:

"D.A.R.E. to keep cops off donuts."

---

At the Whittington rifle class the students were treated to the chance to fire several of John Gannaway's big guns, including the 416 and the 460. The consensus was that the 460 was the more satisfying weapon to shoot. In my opinion the 416 is something on the order of the vanishing 41 Magnum revolver. If you want power you really should go all the way and not be content with half measures.

In that regard, we note this new profusion of heavy caliber rifles for bolt guns now available for sale as semi-production items. Both Dakota and A-Square now offer bolt guns starting a 45 caliber 500-grain bullet at around 2,400 foot seconds exactly the ballistics of the 460 G&A Special that I have been using with great satisfaction for many years. In addition, A-Square offers the 470 Capstick, with slightly greater bore area and a tad more weight. This may be the best of the bunch when you consider that you can get five rounds into its magazine without an extension. The 450 Rigby is now also available if you wish, but none of these bolt-action heavies features a proper ghost-ring sight system. That point alone keeps Baby and her kin still out in front.

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I have been approached to speak on the subject of the phrasing of a proper law regarding the carrying of sidearms. *Family member* Bill O'Connor of Maryland suggests,

"Carry what you want, how you want, where you want, and we won't bother you unless you screw up."

This is approximately the way the rules read in Vermont.

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We note with some interest the introduction of the "Vektor" pistol from South Africa. This is a 9mm self-loader of particularly slick exterior design. It is smooth-looking and compact, and features a version of the Glock trigger, which means that the safety is incorporated in the trigger (which is something like stamping the combination on the safe door.) Of course, as Glock points out, if you keep your finger outside the trigger-guard where it belongs until you can see your sights, this will not give you any trouble. The same can be said of a 1911 with the safety off. At present the Vektor is still only a 9, but if it succeeds it may well be reissued in a major caliber. We await a personal account from the RSA.

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In reading the brochures for these luxury cruises that seem to be all the rage now, we note with some astonishment that they don't do your laundry. Presumably you are supposed to wash your skivvies in the sink. One of the attractive things about your African hunt is that both your daily laundry and your booze (within reasonable limits) are on the house.

---

Sometime ago we reported that a *copchick* trainee up in Colorado had shot a classmate neatly through the head during classroom practice for malfunction clearance.

Now hear the sequel. It seems that this girl felt that her safety training was inadequate and the proximate cause of the fatality. She fell into the hands of some shyster and proceeded to sue the city for huge amounts of money, claiming that she was now so upset that she could not pursue her chosen career as a cop. The case settled out of court for \$70,000. Moral: If you kill somebody through your own stupidity, and find someone upon whom you can blame that stupidity, the taxpayers will buy you a nice new Mercedes Benz, of the inexpensive variety of course.

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We get the following news commentary a bit dated from Orange *family member* and Babamkulu veteran, Jack Buchmiller:

"Reuter News Highlights Bucharest, Reuter – Romania's top Olympic marksmen blasted away at human targets in a gunbattle at a Bucharest cemetery this week to defend the country's pro–democracy revolution, according to the official news agency Agerpres.

Olympic rapid–fire and free–pistol champions 'annihilated' pro–Ceausescu forces in the fire–fight at the Ghencea Military Cemetery, Agerpres said, without saying when it took place.

The shooting by 1984 rapid–fire silver medalist Ion Corneliu and 1988 free–pistol champion Sorin Babli was among 'genuine acts of heroism by the athletes of the military club Steaua,' it said."

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Mike Ballew, the Whittington honcho, tells us that while his cougar population regularly kills mule deer, the victims are almost invariably bucks. Now according to the textbook a cougar will always choose a cow elk over anything else if he can, since a cow elk is relatively easy to catch and provides a great deal of meat, but these cougars seem to be programmed to kill buck deer, which are hard to catch, skimpy, and somewhat dangerous. What have we here?

Anyone who says he knows all about the behavior of wildlife is giving himself away.

---

As you have doubtless heard, there is a bill now banging around in the House authorizing Butch Reno to recruit, train, arm and equip a federal force of 2,500 ninja, presumably to make war upon American citizens.

It is up to your representatives in Congress to find out why this country needs a special force of civilian storm troopers in order to make war upon its own people. Now that we have a bunch of new boys in Washington, it is up to us to call upon them to answer this question.

---

Reports from both Desert Storm and Somalia indicate that whatever else they may be doing, our current crop of Marines is indeed observing Rule 3. Those of us who had a hand in that may be highly gratified at that news. When confronting Saint Peter before the Throne of Judgement and asked, "What did you do in life that was worthwhile?", we can answer, "I kept the finger off the trigger 'til the sights were on the target!"

Pass on in, brother!

---

It may be prejudicial to assume that O.J. killed Nicole, even though everything points that way, but we do not know who killed Vince Foster. The millionaire lawyers team will not leave a stone unturned or a fly unswatted to confuse the issue in the Simpson case, but nobody that is nobody seems to be asking even the most obvious questions about the demise of Vince Foster. Now is that not curious?

---

Herewith an interesting tactical ploy for our times. Late night shopper comes out of supermarket to be confronted by a hostile crowd of pickaninnies asking for money. The shopper greets hostiles in friendly fashion and raises a question,

"Any of you brothers seen my speedloader?"

"Speedloader?"

"Yah, something like this,"

and he brings out his Detective Special, fishes around in his pockets and says,

"A speedloader is something you use to load this piece. It's round and made of black rubber. I swear I dropped it around here someplace. Anybody see it?"

We have often noticed that one can frequently disconcert a goblin by asking him a question he is not prepared for. This would seem to be a good one.

---

From what little we have seen of the "militia" out here in the West, they might do well to clean up their act. Some of them seem to think that scruffiness is an asset to their position, but in this I think they are wrong. I do not maintain that camouflage clothing is necessarily scruffy, but it does tend to look that way. I do think that these milicianos would look a good deal more authoritative, legal, and proper if they wore pressed khaki or hunting greens and got rid of all that hair.

---

For those who wring their hands over the status of the poor, long-suffering Japanese, two questions should be posed about World War II in the Pacific.

- Who started it?
- Who won?

Whenever the Nips get uppity I reflect that those two questions should be engraved in bronze in prominent places throughout the now defunct Empire of the Rising Sun.

---

We now have \$720 in the *Waco Memorial Fund*. If you have contributed, remember that your money is safe and that we are holding it until we have enough to institute significant action.

---

If you have noticed the big split between IPSC pistol competition and the real world, it is easy to explain by the proposition that pistol competitors must hit what they shoot at, whereas the law enforcement establishment, in general, does not. In general, the cops do not feel that they need to hit the target, nor to hit it very hard if only they get off a lot of rounds. The spray-and-pray doctrine has triumphed.

Hence the enormous success of the Glock pistol. It is new, it works and it is cheap, thus it is the end product of one of the most successful marketing ventures the world has ever seen.

---

"There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things."

Machiavelli, 1513

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Here we have the F. Lee Bailey syllogism, as paraphrased from Bill Buckley:

A detective investigating a murder case has been known within the past decade to call a spade a spade. Therefore: O.J. Simpson could not have murdered his ex-wife.

This is called courtroom reasoning.

---

*"The Waco Whitewash"* by Jack DeVault, Major US Air Force, Retired.

This is a careful examination of the court action taken in Texas against the survivors of the Waco atrocity. You may remember that the most interesting thing about this trial was that the victims were convicted, while the perpetrators were not only set free but rewarded. Bringing this about in a court of law is a good trick, and it can only be achieved by the most outrageously illegal conduct on the part of the court itself.



I am not qualified to pass on this work, but it convinces me. I invite you to study it for yourself.

You may order the book from,

Rescue Press,  
8048 Midcrown 11,  
San Antonio, TX 78218  
telephone 210-653-3087

Price for the book is \$20.00, including postage and handling (but not Texas sales tax.)

---

Shortly now we are off to Guatemala ("we" includes Bob and Allie Young and the Countess.) The purpose is pistolcraft, and we will have a full report on return. Thereafter we are off to Austria to confer with Steyr-Mannlicher, and to Bavaria at the invitation of Blaser. We expect these ventures to be both enjoyable and entertaining, but they do interfere with our literary production. I have cleaned up a couple more chunks of "*The Art of the Rifle*," about which I have received many kind inquiries. The work does not go as easily as I had hoped, simply because of the principle of "The more you know, the more you know you don't know." I can say that I know a good deal about rifle work, but the more deeply I study it, the more I discover that there is more to study. I am getting there, though. In truth, if I waited until I knew all I should know, I would be dead. (Note how this does not seem to affect other "gun writers.")

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"Life is a comedy for those who think. A tragedy for those who feel."

Tacitus

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 7

16 May 1995

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## Springtime, 1995

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We have been taking advantage of the good weather to verify rifle zeros on our friendly range at Ravengard. Predictably, the SSG and the Blaser have remained dead-on through the winter, but the Springfield pseudo-Scout decided to throw high. Just why this is I cannot tell, but it supports the basic rule that one should never fail to check his zero at the scene of his endeavors before he takes the field. A good rifle, a good sight, and good ammunition should stay put, but sometimes they do not.

---

Please note that "apprehension" and "paranoia" are not synonyms. Paranoia is a mental affliction. Apprehension is reasonable awareness of hazard. Please!

---

So much has been written about the Oklahoma bomb that there is little point in adding to it. I can, however, extract the following from a recent letter to a friend which covers my feelings on the matter:

"A planted bomb is a despicable instrument, as any decent human being will attest. One may reflect, however, that more children were killed at Waco than at Oklahoma City. No sympathy must be shown to the perpetrators of either atrocity."

---

More than two thousand years ago Aristotle opined that most of the human race has essentially the soul of a slave. A recent *Associated Press* poll recorded that fifty-four percent of those questioned seemed willing to trade liberty for security. The sad fact is that one cannot trade the one for the other. You can surrender your liberty, but what you get in turn is never a significant increase in your security. There are those in Israel who feel that they would like to trade "land for peace." That will not work either.

---

A report from South Africa suggests that the new Vektor pistol, with its exotic, attractive lines, comes over the counter with an atrocious trigger release. Apparently the facilitation of precise placement is of scant interest to current producers of defensive sidearms.

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A gruesome hunting tale we just extracted from the *Safari Club magazine* points up yet again the need to "use enough gun," in Ruark's expression. It appears that this sportsman undertook to harass a water buffalo on India's east coast with what he refers to as a "carbine." Various compact rifles have been called carbines over the years, but given the time and place of this episode I conclude that the narrator was referring to the unsatisfactory 30 caliber US carbine of World War II. You would think almost anyone would know better than that!

The buff, after having been shot several times, crashed through the group and pinned one of the party to the ground. It was a smallish bull, with a spread between points of some twenty inches, but it succeeded in driving its horns through the body of the victim in two places high in the shoulder and low in the pelvis. This fixed the victim on the horns and the buff ran off into the jungle with the man on his head.

The attempted pursuit was not very successful. After four days, when the hunters finally made it, the mortally wounded buffalo was unable to rise, but he still bore on his horns the rotting wreckage of what had once been

a man. Ugly!

Moral: Don't hunt dangerous game with little guns. How odd that one should have to make that point!

---

We have been approached by Don Mitchell of California with the notion of producing a perfected clone of the 1911 allowing me a free hand in design control. This is most gratifying and bids to produce a really serviceable gadget-free sidearm at a very reasonable price.

This could be a really important development.

---

We have now seen the second issue of the *Guru's Gold* ready for the *Keneyathlon* at Whittington Shooting Center on 9–10 June. Remember that this award goes to that shooter who has the lightest rifle placing in the top five. We have made it up for an average size finger whatever that is. If it does not fit the winner, we invite him to send it in and we will re-size it for him.

The massive gold ring, complete with our insignia and its diamonds, is quite beautiful!

---

Those of you who are still watching the Simpson case on the tube may note what John Stuart Mill said about the adversary system more than one hundred years ago:

"The people speak and act as if they regarded a criminal trial as a sort of game, partly of chance, partly of skill, in which the proper end to be aimed at is not that the truth may be discovered, but that both parties may have fair play: in a word, that whether a guilty person should be acquitted or punished may be as near as possible an even chance."

The disturbing thing about this situation is that whatever verdict is reached in the matter of O. J. Simpson, the result will be towering rage on partisans of one side or another. We should perhaps remember that when the peasantry become enraged they burn down cities, whereas no matter how exasperated the bourgeoisie may feel, they do not take to the streets.

So much for justice!

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"If God had wanted us to vote, he would have given us candidates."

Joseph Sobran

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We see that Winchester is recalling one lot of 30–06/180 ammunition (#137HF22). If you happen to have any of this lot do not shoot it, but return it to your dealer for replacement.

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Remember Kenesaw, Georgia? That is the place where the city fathers decided to reduce crime by requiring householders to be armed. It is also the place that the national media will not discuss. Since the ordinance was enacted, there have been only two murders, both with knives. Since passage of the bill crime against persons decreased 74 percent and has stayed low. There have been just the two murders, and armed robbery, residential burglary, commercial burglary, and rape have almost disappeared.

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Bumper sticker:

"Hey, hey, ho, ho!  
BATF has got to go!"

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It would be nice if journalists in general would drop the term "open fire," which applies to area fire rather than individually aimed shots. To say that (a) "opened fire" on (b) is to suggest that he simply commenced shooting with little notion of hitting. This unfortunately is all too true in the present *Age of Spray and Pray*. It should not, however, be encouraged.

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A question for discussion in next week's class is "How much ammunition does one need?" One would not take that matter up with the *BATmen*, but among friends it has interesting aspects. The competitive pistolero thinks of his increments in terms of thousands, as does the dedicated trapshooter. The big-game hunter is usually much less voracious, even if he is a conscientious marksman. I have always felt that one hundred rounds a year of 30-06 and another of 308 would suffice, bearing in mind that on most hunting trips one may expend less than a dozen rounds including sighters. When we built Baby, more than a decade ago, John Gannaway constructed 200 rounds for me. I still have about 65 left waiting for me in Durban.

At Orange Gunsite we used to run to about 500 rounds of pistol and 400 rounds of rifle per class, but that is rather intensive practice.

As a boy I was permitted to take just 50 rounds of hunting ammunition into Canada per hunt. Today I believe the allowance in Botswana and Zimbabwe is 100.

With the 22, matters are very different, and on a picnic one may easily go through 50 rounds of 22 per customer.

The subject is obviously very flexible, but the "one box a year" man should remember that two different lots of ammunition may well not shoot to the same point, and that he really should expend about 200 rounds with his hunting rifle before embarking for his annual hunt.

Certainly circumstances alter cases, but I clearly remember the old adage:

"One cannot have too many books, too many wines, nor too much ammunition."

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We now are led to believe that it is politically incorrect to take the Constitution literally. We knew that the liberals held that view, but it is interesting to see them admit it at last.

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It would seem that when backlash faces backlash, we have polarization. When we have polarization there is little room for discussion. Much as we might like to reason together, this serves no purpose when our adversary has already made up his mind, with or without reason. Thus the nation faces a crisis unprecedented since 1861. Since there is little point in argument we must fall back on prayer.

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Now that the bunny-huggers have prevailed in Kenya, there exists a serious elephant problem. When elephants learn that they need not fear people they tend to become very casual about confrontation, and they have been killing people without restraint down in the Hemingway country that borders on what is now Tanzania. Balancing man against nature is a tricky business, and must be conducted by people who will not allow themselves to be ruled by the emotion of the moment.

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As we have long known, a man's weapon is less important than the man. Up in Littleton, Colorado, recently some creep went on a rampage and started shooting people. Since no firearm was ready to hand, a local construction worker terminated the action cleanly with a rock. The article did not say what caliber the rock was.

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Perhaps the Sarah Brady gang should shift their emphasis to "dung control" and enlist the help of the Agriculture Department. After all, ammonium nitrate is a fertilizer, and fertilizer is agriculture business. Soon

we may see a new type of federal enforcer, but now dressed in brown uniform and wearing a gas mask.

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In going back over some of the hunting adventures from the English Colonial Period I discover the custom of sleeping with a pistol under one's pillow. This was presumably because field accommodations were pretty fragile and one had no security apart from himself ("So what else is new?"). This raises the interesting question of what sort of pistol is best kept under the pillow. Much, of course, will depend upon the character of the individual in such matters as to how deeply he sleeps and how quickly he awakes. I think a good choice might well be a heavy-caliber Peacemaker. It may not be the most efficient fighting tool around for one who is wide awake, but very little can go wrong with it, and a ready round of snake shot might prove to be just what is needed.

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In response to an increasing body of misapprehension, I must point out that my forthcoming work "*The Art of the Rifle*" is about shooting, not about guns. There are a dozen or more good books available on the rifle itself, but as far as I can see no satisfactory work on rifle marksmanship at this time.

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"Most of us could get along better with much less government than we have; there are others though who seem to require lifelong shepherding from pre-natal care to the electric chair. It makes no sense to talk of self-government to a man who cannot even govern his own behavior."

Paul Kirchner

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If you are ever fortunate to be in a position where it seems necessary to pack two guns, take care always to pack the heavy. Let your companion or your assistant pack the light. If an emergency occurs, you do not want to be standing there with the rapier in your hand while the man carrying your battle-axe has suddenly departed.

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Placard carried in the Philippines:

"If you cannot protect us, arm us.  
If you cannot arm us, pray for us."

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All of us who participated in the Babamkulu expedition last year have been having a great time celebrating its first anniversary this month. We have broken out the journals and run the tapes. Lindy has fed us bobotie. We can by no means expect to repeat our frolic of last year, but we can relish the memories and look forward to new and different adventures. It has been truly said that you can never step into the same river twice, but the world is full of rivers to cross and each one is a fresh delight. Planning is half the fun, so break out the maps and get at it!

---

Our great caption contest seems to have run down, so now it is up to the judgement of the incorruptible judges to pass upon the entries. Right now I fancy the reported response of the English Lord who, after having won the Victoria Cross at the retreat from Dunkirk, refused to discuss the matter at dinner. "The noise, my dear and the people!" was his only comment.

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"Experience is what you get when you don't get what you wanted."

Italian Proverb

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"By the way, I have had the experience of surprising a burglar. He fled. I notified the police, ID'd him and pressed charges. He had a *very* long record. Playing the continuance game, he

and his lawyer caused me to spend 5 days in court. He spent 3. The judge sent him for alcohol counseling at taxpayer expense. I needed a drink; I paid for it myself. The judge was an ass, the court system was pathetic."

Bill O'Connor

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I have often denigrated variable–power scopes. People ask why.

First, variable power serves no purpose. You can hit what you can see, and it need not appear larger.

Second, variables frequently shift point of aim when power is changed. Not always, but enough to be troublesome.

Third, variable power reduces eye–relief, which should be greater rather than less.

Fourth, complexity increases fragility.

Fifth, variables cost more.

So now it seems that Zeiss has discontinued fixed–power sights. Because of the "lemming principle," they don't sell.

---

We will be going out of contact, so to speak, for the next few weeks, as our travels take us hither, thither and even yon. I do not feel too guilty about this, since this issue is number seven of the year, putting me a little ahead of a monthly output. Besides, I expect to learn much of interest in these journeyings and to be able to report back to you on my return to station.

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*[Editor's note: Photo of several men wearing raid suits, with "FBI" featured prominently on the suits, with their faces covered by nomex hoods.]*

Why are these men ashamed to show their faces?

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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. 3, No. 8

21 June 1995

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## Independence, 1995

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We really did not intend to get out another commentary in the month of June, during which the sequence of activities has been such as to preclude much of anything other than eating and sleeping – and drinking.

However, the material has just kept piling up, so we will try and put this one together in what time is available, which is, as usual, less than needful.

Our class in Guatemala went quite well, thanks to the ingenuity and activity of *family members* Bob Young and Tom Graziano.

It has been a short lifetime since our first visit to Guatemala, and while the geography remains the same the sociology is entirely different. The street hazard from bad guys is still there, but it comes from different directions, and while it is easier to combat, it is more difficult to predict. Most of our friends down there remain faithful to the 1911 pistol, as in our class the *crunchentickers* were pretty much the field of the military citizens and there was only one Glock (no revolvers.)

It remains so difficult to keep the thumb of an inexperienced shooter on top of the safety where it belongs that we are now thinking seriously of making the safety spring-loaded in the new pistol. *Family member* Rich Wyatt points out that if the safety goes on automatically when the thumb is not actuating it, it will be difficult for the weapon to be operated with the wrong hand unless the safety mechanism is "ambidextrous," a concept which is structurally unsound. *Vamos a ver.*

The other point which impressed itself again is that the student who chooses to use a *crunchenticker* must be shown how to operate the pistol in both trigger-cocking and thumb-cocking fashion, and given a choice by which he can prove to himself what system suits him better. This is not a matter to be left up to bureaucratic regulation.

The very good things about Guatemala are the climate, the tortillas (Mexican style,) the beef, the rum, and the people. On the negative side are the city traffic and the highly confused political situation. (Also the turistas, unless you keep your blood alcohol level at a proper count.)

We were delighted to meet again old friends: the Grimlers, the Harshbargers, and the Widmanns. Carlos Widmann probably should be president of the republic, but the very idea fills him with dismay. He flew us around in his helicopter, which, in that beautiful landscape, is a true luxury.

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I visited with *family member* Rich Wyatt up in Denver, but I still do not have a definite date for the forthcoming instruction sessions at Whittington Center. I will release those dates as soon as I have them.

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The *Keneyathlon* this year did not turn out well, from my standpoint. I tried to introduce the concept of a proper rifle to the contestants by means of the special award called "*The Guru's Gold*," but seems that target rifles have taken over this match. The lightest rifle in the first five, which was to receive the special award, weighed well over 10lbs. Something will have to be done about this, and David Kahn and I will come up with

a solution prior to next year's event.

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Plans for the *Third Annual Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* are already afoot at Whittington Center, and this time we plan to hold a party down at the St. Charles Hotel in Cimarron, which is a historic landmark and well worth a visit in itself. Naturally, we will feature rifle, pistol and shotgun shooting, as well as two full nights of declamation. All you frustrated thespians are well advised to start now on your preparation.

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We learned in Phoenix that overall NRA membership is stable, but that we got a considerable lift from the "Bush Flap." At the membership booth we were pleased to hear a new applicant for life membership state that she did not own a gun and did not intend to be a shooter, but that she wanted to pick up George Bush's membership number.

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At the NRA general meeting at Phoenix we were shown by Tanya Metaksa that now I have been personally excoriated in the pages of the *New York Times*. This is certainly a mark of "having arrived," and I thank the perpetrator sincerely.

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Many years ago I instituted the doctrine of always placing two shots solidly in the center of the adversary's torso. This has become the rule throughout much of the world, and while it is not necessarily wrong, it ought not to be followed slavishly. In a gunfight the precise placement of a big bullet is what wins. That second shot is just for insurance. However, in certain competitive circles the need for an almost instantaneous second shot has led to the introduction of small calibers, long slides and light loads. This is not a good answer and course designers should take note.

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*Family member* and riflemaster John Gannaway recently cruised out to a silhouette match, which he entered more out of curiosity than anything else. Not to my surprise, he won, being the marksman that he is. I find in my wanderings across the world that the people who enter marksmanship competition are in large measure not qualified for the task. I have seen people shooting in police pistol matches recently who have obviously not been properly schooled. The problem is serious and is one result of the loss of doctrinal purity on the part of IPSC competitors.

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Today the Israeli pistol salesmen are roaming the world and providing pistol training for those departments who will purchase their firearms. I have seen the results, and it is quite clear that Israeli pistol doctrine has little to recommend it apart from the fact that the Israelis teach it.

Who then can define proper pistolcraft at this time? At the beginning of *The Movement* it could be said that the best shots were those who were winning in practical competition. Since the loss of practicality in practical competition, who can say what technique is best? The original lifesaving technique was invented by Jack Weaver, perfected by Elden Carl and Ray Chapman, codified by John Plahn, and promulgated by me. Now, thirty years later, I do not see anything better being demonstrated worldwide. On the contrary what I see, in the main, is retrogression. It is, of course, presumptuous of me to claim that I know the answer, but looking around I certainly can say that I have seen a great many people who presume to know the answer and do not.

The important thing is to keep the seekers after excellence free of the public sector. Neither the police nor the military, are proper places in which to seek individual excellence. Many cops and many soldiers are very fine marksmen, but they are that regardless of their civil status. The sad fact is that individual excellence is a matter for development by the individual and it is not something that can be imparted in the mass. Ask any fighter pilot the next chance you get.

---

Gordon Cormack, a professional hunter now operating up in Mugabestan, assures us that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – War, Pestilence, Famine and Death – are riding in full cry across Africa north of the



Zambezi. Well, what did you expect?

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I am sure all of you have been battered by viewers—with alarm who have taken exception to Wayne LaPierre's characterization of the *BATmen* as "jackbooted thugs." This was probably an unfortunate use of words, though neither Wayne nor anyone else who is aware of the circumstances will recant the thought behind the phrase. Personally I do not know exactly what a jackboot is, but I suppose that term could be applied to the footgear worn by the *BATchick* who stomped the pet kitten to death in the Lamplugh raid. Perhaps if we call these people "kitten stompers," rather than thugs, we would get the message across to more people.

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Please note that another group in Waco has already secured the money and put up the Waco monument, thus we have no mission for the money that many of you have already subscribed to us here. We are returning your checks with thanks. You may not have built the monument, but you certainly showed the right spirit.

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I had always thought that the injunction not to shoot "until you can see the whites of their eyes" was properly attributed to Dr. Joseph Warren at Bunker Hill. Now I find that Frederick the Great has supposed to have used the same caution several generations earlier. Be that as it may, it does raise an interesting point. Just how far away can one see the whites of the eyes? Check that out yourself sometime. Just what is the range at which you can see the whites of someone's eyes?

---

We are somewhat amused by the hysteria manifest in the press at the suggestion by Gordon Liddy that if one is menaced by bad guys (particularly the ninja) one is wise to shoot for the head. That statement has got a whole bunch of journalists and commentators bleeding from the nose. One wonders why it should. Where else should you shoot a man if he is probably wearing an armored vest? If you decide to shoot you have made the big decision. Where you place your shot is merely a technical matter.

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A new and highly recommended bumper sticker:

ESCHEW ETHNICITY!

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Have you noticed all these pictures of people shooting from a putative kneeling position and not using the knee? One would assume that error would be obvious even to a person who had never thought about it, but we are living in an age where people will not do anything because it makes sense and will cross the street against the red light simply because they were never told not to.

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Phil Gramm certainly gave us a rousing speech at Phoenix, pointing out that he had always been a devoted bird shooter. He wound up his presentation by saying that we have not had an honest-to-God hunter in the White House since Theodore Roosevelt – and that's too long!

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I mentioned recently the demise of the hero Lord Lovatt and the elegance of his funeral. Now we learn to our dismay that the estate of the Clan Frazer is in total disarray and that the traditional seat in Scotland is to be broken up and sold in chunks. This is not unheard of in Britain, but it is nonetheless tragic. The heroic tradition has been dimmed throughout the world and journalists now use the word without any thought for its meaning.

"Heroism" is not the same as coping. A man who does his job properly and succeeds through his own efforts is definitely to be commended, but he is not a hero in the classic sense until he deliberately lays his life on the line for a cause he deems to be greater than himself.

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I was pleased, of course, at being awarded the Outstanding Handgunner trophy for this year. I have never been

one for "ribbons and stars," being more inclined to judge my performance by my own standards, but praise is always pleasant regardless of what one's own standards are.

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We were both amused and annoyed down in Guatemala at the efforts of uninstructed range personnel to calibrate poppers so that they would go down with minor caliber hits. After adjusting the targets with some care to illustrate to the shooter that if he did not succeed with a body shot he should shift to the head, we found the mozos rushing out between strings to reset targets which had been hit by nines and had not fallen down.

"Lo pegue pero no se caio'."

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Years ago we opined in print that the three great luxuries of life were fresh citrus fruit daily on the breakfast table, a private shooting range on one's own property, and a personal helicopter. Though we have been chided for not putting political liberty on that list, we feel that this is simply a matter of semantics. Liberty is essential – something one is prepared to die for. One does not die for luxuries, he simply seeks them and enjoys them insofar as possible. I have not met anyone who has enjoyed all three of my own idealized delectations simultaneously. Those who enjoy just two of the three are among the most fortunate of men.

---

Dick Thomas, of Columbia, Missouri has now proposed a twentieth anniversary party for IPSC to be held at Pretoria, South Africa, in March of '96. This is just the final impetus we needed to make our own decision to go back to Africa next year. There are about a dozen things we really should do down there (including a hippo on dry land,) and now we have enough to make a final decision. We plan to be there with bells on.

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When people tell you that personally owned firearms are a source of deadly danger you may point out that according to the National Safety Council about twice as many people die from medical malpractice as die from firearms accidents. Furthermore, there is no comparison to the risk from motor vehicles, falls, poisoning, drowning and simply choking to death on your food.

---

Curious that in light of this so-called fertilizer bomb in Oklahoma City our *Glorious Leader* in Washington made a point of offering the hospitality of the White House to the leader of the Irish Republican Army, which is the world's leading specialist in fertilizer bombs. This guy has a real talent for ineptitude. Or should we put it more precisely, *gaucherie*.

---

No doubt you have heard that Diane Feinstein, among others, is seeking to abolish the Office of Civilian Marksmanship, on the grounds that civilians ought not to know how to shoot. The leftist elite obviously fears an armed citizenry, which is, of course, the sole barrier to tyranny.

From the opposite point of view, what ought to be abolished is the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, a rogue organization that was never needed in the first place and which has now developed into an uncontrolled instrument of harassment recruited from the dregs of the federal employment establishment.

Let us by all means economize, but let us get our priorities straight.

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Fund raisers of all sorts on our side of the political spectrum report with dismay that too many people have regarded last November's election as a reduction in the need for the sinews of war. Not true! Last November's election was a skirmish – hardly even a battle, still less a war. We need that money for the 1996 election, in which Wayne LaPierre has stated pointedly to Bill Clinton, "We will clean your clock!" Well we should, but it will take both concentration and, unfortunately, money.

---

I discover with sorrow that Sweetheart grows old. This little rifle – Scout II – has had such a distinguished

record over the years that it has rightfully been termed by critics "the best rifle in the world." The fact is, however, that it has had so much hard use, and had so many rounds through it, that it is showing signs of wear. Thus I will no longer loan Sweetheart out. I could go to the trouble of having the piece rebarreled and rebedded, but I seriously doubt if she will ever obtain the almost supernatural edge she started with.

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"Much is being made of the shock that we're supposed to feel that the Oklahoma bombing was perpetrated by Americans, as opposed to Islamic militants. I don't know why this is an issue. I am quite used to American criminals and psychopaths committing atrocities – after all, it was putative Americans who looted and burned Los Angeles four years ago. What shocks me, and what our media are strangely indifferent to, are the crimes which our own government has committed against Americans."

Paul Kirchner

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Summer is upon us here at Gunsite and "June is busting out all over." Under proper supervision this whole estate could be beautified beyond recognition. May it indeed come to pass!

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I am now off to Austria where I hope to see the light of a new production Scout on the horizon. I have been on this exercise for five years now and time is running out. I devoutly hope that you all may be able to purchase an idealized production rifle and an idealized production pistol over the counter in 1996. If that comes to pass, I will consider my life well spent.

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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. 3, No. 9

August 1995

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## High Summer, 1995

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Well, wow! Even now that we have done it, I find it hard to believe that the Countess and I could have accomplished so many things in such a short time on our European venture. Of course sprinting at this rate, there were at least half a dozen more things we should have taken care of and did not. However, it is wonderful to combine business with pleasure in this fashion, and while we regret not staying longer, it is always nice to have something left out to take care of on the next trip.

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As promised, we sat down and examined the prototype of the Mannlicher production Scout at length. I have promised not to talk about the instrument in any detail, and keeping that promise will have me bursting with frustration until the factory sees fit to reveal its revolutionary wunderkind. It has taken a long time to bring this about, and it will be another long time until you can put your money down and take it out of the box, but barring fire, flood, and other acts of God, the project is set up and underway.

Praise the Lord!

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The other part of our cup-of-joy is the Mitchell pistol, for which Don Mitchell and I have signed the papers. Here again it will take some time to put the piece in the box for shipment, but I would like to think that you will be able to examine it in person at the next SHOT Show.

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Summer is upon us here at Gunsite, complete with thunderstorms and pigs in the garden (javelina, that is.) Personally I am rather fond of the little pigs, but they are destructive. If we could just train them to eat only the squash and leave the other plants alone I would be willing to share our fresh produce.

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We have enjoyed continuous satisfaction with the Swift bullets. It should be noted, however, that the Swift soft-point in 458 caliber has a semi-spitzer configuration which makes it just a touch long for the already crowded 458 Winchester case. The answer, of course, is to skip the 458 and go to a larger capacity case such as the 460 G&A Special or others of that breed.

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We have long suggested that anyone who has a 458 now is well advised to re-barrel it for the 40-caliber 400-grain bullet. This combination is usually referred to as the 416 Taylor, and it offers better balanced ballistics all around.

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In view of the recent bear fatalities in Alaska it may be time to re-issue the five *Gunsite Bear Rules*, as follow:

1. Be alert.
2. Take bears seriously. They are not cuddly.
3. Never enter bear country on foot without a powerful firearm and the skill to use it well. (If this is not permitted, do not go.)
4. Do not pitch your camp on a bear thoroughfare, most particularly along the banks of a stream full of fish.

5. Be alert.

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War cry from darkest Connecticut: "Watch it, kid, or I will twist your head around 'til your cap's on straight!"

---

From Paul Kirchner, our colleague in darkest New England, we hear the following:

"When Clinton had O'Grady in to lunch at the White House they spent their time swapping war stories. O'Grady told about how he avoided the Serbian military, and Clinton about how he avoided the US military."

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We note with considerable satisfaction that the murder rate in Florida continues to decline since that state's right-to-carry law was further refined and strengthened this year. And then there is the famous town of Kennesaw, Georgia, but the media do not want to talk about that either.

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The current rapid increase in state concealed-carry laws has made it apparent that the defensive pistol may be more conveniently carried in a belt pouch than in a holster. Thus in training and practice specific exercises in getting the pistol into action from the fanny pack must be encouraged. As to that, practical pistol competition should now include at least one stage of fire in which the pistol must be produced from a belt pouch. Only this way can we discover what sort of belt pouch is best and how it is best used.

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We have long felt that by rights the reticle in a telescope sight should be etched on the glass rather than mounted separately in the focal plane. Such a reticle could not come apart or become otherwise disarranged. Discussion with Swarovski, however, brings up a point that I had overlooked. It seems such reticles tend to pick up minute flecks of trash inside the tube. One would think there would not be anything of that sort inside a carefully made optical instrument, but I am told dirty reticles are what caused the Steyr-Mannlicher people to shift from the ring sight in the AUG to a more conventional crosswire in later production. I would like to know more about this, but I am not in a position to conduct the necessary experiments.

---

We note with some excitement that Stoeger of New York is now advertising an authentic Luger replica. The Luger, of course, is one of the most glamorous and exotic personal instruments of the 20th century. It is long obsolete, but that does not detract from its chic – probably to the contrary. So if your piggy bank is full and you simply must have a new toy, consider the new Luger.

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We were handsomely hosted at the Blaser factory at Isny, which is in the éllgau. This is a charming province long famed for its cheese, and perhaps may become equally famous in the future for its rifles.

Here we saw the wonders of robot technology, which left us goggle-eyed. After seeing these intelligent machines at work one wonders if the human race has finally become irrelevant. Shades of 2001! We have talked about the Blaser M93 straight-pull rifle at some length in the past, but a novelty we ran across on this visit was the Alpine single-shot rifle, which I had never seen before. In the Alps you hunt the gams – the chamois. He bounces around above timberline, and when you engage you only get one shot. Therefore, the gams rifle need not have any repeating feature. The ones we saw were beautifully made, top break, single-loaders weighing almost nothing. In fact on the one we examined the most massive ingredient was the sight. This sort of piece enables the hunter to scramble around in the rocks almost unencumbered and still capable of delivering his decisive single round with the greatest accuracy of which he, the shooter, is capable. This specialty is almost diametrically in opposition of the Scout, which is above all a general-purpose weapon, but for the-man-who-has-everything and wishes to hunt way up there in the clouds, it is curiously attractive.

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In a strange incident up in Maine last month some wacko decided to break into his ex-concubine's house in

violation of a court order restraining him from further sexual abuse. So he approached the house in the middle of the night armed with his trusty 22 rifle, and for some reason attempted to break in a glass window using the rifle butt—first. In so doing he shot himself neatly and fatally in the head. He must have been from out—of—state – no Downeaster would ever do a thing like that, now would he?

Here we have a classic example of *the Good Riddance Factor* in operation.

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We have never been partial to shooting slings made of nylon webbing, though they may suffice as carrying straps. They lack sufficient body for proper placement and they tend to slip. Colleague Finn Aagaard tells us now that these characteristics can be remedied by the application of various sorts of goop to the webbing. I must consider this a temporary expedient, however, and I will continue to use leather as long as we have any cows left.

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Those who are statistically inclined may consider that 98 percent of all human beings ever born are now dead. Statistically you only have a 2 percent chance of being alive as you read this. You better check your pulse, quick.

---

"In Månchen steht ein Hofbraåhaus!" Yes indeed, there it stands as it has always stood, and it gives one a profound sense of serenity in an uncertain world. The Hofbraåhaus in Munich is exactly the same today as it was when I was a boy, and as it was when my father was a boy, and as it was when Theodore Roosevelt was a boy. The building is the same, the furnishings and decorations are the same, the music is the same, the singing is the same, and, of course, the beer is the same. And customs stay the same. Seating is "ranch style" and you cannot be served a puny beer. A beer in the Hofbraåhaus is a liter, which is something over a quart, and that is the only size stein available. The sausages, the sauerkraut, the salzbrot remain just as always, and in today's world such cultural continuity is almost unique. The yodelling, the Schuhplatler and the Alphorns remain the same, and the squadrons of little camera—clicking Japanese tourists do not detract therefrom. The Bavarians invented Gemåtlich—keit, and they still own it serene and unchanging in an ever darkening civilization.

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We hear that the Russian ninja engaged in the suppression of the Chechens have now taken to wearing face masks. I guess this is a trick they learned from the American cossacks – a sort of cultural exchange.

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Mind—set is everything, as we have always taught and will continue to teach. You cannot solve a problem if you do not know you have one, and you cannot win a fight if you do not realize that it has started. Recently down in Yuma we had a couple of dreary murders in the law enforcement community evidently attributable to the fact that the two victims simply could not realize that a brother officer could be capable of intradepartmental homicide. The murderer in this case could not even get his little old Mac10 into operation until the victims gave him time to do so. It is fine to be a good shot, and it is fine to master precise gunhandling, but these things do not matter at all without the proper mind—set. If you are in Condition White, you lose.

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Imagine our amazement when at the airport on the morning of our departure from Munich we saw an item in the paper to the effect that "studies have shown" that Bavarians do not drink enough. Bavarians may indeed have their shortcomings, but I would not have dreamed that insufficient beer was one of them. Obviously this is a subject worth considerable research, so book your tickets as soon as possible.

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How depressing it is to see the number of people who do not understand at all about the operation of the bolt—action rifle! In a recent feature article I ran across the point that the advantage of the lever gun over the bolt is that the butt need not be taken out of the shoulder to continue the action. This is a dreadful thing to think about for one who spent many nights after taps "snapping—in" in preparation for the following day's record run. We sat on the floor of the barracks in the dim squad light dropping the striker and instantly snapping the bolt until the interval between controlled shots was reduced to that necessary to bounce back

from recoil. Watching a man take the butt from his shoulder when he works a bolt strikes a rifleman as an equivalent of watching a pedestrian put the wrong foot in the stirrup and swing himself into the saddle facing aft. Sometimes I cannot avoid the feeling that we are no longer producing serious men. (Maybe that is the reason we put girl pilots in fighter planes.)

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The rifle class we promised at Whittington Center has been delayed, partly because of conflict in dates and partly because the organizers, Rich and Rebecca, decided to run off and get married. We wish them every happiness and we look forward to rescheduling the rifle session in mid-October. Those who want in on that class should contact Rich Wyatt at (303) 232-0542.

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And now we have a gent who has gone forth and taken his moose with a 50 caliber single-shot BMG rifle. He is quoted as saying that "The only reason I used this gun was to demonstrate that this cartridge has a legitimate purpose." The man's heart is in the right place, but the point he sought to prove was the wrong one. "Legitimate sporting purpose," which has been inserted into law several places, is absolutely irrelevant. The Founding Fathers did not seek to protect our right to hunt moose. I should have thought that everybody would know this by now, but obviously a good many do not.

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Those fortunates who are familiar with the old Mannlicher plant in the Steyr industrial complex will be pleased to know that when Mannlicher relocated their main smallarms factory they carefully preserved all that marvelous Russian handcarved woodwork in the conference room and replaced it in the new building. These people properly revere traditional values.

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Jean-Pierre Denis, the distinguished President of the International Practical Shooting Confederation, is definitely stepping down from his office next month at the general meeting in Sweden. He is going to be difficult to replace, but three good men have been proposed from various parts of the world. Up for election at this time are: Andrç Tasset of Belgium, Nick Alexakos from Canada, and General Denis Earp from South Africa. We respect all three, but if we had a vote it would go to General Earp, who is, in our opinion, distinctly the best qualified man for the job.

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We have a good anecdote from our neighbor and colleague, Colonel Bob Young, who did a stint not long ago in Saudi Arabia. It seems that on this occasion an American aircraft was parked on a runway, and being rather a sensitive item it was given an individual sentry to keep unauthorized personnel at a proper distance. In a demonstration of bad judgement, somebody in charge gave this job to a girl soldier, the idea of which is extremely offensive to a devout Muslim. In Saudi Arabia at this time the purity of the faith is enforced by priestly types who prowl the country on the lookout for violations of doctrine. These characters are armed with long, heavy whips. One of them wandered onto the base and became totally scandalized at the sight of this girl patrolling the aircraft with her M16. Shouting holy imprecations, he endeavored to use his whip on the lass, who quite reasonably shot him six times in the chest with her 223. *International Incident!* Bob tells us that the Air Force moved with uncharacteristic alacrity and got the girl out of the country in a matter of minutes, and the whole incident was immediately swept under the rug. It is hard to say who won that round, but it recalls the principles of *Hastings' Third Law*, which reads

"Do not throw rocks at people with guns."

---

5 August is our own personal holiday. This is the anniversary of the day on which Danie van Graan organized that lion for us. The experience was tremendous. Confronting an angry lion head-on in the thorn at rock-throwing range is not an adventure granted to most people. I am glad it happened to me late in life, since if I had brought it off in my youth I would have been going downhill for the rest of my hunting career.

So now on the 5th of August we wish everybody a *Felicitous Lion Day*. Here's to the lion, here's to Danie, and here's to the Lion Scout!

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 10

August 1995

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## Dog Days, 1995

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We did not announce the ten-day delay in the production of this commentary, which was due partly to eye surgery on my part and partly to the summer vacation of Joyce Anderson, who is our production wallah. We did not think people would notice, but we are getting a sock full of complaints asking about the whereabouts of this paper. Well, here it is.

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A number of people have pointed out that there is some distinct merit in the red dot rifle sight. It seems to be very quick, and if it is a touch imprecise at distance, this may not be a serious handicap. A sportsman should not attempt shots beyond his 90 percent capacity limit, and very few riflemen can hold into half the diameter of the vital zone from a field position under pressure at long range. Remember you should never brag about how long your shot was, but rather how close it was.

In any case the red dot, as well as the laser, have yet to prove themselves in the *Keneyathlon*, which is the most serious rifle competition being conducted at this time.

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Guru say:

"Featherheads should be seen and not heard."

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First off, I wish to remind all the faithful of the forthcoming *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* scheduled for 20, 21, 22 October at the Whittington Shooting Center. If you have not made your reservations yet, note that it is not too early. Address,

Brad Schuppan, c/o Whittington Center, PO Box 700, Raton, NM 87740, (505) 445-3615,

and remember that accommodations at Whittington are not unlimited.

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I should also announce the scheduling of my next rifle class on 9 – 14 October, also at Whittington. To make this reservation call,

Rich Wyatt, 3430 Wright St., Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, 303-232-0542.

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The new issue Smith & Wesson 357 (#640) seems very well conceived for the current age of concealed carry legislation and equipment. I would rather be able to cock it, as in teaching ladies defensive pistolcraft I find that quicker progress is made in the thumb-cocking mode. However, since the piece is apparently designed for use across the tabletop, this may not be a serious matter.

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It may be that we will never learn how Jimmy Hoffa died, and the way things are going, the same may be said of Vince Foster. Foster may indeed have killed himself, though that seems most unlikely from available information, but we can be quite sure that if he did he did not carry himself into the park and lay himself out for inspection.

As to that, no one knows what sort of gunfire killed the four *BATmen* at Waco. The nature of the wounds would seem to me distinctly relevant to the inquiry.

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The Waco inquiry was botched. The question about that atrocity was not how it was conducted, but why. Janet Reno has insisted that she bears total responsibility. That being the case, one wonders why she is not in jail.

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The new Walther 200KK 22 rifle appears to be a gamesman's triumph. It looks less like a rifle than the Eiffel Tower, and it costs somewhere between \$3,000 and \$4,000, depending upon circumstances. My own venerable 22 cost \$34, and it has always shot every bit as well as I can shoot it. Here at the *Sconce* we have recently been treated to a surfeit of ground squirrels. They are not large and they offer fleeting targets, but that little Remington, which I obtained at age 14, puts them away in fine style, though I do find that a 22 long-rifle high-speed solid will rarely exit the target.

As I have pointed out several times, mechanical potential which the operator cannot appreciate is useless. (Of course, it may be fun to know it is there.)

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Among the other ways in which our culture seems to be deteriorating is in monument design. I thought the Vietnamese monument was about as bad as they could come until I saw the Korean War monument. Both are dreary – extolling dreariness rather than achievement. They certainly do not inspire the viewer to emulate the achievements of the deceased. Well, we can always go and admire the Iwo Jima monument. Now, that's more like it!

---

"The NRA is the reason the Republicans control the Congress."

Bill Clinton. Quoted in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* for 13 January.

This is the finest compliment that could be paid to our association. We hear that membership is down somewhat, and this is attributed to the rather striking dues increase leveled last year. Money talks, of course, but to opt out of the only organized defender of liberty in this country at this time because membership costs more is rather like deserting from Valley Forge because of the shortage of whiskey. The NRA may not be perfect – nothing is – but still it constitutes our most powerful bastion against tyranny. If it is not doing everything right, according to your likes, get in there and work with it – do not back off from it! In the reported words of Dr. Franklin,

"We must all hang together or assuredly we will all hang separately."

---

The most disastrous piece of news of the year was the decision of the Connecticut Supreme Court to the effect that a robbery victim is not legally entitled to defend himself.

"The underlying policy is that the protection of human life has a higher place in the scheme of social values than that value that adheres to standing up to aggression."

That is a cowardly, specious, dishonorable, un-American, disgusting position! It is not acceptable, and it must be overturned. It is impossible to render honor to the flag of the United States while such a ruling stands.

---

Is it not curious how the classics repeat themselves in current life according to the dictum that life imitates art? Here in the States all summer we have been treated to real life versions of both Othello and Medea. Somehow I think the classical versions are better.

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As a long-time admirer of the magazine cutoff on bolt-action rifles, I was somewhat amused at the efforts of a journeyman gun writer to deride the idea on the grounds that the cutoff takes too long to operate. If it takes too long for you, do not operate it! Simple, what?

This suggests saying that a trigger-cocking pistol is always going to be faster than a thumb-cocker, because you have to do something to the latter while you are lining up. Competition has proved positively that you can either cock the hammer or disengage the safety while you are in the process of lining up. Likewise you can work the bolt while you are recovering your sight picture with a rifle.

Since detachable box magazines seem to be the coming thing in bolt guns, there is a very simple solution to this magazine cutoff question. This is what may be called the "Double Detent." This allows the magazine to be inserted until it catches, but since the magazine is not fully inserted the action will not feed, thus the magazine is in effect cut off. To actuate the magazine the shooter simply has to squeeze it further, catching on the second detent. When you hear and feel two clicks, she is ready. When you hear only one click, the magazine is in reserve. I do not know of any action which features this now, but only a couple of years ago we did not know about ABS braking systems either.

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To Albert Einstein is attributed the dictum, "Everything should be kept as simple as possible – but no simpler." See how that applies to other activities! In driving, always drive as fast as possible, but no faster. In shooting, always shoot as quickly as possible, but no quicker. The true expert is one who understands where the dividing lines occur.

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We hear from South Africa that while organized insurrection is down, street crime is up – almost to the level of the major cities of the US. The proper response to this, of course, is "Get out into the country as best you can." That goes for both Africa and the US

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A nasty trend we have detected in new cars is the elimination or radical reduction of the glove compartment, attributed to the presence of the passenger-side air bag. In our opinion the glove box is essential, and its absence might well be a good reason for looking up some other make of car (or a secondhand vehicle without the air bags).

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I do not think I mentioned the name of the *BATgirl* who stomped the kitten to death in the course of the Lamplugh raid. Her name is Donna Slusser. That is one to remember along with Lon Horiuchi. We are treated to inquiries and investigations, but it seems very difficult to ask a straight question of a perpetrator. "Mr. Horiuchi, why did you shoot Vicki Weaver in the face? Ms. Slusser, why did you stomp on that kitten?" "Self defense" will not do.

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*Family member* Cameron Hopkins reports yet another failure of the 375 Magnum cartridge on buffalo up in Tanganyika. The 375 is simply not a proper buffalo gun. To use it on buffalo is the equivalent of using a 9mm on a human being. It may work, but it may also fail.

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"Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide."

John Adams

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We may note that Browning now advertises that they put an excellent trigger in the venerable P35. The implication, of course, is that previously it did not have a good trigger, which bears out my own experience with this piece. A P35 with a good trigger action is about as commonplace as a Luger with the same. If you find one, hang on to it!

---

Our colleague, Paul Kirchner, recently enjoyed a potentially lethal confrontation in darkest New Haven (which is in Connecticut). He was alone against three goblins, but he was aware and he was ready and it was his attitude rather than his marksmanship that won the day. There must be such a thing as "psychic competence transference." Paul was ready and even anxious for the scene to escalate, and this threw doubt into the minds (?) of the three goblins. No physical contact, no blood, no gendarmes, no handcuffs, no trouble (except that those three specimens are still running around loose). In all a joyous good show!

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Babamkulu veteran Jack Buchmiller notes that in 1597 a royal edict banned the Scots from playing golf because it was felt by authority that people should be practising archery rather than smacking balls. Much to be learned here.

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There are those who claim that the *Keneyathlon*, as practiced in 1995, is more of an athletic than a marksmanship contest, and that its ranges as now set up tend to be unreasonably long. These points can be remedied, since the rules are not engraved in stone. If you have suggestions as to how to make this contest more truly practical, please address them to,

Dr. David Kahn, 6211 South Crest Brook Dr., Morrison, CO 80465.

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*Family member* Cas Gadomski reports a total failure to expand on the part of a 230–grain Black Talon bullet from a 338 Magnum, impacting a bison at 240 yards. This is certainly not enough to disparage the entire line of Black Talon rifle ammunition, but it does point up the fact that expansion in animal tissue is always problematical, and tends to diminish with impact velocity. I intend to check out the Black Talon bullet on elk this fall and in Africa next year. There is always more to learn.

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A stuffed and deep–fried jalapeno chili is a new and tasty snack. We were much annoyed, however, at noticing that in at least one market in Arizona it is referred to as a "pepper popper." For shame! The *Pepper Popper* is a humanoid steel target invented by John Pepper of Maryland, and now in wide use throughout the world. I made no effort to copyright the name, and anyone may call anything whatever he wishes, but I am still very much annoyed.

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In tribute to Steyr–Mannlicher, this kudo is from *family member* Barrett Tillman:

"And then there is the SSG, which never loses zero and shoots into 2 inches from here to the horizon. I am sure it will be banned before long."

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For those of you who are troubled by trespassers, we learn that if you can obtain a calf of the black wildebeest, or gnu, and raise him as a pet, he will make a superb fence–watcher. The adult bull is both territorial and pugnacious. He is also fast and alert. See your local dealer.

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We had an interesting minor confrontation in Encanto Park in Phoenix a couple of weeks ago. It appears that the Parks and Recreation Department had posted signs throughout the park advising that firearms were prohibited in city parks and attributing the prohibition to a city ordinance which did not exist. Accordingly some fifty people brought their weapons with them openly to the park on Saturday morning. (As you know, carrying a firearm openly is not forbidden in Arizona.) As it turned out no scuffling occurred, no voices were raised, and no one was arrested.

Here is a case where the city government took an illicit act – knowingly – but did not attempt to enforce it. This is sinister behavior on the part of the administration and points up the fact that while the United States may still be a free country, it is up to us to ensure that it is kept so.

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Now Rigby announces the reintroduction of the 10-bore elephant rifle, which fires a 900-grain bullet at something over 1500f/s. The weapon itself is a handmade, very expensive double and the ammunition supply is something of a problem; however, it should be a very nice buffalo stopper and the manufacturers claim that it kicks somewhat less than a modern 460 or 470 high-pressure rifle. Well bully for Rigby, but if I am to tackle anything really big I will rest content with Baby, which features 6500 foot pounds, excellent ghost-ring sights, a nifty trigger, and six rounds at the ready. (Besides, when I built Baby back in the beginning of my African period, it set me back a mere \$900.)

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I am sure you know about Schumer by now, but just in case you have not, here he is portrayed by Linda Bowles, who is one of our favorite columnists:

"Rep. Charles Schumer (D-NY) exposed himself as a radical, left-wing extremist who is phobic about guns and sees a camouflaged member of the National Rifle Association lurking behind every bush. He is a conspiracy theorist, outspokenly paranoid, who firmly believes that the Waco hearings were some kind of insidious NRA plot to prevent him from confiscating all the guns in America, except, of course, those in the hands of the government."

Schumer constitutes a blot on the democratic process.

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I confess I do not understand the proper place of the "light-heavy," in both rifle and pistol cartridges. The 41 Magnum was introduced by Smith & Wesson some years ago, but it never caught on – I suppose because it would not do anything that a 44 Magnum would not do better. Today I feel somewhat the same about these 400-grain 40 caliber rifle cartridges. If you need something more than a medium – and you do for buffalo – you certainly should go to a heavy (500-grains, 45 caliber, 2400f/s – at least). Half measures are not, in my opinion, a good idea. A heavy costs no more than a light-heavy. It weighs about the same. If it kicks a little more you will never notice it in action, and it affords noticeably increased cross-sectional impact area. However the 416s are all the rage. This may not make a lot of sense, but skillful marketing does not have to make a lot of sense. Examples proliferate.

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We had a real hot spell here in Arizona – now thankfully past. It never logged less than 110 high in Phoenix for 17 days, and once it reached 121. This is hotter than Riyadh, Mecca, Timbuktu or even Poona. It was indeed sultry, but it did not detract from the delight of tomatoes fresh off the vine and corn right off the stalk, two native American delicacies which invite us to count our blessings.

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All out for Africa in March of '96! Make your reservations now.

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Colleague Glenn Jacobs, publisher of a local newspaper in the White Mountains, puts forth as a worthy candidate for the *1995 Waffepösselhaft Award* the Army's new Objective Individual Combat Weapon, which is designed to make an infantryman deadly whether or not he knows how to shoot. Its projected cost to the Army is said to be about \$1,500 per unit. One wonders if that would be a suitable weapon for the Swiss, where each man takes his own piece home with him every night. Of course the Swiss have not given up entirely on marksmanship, so perhaps the OICW is not the proper answer for them.

A spokesman said that not all soldiers will get the new weapon – "only infantry troops most likely to find themselves in firefights." I always thought that that is what infantry troops are most likely to find themselves in!

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<p>I am sorry to report the death of Israel Galili, designer of the Galil series of rifles. We were privileged to meet and talk with him some years back and we truly admired his work. He was a great little guy. May he rest in</p>
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peace.

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It is said that Voltaire, an announced atheist, still had one favorite prayer, to wit:

"O Lord, make mine enemies ridiculous!"

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 11

September, 1995

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## Equinox, 1995

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"In Heaven it is always Autumn."

John Donne

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The NRA Directors' meeting in Washington was interesting, as usual, and the word I can bring back to you is that despite the flagrant and unabashed hostility of the media, from whom we all must get our news, the NRA is in good shape financially and steadily increasing its influence. This is a tough war, since it is an axiom in Washington that it is image rather than truth which delineates reality. There are a great many fools among the rabbit people who are hoodwinked into believing that what the media promulgate in regard to our traditional American liberties represents mainstream opinion. As we know, it does not. Once outside the metropolis and its suburban support you encounter the real America, which is not as gullible as our news agencies seem to think. The great majority in rural America may be disinclined to propagandize, but it remains true to its traditions, one of which is the armed citizen.

This bothers Senator Feinstein, since she disapproves of the armed citizen and is hard at work trying to abolish the Office of Civilian Marksmanship. Elitists of both the right and the left have always feared the armed citizen, as well they should, for an armed citizenry cannot be tyrannized.

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I have been informed that there may be enough Orange Gunsite graduates in Southern California to support the establishment of a "Raven Club." This may be worth investigating. Let us discuss the idea at the reunion on 22 October.

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The new "weapon of the masses" seems to be the Chinese version of the Kalashnikov. It is not very accurate, nor very powerful, nor very well made – but it is cheap, and this matters very considerably. It is not as good a weapon technically or tactically as a Winchester or Marlin lever action 30–30, but it is a self-loader, and that makes a great difference to a lot of moderns who feel that they must have semi-automatic fire in order to "keep up."

Note that Mike Root, our man in Cuchillo, cleaned up the iron sight category at the last *Keneyathlon* with his 30–30. I do not think anyone is likely to do that with an AK47, or clone thereof.

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It is amusing to learn that the Israelis have decided that they should not use sights on their pistols. That should prove great good news to the Arabs.

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You should be aware that the new Mitchell pistol, upon which Don Mitchell and I are now collaborating, is not simply another clone of the 1911, but rather radically innovative in various ways. In our many years of teaching we have discovered that about 25 percent of the men and 50 percent of the women have hands too small to grip the old Browning frame in satisfactory manner. I have good-sized hands and this never bothered me personally, but in terms of design it does pose a problem. Back at Orange Gunsite I came up with a process known as "slim-lining," by which the circumference of the butt, where it is encircled by thumb and

forefinger, could be reduced by 7/8 of an inch. This does not sound like much, but it constitutes a surprising improvement. The slim–lining process, which involves reducing unnecessary thickness in about six places, will be a feature of the new Mitchell pistol, and a feature not shared by any other full–service sidearm at this time. There are many compact versions of the 45 auto, but while they are both shorter and shallower, they are not thinner to the hand. All the new Mitchell pistols will be slim–lined, making them vastly more comfortable in small hands and fully as stable in large hands.

We are searching for a model name for the new pistol. Any of you good people who have any brilliant suggestions should just send them in.

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You can get your zero targets from Kwik Print in Prescott,

404 W. Goodwin St., Prescott, AZ 86303, (520) 778–0900.

This target is my own personal design and I think highly of it.

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In Northern Europe during the Middle Ages the tradition of wergeld was widely observed. This is, bluntly, payment for murder. If one could pay off the victim's family, the case was closed. See how we have progressed, now that the Justice Department, while "admitting no guilt," is either paying or preparing to pay the Weaver family several million dollars for the life of their wife and mother, Vicki Weaver, who was shot in the face by Lon Horiuchi while holding her baby. Wergeld was supposed to have been abandoned in principle a thousand years ago, but here we are reintroducing it at the close of the twentieth century.

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Well, now we know where General Colin Powell stands on the issues.

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I find it difficult to accept the weeping and wailing that we hear from the media about the possibility of battle casualties. When people fight, there will be casualties. When a man puts on his country's uniform he accepts the distinct possibility of being killed in action. When we whimper that we cannot imagine sending our infantry troops into the Balkans because some of them may be killed we are in effect saying that we need no army. Personally I am more concerned about air operations, because when aircraft are shot down over enemy territory savages on the other side may use the deliberate torment of our fliers as a means of exerting pressure upon us. If we send infantry into the attack we may get some people killed, but we will not have to watch them on television being hung up by their thumbs.

People die in war. People also die on the highways and in the hospitals. Death is one thing we can be sure of, and perhaps we should remember that "Dulce et decorum pro patria mori est."

---

In a previous issue we forgot to mention that we discovered the television service in Guatemala to be superior to what we can pick up here in the wilds of Arizona. In our hotel we were treated alternately to the Discovery Channel and the current bullfights. The corrida de toros is in no sense a sport, being rather a demonstration of the triumph of human grace and courage over brute strength. It is not popular with most Anglo–Saxons, but that does not invalidate it as a stirring spectacle – featuring the deliberate defiance of death.

(I can hear the bambiists screaming all the way up here on the plateau!)

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We hear from our overseas agents that law enforcement and the whole judicial system in Kenya has now broken down to the extent that the people are now largely executing summary justice on the spot. There is a good deal to recommend this, but it does have certain disadvantages, principally in what may be called over–control. (Shoplifters are frequently beaten to death at the scene.)

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Those of you who have had the chance to peruse "*Quartered Safe Out Here*," by George MacDonald Fraser, doubtless noticed the author's interesting comparison of the British jungle carbine with the Thompson machine pistol. At one point the author was required by the table of organization to carry the Thompson, and after using it in a couple of actions found it convenient to drop it in the river and scrounge an example of his beloved 303 carbine for his own continued use. The machine pistol, in any guise, is a highly specialized instrument of limited general usefulness. It does pretty well for murder in closed spaces, such as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. It does well in boat-versus-boat actions where the vessels are in contact, especially at night. It is sometimes a good instrument for the point man when patrolling in heavy cover against low dedication troops. Also the sound of its discharge may serve to intimidate the unenlightened.

But the machine pistol (submachine gun) simply does not dispose of the range or power necessary for a general purpose personal weapon; besides which it encourages sloppy shooting and the exhaustion of ammunition.

I do recommend Mr. Fraser's book as one of the best memoirs of World War II action that I have read.

---

Strange as it may seem to our over-civilized friends throughout the world, it still warms our heart to see pistols worn openly in the check lines of supermarkets in Prescott. Sad to say most of the exemplars may properly be characterized as geezers, but then Prescott has always qualified as a geezer town – that is one reason why we moved here.

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Despite my decades of experience in this gun business I fear that I still do not fully understand about recoil effect. It must bother some people because they talk about it so much, but what I do not understand is why shooters do not simply ignore it. Rifle and shotgun students, under my tutelage, have always been able to do this. The blow you receive from the butt of a rifle or from a shotgun is considerably less than that you suffer repeatedly in going a few rounds with a sparring partner in a friendly match. It is certainly less than that which you feel when you throw a shoulder block. Of course it can go to extremes, and I have been told that the recoil of the new 700 Nitro is pretty fierce, but we need not work with extremes. The recoil of a 10-gauge Magnum, or of a 458 Winchester, is simply not disturbing enough to bother about.

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A minor scandal erupted in Phoenix recently over individual police sales of the AUG. This is yet another example of how foolish it is to make laws against things rather than acts. A lot of people discovered that the AUG, whatever one may think of it as a firearm, is a nifty item on which to practice the "buy low, sell high" principal. I do not believe any of the people involved were especially interested in shooting the piece, but such people are always interested in turning a fast buck.

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We recently saw a curious headline in one of our newspapers, to wit: "China To Expel Wu." We got to thinking about that and concluded that if China could bring itself to expel enough wu the whole country could go airborne, fittingly "hoist by its own petard."

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Many years ago in Command and General Staff school at Quantico the class was treated to a super secret session on biological warfare. It was impressive, but it does not seem to have been followed up. Fifty years later the media are still talking about infection with known diseases such as anthrax. It was impressed upon us back at school that if the biological weapon is to be used in any serious fashion the agent will be an unknown disease for which, of course, there is no treatment nor cure. This disease will be created in a laboratory and given a code name, such as "Q12" or something of the sort, and all of our troops will be inoculated against it before it is employed. The doctors assured us that almost any desired symptoms could be caused. The afflicted could be knocked flat for two days, upon which they would recover. They could go blind for two weeks and then regain their sight. They could be either killed or totally incapacitated at the choice of the using power, but it was impressed upon us that in a sense the biological weapon might be considered more humane than conventional weapons because the victims do not have to die. (Of course, some might die from heart attacks

or side effects, but not many.) So here we are closing in on the twenty-first century, and while people still talk about biological warfare no one seems to know anything about it. Perhaps that is just as well.

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If any of the *family* have anything to report about Black Talon ammunition ("Failsafe") we would appreciate hearing of it. As of now we have had both good and bad reports, but not enough of them on which to base an opinion.

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"The citizen wants justice; the politician wants votes. Here we have a conflict."

Paul Johnson

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As you doubtless know by now, Jean-Pierre Denis of Belgium has stepped down as President of IPSC. His successor, starting with the new year, is Nick Alexakos of Canada, for whom we wish all the best of luck. Watching IPSC operations progress, however, we get the notion that the next step is to move to the 22-long rifle cartridge. The game has long since ceased to be practical, so why not take this obvious step?

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Our man in Capetown reports that when the new South African parliament met to pass the budget it failed for lack of a quorum. It seems that all the fat ladies were still at the Hillary conference in Peking.

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The syndicated columnist, Walter Williams, who happens to be a college professor, has recently finished a study of governmental murder and has concluded that in the twentieth century far more people were killed by their own governments than died in war. Statistics are always questionable, but Williams' come out as follows:

Killed in Warfare: 39 million

Killed by Lenin and Stalin: 62 million

Killed by Mao Tse-tung: 35 million

Killed by Hitler: 21 million

These are the leaders, and the figures are beyond comprehension, but coming down to more comprehensible numbers we find that 2 million were killed in Turkey, 2 million in Cambodia, 1.5 million in Mexico, and 1 million by Tito in the Balkans. It should be noted that the time over which these atrocities were perpetrated has a bearing on the magnitude of their atrocity. Combined executions committed by Lenin and Stalin, for example, were spread over 70 years between 1917 and 1987. Mao's murders took place over about 37 years between 1949 and 1987, so his intensity could have been greater. Hitler's 21 million were murdered over a much shorter period, and so the intensity factor pretty well evens out, but the fact remains that vastly more homicide was perpetrated in this century of slaughter by governments against their own people than by armies against enemies. Man's inhumanity to man seems more virulent when it is domestic.

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"Shooting a one-minute rifle is like driving a 200-mile-an-hour car – interesting but academic."

The Guru

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We were recently treated to a long and rather well-done scientific letter on the subject of muzzle drop tests for pistols, the idea being that the government has now specified that a pistol must be capable of being dropped on its muzzle without firing, and calling for various sorts of machinery to prevent this occurrence. We have been around pistols for a very long time, and we have seen three occasions where a dropped pistol fired. In no case was any damage done. If a pistol shoots straight down into the ground, no harm is done, so why worry about it?

In classes back at Orange Gunsite, I used to point out that how much drop is necessary to fire a 1911-type

pistol depends upon four variables –

1. the composition of the primer compound,
2. the strength of the primer metal,
3. the condition of the firing–pin return–spring, and
4. the cleanliness of the firing–pin channel.

If all these variables are stacked in one direction you could probably fire the piece by dropping it no more than 3 feet. If they are all stacked in the other direction you could drop a piece out of an airplane without its firing, even if it lands straight muzzle–down. The point is it simply does not matter whether it does or not. To arrange to have some passerby standing directly underneath the weapon when it is dropped from high enough onto a very rigid surface, which is also fragile enough to permit a bullet to penetrate it, is going to take more organization than we have time for.

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I am sure you are all glad to learn that the *BATmen* now have their own air force, composed of 22 OV10Ds they purchased from the Marine Corps. That is just what those boys need in their further operations against gun owners – close air support! Obviously the sooner we abolish the *BATmen* the better off everybody will be.

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Have you seen these various perorations in national medical journals which tend to equate crime with disease? Columnist Edgar A. Sutter points out that treating crime as a disease is as sensible as treating disease as a crime.

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A point that was emphasized at the NRA meeting in Washington most convincingly by Senator Larry Craig of Idaho was that we, the public, must be sure to differentiate between abuses of police power on the local level and that perpetrated at the federal level. It is no news that the federal ninja are completely out of control, and it is disturbing to see members of the law enforcement community endeavoring to close ranks defensively in the face of the wrath of "civilians." One of the unfortunate but noticeable attributes of police organizations is the "us–against–them" obsession. Since cops are in contact in large measure with the complete dregs of society, it is not hard to understand how they may come to place people into the three categories of cops, cops' families, and scum. We must all be aware of this problem and do our best to mitigate it. If it appears that fed rogues are the principal hazard the citizens face today, we must bear in mind that not all federal agents are in truth rogues, and that our local police are most unlikely to be such. I have a friend, now retired from the federal service, who simply will not accept the fact that Horiuchi deliberately killed Vicki Weaver – when he was in no danger and had no legitimate objective in mind. We are all subject to this group loyalty obsession and I notice it in myself when I am reluctant to accept criminal actions on the part of marines, but a sensible man should not be entrapped by stereotypes. If you happen to think – possibly rightly – that fighter pilots are better than other people, you must remember that this does not apply to every possible fighter pilot, only to the majority. Thus the fact that a man is a cop does not in and of itself mean that he is either good or bad. His actions must be evaluated individually. Ideally your local friendly cop should be your neighbor, whose children go to school with yours and who associates with you in your recreational freedom. This is not always possible, but it should be an aim.

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Our man in Santa Monica points out that writing is now coming more easily to him. He tells us that, as with shooting goblins, it is easier the more you do it.

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"A fear of weapons is a sign of retarded sexual and emotional maturity."

Sigmund Freud in "*General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*"  
via John Pate

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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. 3, No. 12

October 1995

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## Black October, 1995

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These are the times that try our patriotism, as evil walks grinning abroad in the land, and Justice hides her head in shame. "Murder will out," was the old saying. Now it appears that murder is in, and the taxpayers are footing the bill. What once was "The last, best hope of Earth" is now the laughing stock of the world, as we truly get the society we deserve.

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Now we head for the annual reunion and celebration of Theodore Roosevelt's birthday at the Whittington Center the weekend of the 21st. The great man's birthday is actually on the 27th, but this year we celebrate a week early in an attempt to avoid the onset of the cold weather that socked us two years ago. As usual, we will enjoy shooting with rifle, pistol and shotgun, and we plan to enrich the entertainment with a good supply of helium-filled balloons (not, we hasten to say, for the shotgunners).

The evenings' entertainments need not be in verse nor original, and they need not be memorized, though these things earn extra points. What they should be, of course, is appropriate – powerful statements of which Theodore Roosevelt would approve. In these bad times we need all the inspiration we can get.

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The video tapes "*Armed Defense*," which I cut in connection with Quad Productions, are available for sale at \$79.00 for a set of four. Address:

doXa Enterprises, PO Box 62176, Colorado Springs, CO 80962  
<http://www.armeddefense.com>

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As we enter upon hunting season I would like to point out again that hunting should not be a competitive exercise, despite the best efforts of the Safari Club to make it so. Except in the rarest circumstances, the hunter has practically nothing to do with the size of his trophy – he takes what is offered, as long as it is presentable. I find the "tape measure hunter" to be bothersome, and tape measures were forbidden on the Babamkulu expedition. A man who shoots game in order to out-do some other hunter has missed the point completely, or so it seems to me. Good trophies are nice to hang upon the wall, but they are there only to remind you of great memories, not to brag about. Speaking personally, I have several record-book trophies, but while they give me pleasure, they do not give me as much pleasure as a number of fairly commonplace heads that resulted from extraordinary moments afield. As Ortega put it, one hunts in order to have hunted, and the hunting experience is essentially inner-directed. This has nothing to do with record books, or the impressions of other people.

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Up at a cop session at Bakersfield, we were treated to the usual round of extraordinary cop stories. One such involved a goblin who unbelievably accepted nine pellets of double 0 amidships without apparent distress. He was annoyed, however, and called out to the shooter, "What did you do that for?" We hunted around for a good answer to that question, and finally settled upon, "My foot slipped."

---

*Family member* and Orange range master Mike Waidelich has now become a firm advocate of the Glock pistol. This has puzzled me because I consider that trigger action is the most significant single element in the

precision efficiency of any firearm, and the trigger on the Glock is customarily so bad as to be practically unworkable. But Mike does not agree. He explained to me that pistol engagements within the law enforcement establishment customarily occur at such short range that precise bullet placement is not important. He maintains that he can teach anybody to center a human adversary with the Glock trigger at any reasonable range – say 10 meters or less.

The other points that recommend the Glock to the police establishment are low cost and readily available modular parts. The Glock people will furnish you with spare parts immediately, where most other manufacturers hem and haw.

These points are important. They are not enough to turn me into a *Glockenspieler*; but then, I am not a police range master.

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Our great good friend Carlos Widmann, of Guatemala, recently underwent some minor surgery on the underside of his jaw, which resulted in a bandaged throat. When asked by a friend on the street what had happened he replied, "A man did a number on me with a knife." The friend was aghast and asked if Carlos had been mugged on the street. His response was that he was done in by the bill presented by the doctor. What his friend did not realize is that Carlos Widmann is not "muggable." Street punks would do much better to pick on something easier; like, for example, a loose leopard.

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We are informed by a good friend in Sweden that the allowance for private ownership of ammunition in that country is 25,000 rounds per each weapon owned. We found this hard to believe, and checked it further. The figure is correct – 25,000 rounds. Basically, we are opposed to arbitrary limitations on private armament, but somehow we do not find a 25,000 limit all that oppressive.

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We have messed around somewhat with the pistol ghost–ring pioneered by Louis Awerbuck, and now available from Steve Wickert in Prescott. It is, indeed, an aid to failing eyesight, but it poses its own problems. It seems okay for deflection, but not as good as conventional sights for elevation. We will bring an example to Whittington, where the faithful can try it for themselves.

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We were recently entertained by a correspondent in Maine who sought to enlighten us on this matter of girls teaching girls. I have always maintained that since there is no difference in technique between the genders (when it comes to shooting) mixed classes are not only acceptable, but desirable. The writer, however, gives me a lecture on what might be called "female bonding," which has always struck me as somewhat questionable. I distinctly remember one outstanding young lady of my acquaintance who, when it was pointed out that she did not have any close girl friends, sang out with "Who needs girl friends?" The renowned war correspondent, Elaine Shepard, had somewhat the same feeling when asked by a commentator, if she did not feel uncomfortable being the only female among a group of about 400 news–types. Her response was, "Well, that's about the right balance, isn't it?".

To each his own, of course, and if the girls like to get together for their shooting, I am hardly one to object. As for me and mine, however, mixed classes will remain the norm.

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I am sure you have noted that competitive shotgunners start each string with finger on trigger, in blatant violation of Rule 3. Given the circumstances under which people compete with shotguns, this does not seem to be hazardous – in and of itself. However, the precept is that people operating violent machines should keep their cotton pick'n fingers well clear of the "Go button." I think the shotgunners are wrong. They gain no speed from this procedure, and they set a bad example for the general public.

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Despite the best efforts of the hoplophobes, the US remains way ahead of most other jurisdictions in the matter of firearms freedom. Recently an English jeweler, whose shop had been raided twenty times in twenty

years, repelled borders by seizing the firearm of one of the bandits who broke into his shop. With the captured firearm he shot both of the bandits, though not fatally.

This was in England, and, of course, he was immediately in a great deal of trouble. He was fined 2,000 pounds for "illegal use of a firearm," 100 more for possession of ammunition which was related to another weapon, plus 1,050 more pounds for prosecution costs. This whole affair is costing the jeweler over \$6,000 in American money, plus his attorney's fee.

Just how this sort of idiocy is justified in the eyes of the British courts is unclear, but though we find a lot of domestic jurisprudence pretty bad, such things can get worse.

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In the course of our recent police conversations, we discover an alarming lack of range discipline on most police ranges. It seems that an unfortunate number of range masters know about safety rules, but are either unable to enforce range discipline or are unwilling to do so. I fear that this is further evidence of the "Us-Against-Them" attitude. Many seem to hold that the safety rules apply only to other people. This is most distressing in connection with Rule 2, when we see people in authority pointing weapons in all directions, and permitting students to do so, on the grounds that the pieces are unloaded. For decades we have insisted that the four basic safety rules apply to everybody all the time. Perhaps we should have insisted even more forcibly that they apply to range masters and trainers, as well as to the common people.

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Is "Taking the Fifth" an admission of guilt? The legalists will insist that it is not, but what is one to think? When people such as Horiuchi and his associates decline to be questioned on the grounds that to do so might tend to incriminate or degrade them, one may ask how can one be incriminated by telling the truth, if he is, in truth, not guilty? Personally I think that when a man takes the Fifth he is also taking upon himself the burden of proof of his innocence.

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I take this opportunity to thank all of the good wishers who have called in or written to sympathize with me in connection with my recent eye surgery. I appreciate the kindness, and I can point out that the operation itself was not distressing, and as of now my shooting shows no signs of deterioration.

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I have just had the chance to examine daughter Lindy's 1903 Springfield, as customized by Robbie Barrkman. It is a very nice piece but, not unexpectedly, it fails to make scout weight. Of course, we never expected anyone to make a true scout using a big military action. But even with the Springfield action, a "pseudo-scout" in 30-06 should be held to 7.5lbs, including telescope. Lindy's rifle goes 8.25, which is not disastrous but still a bit much. Scout I, which now belongs to daughter Parry up in Colorado, comes on at just under 7lbs ready to go. We are still working toward that, and hope great things from the Mannlicher people at Steyr, if we can last that long.

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I remain bemused by this fascination for overcapacity magazines manifest in the marketplace. I have never heard of a case in which a participant in a pistol action profited by the ability to shoot again, and again, and again. Certainly, there are occasions in which an individual law enforcement man has had to contend with a group of miscreants, all of whom were equally dangerous, but one can hunt the records long and long without finding good examples. Recently *family member* Tim Lloyd from Australia handed me an account of a shooting up at Conneston, north of Alice Springs, back in 1928. In this adventure the constable in charge was set upon several times by what is called Downunder a "mob" of aborigines. He was carrying a 6-shot, major-caliber revolver, and on one occasion he got five one-shot stops out of his cylinder. If any of the *family* run across cases which justify the utility of an overcapacity magazine, I would appreciate being notified.

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We were recently amused at a report back from Africa that a professional hunter down there had decided to use one of these Star Finder terrain location devices to get him back to camp. As has been known to happen

with machinery, his device somehow got askew out in the bush and he got himself thoroughly lost. If he had asked me, I could have told him that your best base locator in the African bush is a local African. His bump of location beats electronic gadgetry every time.

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Have you heard the term "Blue Suicide?" That is the police code for a shooting death brought about by the victim. It is not at all uncommon. It occurs when a citizen becomes inclined to take his own life, but lacks the viscera to do it himself. He then provokes the police by the use of deadly force until they shoot him. "Blue Suicide" – I knew there must be such a term but I did not know what it was until now.

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I recently had occasion to discuss the matter of his upside–down kill with Joe Foss, one of the few remaining American heros. You will recall that Joe is sometimes listed as the only American aviator known to have killed an enemy aircraft while flying flat on his back. The point here is that the 50–caliber Browning machinegun is prone to feeding failures when inverted, since the recoil action is usually not sufficient to pull those heavy belts. Joe pointed out that the guns will usually jam if the airplane is simply rolled onto its back, but that on the occasion under discussion he was at the top of a loop, and that the centrifugal force involved was sufficient to maintain one positive G at the top of the maneuver. Keep that in mind the next time you try this stunt.

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It is probably hopeless to expect people to use the right words for things, and the matter is further complicated by people who claim that whatever meaning they wish to attach to a word is right in their case. Still, the use of the word "shrapnel," when that is not what is meant, and the use of "clip" in place of magazine and such–like barbarisms are annoying.

Take the matter of "safari." This is originally an Arabic word meaning, approximately, "journey." The safari is a journey from one place to another, and in the good old days when animal transport was ruled out by the tsetse fly, and motor vehicles were unavailable, one hiked when he wished to go from one point to another. If the hike was long, provision had to be made for supplies, and these supplies had to be carried on the heads of local porters. These porters had to be fed, and while they could survive on a ration of coarsely ground meal, what they wanted was meat – nyama. Even today it is delightful to see how the Bantu relish meat. On a true safari one fed the troops with his rifle. With a big outfit there could be fifty or more bearers, all of whom were conspicuously meat–hungry. This meant what you packed along on such a trip was ammunition, and you used a lot of it. That was a safari. We do not do that anymore. When we go to Africa we go hunting, but to call a modern African hunt a safari is an unfortunate mistake. What is really an abomination is the term "photo safari." People who use that term should be required to eat their own pictures. Wildlife photography is a great art, but let us please call it by its right name.

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One of those *black helicopters* dropped in at the Gunsite airstrip on 23 September. It turns out it was not black, but a very dark green. It was not entirely unmarked, having "US Army" printed in very small letters on its tail. Well, at least it did not have BATF anywhere in evidence.

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One theory we recently heard was that the masks worn by the ninja are there to prevent lawsuits by citizens. A citizen cannot sue a sovereign state without its permission, but he can sue an individual agent if he can identify him, thus the agent wears a mask to avoid being sued. Cowardice seems to be the curse of the Age of Aquarius.

---

The absolute essence of good marksmanship is concentration. If you maintain it, you hit. If you lose it, you miss. It is as simple as that. Now then, how do we maintain concentration? I was recently discussing Horiuchi's shooting at Ruby Ridge, as described in the official reports. I raised the question as to how a man as good as that could have pulled off a shot like that unless he intended to do so. My friend, who has considerable experience in these matters, insisted that when a man gets excited he cannot expect to do his best with his rifle. While I have never shot a man with a rifle, I have considerable experience in shooting under



conditions of great nerve pressure, and I can report that, in my case at least, excitement does not enter into the matter. If one's reflexes are properly programmed, he is only excited before or after the moment of truth. Even then the excitement may not live up to his expectations. ("Weren't you excited?" "No, I was too busy concentrating on my trigger.")

People are different, and thank God for that, but to blame one's bad shooting on the fact that he was excited at the time is not an acceptable position.

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"Do what thy manhood bids thee do:  
From none but self expect applause.  
He noblest lives and noblest dies,  
Who makes and keeps his self-made laws."

Sir Richard Francis Burton

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 13

November, 1995

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## Indian Summer, 1995

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The annual *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* held at Whittington Center in honor of the great man's birthday was even more of a success than in the past. The shooting, conducted by Rich Wyatt, John Gannaway and David Kahn, was great fun. The declamations were inspiring, as always, but perhaps the greatest exhilaration of the meeting was the sense of unity and comradeship experienced by Orange Gunsite comrades, who in many instances are forced by circumstance to dwell amongst the unenlightened.

While most of our people were from various parts of the United States, we had members from England, Switzerland, and even way up in *Darkest New England*. It is a long, long way to Whittington, but it is worth it when you get there. The weather was absolutely gorgeous, at the very peak of the western autumn colors, and we were troubled by neither heat nor cold nor wind until Sunday afternoon when we were breaking up.

With all the *family* hard at work shooting, it was impossible for me to single out every distinguished performance, but a couple that stick in my mind were Finn Aagaard's erasing of two helium balloons with one shot as they lined up, and Marc Heim's impressive performance on clay birds with his "Kansas City Special." (That's a 16-inch iron-sighted lever gun in caliber 44 Magnum.) Dr. Manning Picket also showed off with his open-sighted 350 Magnum, and daughter Lindy managed to break four in a row on sporting clays.

We had occasion to break out the "Gunsite zeroing target" for the first time on public display, and, not to my surprise, it worked very well. I commend this target to all the faithful as the most efficient thing of its kind I know.

Dan Dennehy treated us to his usual knife throwing demonstration, as well as to his rendition of "The Lure of the Tropics."

Both Don Davis and Marc Heim showed us how to use a lever-gun from a Condition 3 Ready, which is a technique not fully appreciated in the Age of High Tech.

Lindy's poetry is developing to astonishing levels, and we are approaching the point where a bound volume of her collected works may be in order. Prior to that, however, her prose work, "Wisdom on Cooper," must be put to bed, published and out on the market.

As always, the wildlife display at Whittington was delightful, with lots of deer and elk, including one big bull, plus pronghorns and turkeys. Nobody saw a cougar, but as these cats are becoming less and less secretive year-by-year we may expect to sight one or more at the next event of October '96.

The Whittington Center cannot accommodate as many of you as we might wish, so fix the date for '96 and plan to join us then.

---

On a T-shirt we saw at the reunion was displayed the pungent phrase,

"Visualize no Liberals!"

---

I have had the opportunity now for a couple of years to evaluate the Glock pistol with sufficient care to give me justification in an opinion. I have not used one much myself, but just enough to know that it is not for me. However, I have some good friends in law enforcement who have pretty much set matters straight. My conclusion is that the Glock pistol is a very good choice for hired hands, but not for serious pistoleros. Its proper place lies in the public sector, and the dedicated shottist is rarely found therein. (Note: That is shottist rather than shootist. Look it up.)

---

It is with profound sorrow that we must report the death of our old friend and comrade Milt Sparks, on 8 September 1995. Milt was a man of great talent and he contributed measurably to American pistolcraft.

He was a good artisan, a good shot, and a good man. He is sadly missed.

---

We learn that the Chicoms placed an order for 10 million copies of the AUG with Steyr–Mannlicher. How interesting that the commies could dream up a demand for 10 million 22–caliber squirt guns! Apparently we will not discover what they wanted with those pieces since the Austrian government queered the deal, but if we are now hunting around for the next war, we may have some hints here. Incidentally, while the American law enforcement establishment refers to the piece in question as the AUG (pronounced OG), not too many of our people know what the letters stand for. AUG signifies *Armee Universal Gewehr*, which may be an exaggeration, but no more so than "high power" tacked onto the 9–millimeter Belgian Browning.

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The columnist Tony Snow offers us a good campaign slogan for the *Billary Gang* in '96:

"We can't fool all the people all the time, but twice would be nice."

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I have almost passed the point at which I can be shocked anymore, but I was perhaps amazed at a report from England about a lawsuit brought by a woman against an importer of toys because when her little boy flung a boomerang it came back and hit him on the head. Apparently she holds that the package in which the toy was packed should have contained a statement to the effect that the instrument actually worked as designed. I suppose the next step is for someone to sue a gunmaker because when the gun fired it made a loud noise which startled him.

---

Perhaps all is not lost. In Washington, DC, of all places, *family member* Bill O'Connor recently overheard the following comment from the driver of a child–filled station wagon:

"There are more armed men in the woods on opening day of deer season in Pennsylvania than there are federal agents, and that gives me a feeling of great comfort."

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Note that the new issue Burris Scoutscope is distinguished by a slightly enlarged bell at the front end. There are other structural differences as well, and up til now, the new glass has demonstrated increased honesty over previous products. An "honest" telescope is one that does what you tell it, in both planes, every time. When you dial in "left 4, up 6" that is what you should get, but all too often you do not. The new Burris, however, in samples inspected, has been quite satisfactory so far. We wish it a bright future.

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Sometimes I am convinced that the world is actually getting worse, and it is not just my advanced age which makes it seem so. Consider the case reported in the shooting industry magazine of a customer who bought a rifle only to return it in a matter of days. He claimed that when he fired it and opened the bolt a piece fell out, and he displayed an empty case to prove it.

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From a recent issue of *Tailhook* magazine, we discover that Naval pilots going into the Gulf War received no training nor familiarization whatever with sidearms. Furthermore, they were forbidden to bring their own. As one post-modern bureaucrat sounded off, "This is war! You can't bring your own guns!"

Of course it maybe adduced that if a flier loses a 30-million-dollar airplane, the taxpayer really should not be concerned about whether or not he can shoot his way to safety on the ground. It may, of course, be of some concern to him.

Many years ago I was invited to a conference at the academy in Colorado Springs on just this point. The colonels sat there and shot the breeze all day without coming up with an answer to the question of what a combat pilot needs a pistol for. One school holds that he should be able to sneak around on the ground and put chickens in the pot. Another says he should stay on top of his hill and threaten the bad guys at the bottom until the chopper can come and pick him up. As many of you know, Goering's answer in World War II was to supply his combat pilots with beautifully made "drillings," featuring two shotgun barrels and one rifle. I have no authoritative accounts about how good an idea this was, but it is a lot different from those manifest by the Navy in Desert Storm.

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As to the Vince Foster murder, Hillary does not want to hear any more about it. So there!

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In re-reading McBride for perhaps the tenth time, we discover again that a heart shot is by no means necessarily a quick stop. A beast shot through the heart will always die, and a man nearly always, unless he is wheeled into thoracic surgery within a couple of minutes, but he will not necessarily drop when hit. An armed antagonist can frequently shoot back, and a charging lion may easily bite you dead between the time the shot is delivered and the victim is no longer able to fight.

From the collected writings I conclude that the larger the caliber the more quickly a heart shot will stop the action, and this is a matter of some interest in this day when the governments of the world seem determined to reduce calibers as much as possible.

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At Whittington we had a long and thoughtful session about the matter of Spc New, the soldier who maintains that he is not required to fight for the United Nations. The issue here is the most important one that I can recall during my lifetime. Can the Commander-in-Chief of American armed forces order an American fighting man to obey orders issued by a foreign sovereignty? In all the long history of mercenary soldiering it has been accepted that a soldier may indeed fight for a foreign power, but only if he volunteers for that duty. If we follow the example of the Swiss mercenaries of the Renaissance we discover that the contract specifically exempted the soldier from the obligation to fight against his own country. I do not believe any of this has been taken up properly by the lawmen as of yet. A soldier absolutely must do what he is told, but what happens if his foreign commander orders him to fight against his own country?

It appears that our masters in Washington are doing their best to sweep this matter under the rug, just as they have done with other recent federal transgressions, but this is a matter of enormous importance, and we the people must demand an answer.

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On the occasion of the recent demonstration in Washington, engineered by Louis Farrakhan and others, one of his lieutenants (sporting the unimaginative name of Khalid Mohammed) is quoted in *Human Events* as shouting, "This is the time of blackman's rise and the whiteman's demise." Being genetically placed on one side of that confrontation, I apparently have no choice but to join the fray. This being the case I am reminded of the statement attributed to John Parker at Lexington on 19 April 1775, to wit: "If they mean to have a war, let it begin here!"

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Daughter Lindy's pseudo-Scout, constructed by Robbie Barrkman on a Springfield base, worked very well for her at Whittington, except that the shortened stock permitted the cocking piece to bang her on the cheek bone. When I was a lad we were all intimately introduced to the 03 Springfield, which naturally featured a stock short enough for even very close-coupled soldiers. We got banged, though I did learn to keep my thumb over on the right side of the stock out of the way, and to open my firing hand a tad so that my fingernails would not gouge my chin. When the rifle is private property, however, and not government issue, another solution maybe somewhat better. Simply saw the cocking piece off.

It has long been claimed that the flared cocking piece on the 03, and the Krag, and some other actions, is a safety feature in that it deflects hot gas which may result from a punctured primer. I know from personal experience on the 1917 action that if hot gas travels back along the striker it ejects from the bolt an inch or so below the line of sight – even an open sight. I sported a neat black tattoo on my right cheek for a couple of months to illustrate this. When asked about it I found it very macho to say casually, "Blown primer on my 30-06."

I have never worn a really good facial scar, but those who have are one up on the rest of us, if their narrative is sufficiently dramatic. The actor, George McCready, was able to say when asked about a clean white scar on his jaw bone that he got it when he flipped his Bugatti at LeMans, which is exactly what happened. (At this point I think the feminists in the group will drop out of the conversation.)

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Arizona T-shirt sign:

"I will rope for beer."

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On the subject of Africa, it is not too soon to start setting up schedules. We are committed to be on station in Pretoria by 19 March, and to be back here in the states by 18 April. Just what happens in the interim is yet to be worked out, but our African adventures have been so totally successful in the past that we do not foresee any problems.

We are informed that the street scene in Johannesburg is bad and degenerating, but that is true of any big city you can name. We expect to get out into the country at once and thus be well clear of social strife, if any.

As to that, one thing that we have always liked about Africa is that if you are attacked you may legally defend yourself, which is not true of London or Toronto or Tokyo.

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"The rifleman, being a hunter, naturally always has an eye, and an ear, for game. The great game movement along the front took place at night. That in the back areas, of course, could only be deduced, from daytime observation, and at night became the business of the artillery and machine guns. But no-man's-land, in quiet times, was the scene of an almost purely nocturnal life. The sniper was lucky if, during the day, he spotted a couple of Germans; but if he really cared for hunting he might have a dozen pass within as many feet of him at night. He can well afford to abandon his rifle for this – if he can still find time to get the necessary sleep. There is nothing just like it for making one feel at home in the trench areas. To spend the night in a funky dugout or musty cellar, whether in the front line, supports or reserves, is like closing the tent-fly at nightfall as soon as you have made camp on the mountainside overlooking a pleasant – and unknown – valley. Much better to get outside and see what's happening."

from *A Rifleman Went to War* by Captain Herbert W. McBride

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Danie van Graan, our good friend from the Low Veldt, has just shown us an interesting photograph of a Burris Scoutscope mounted on an Enfield Combat Rifle. The assembly looks good. It is not a Scout, being overweight and overlong, but it is handy, powerful and easy to feed. Since it has a full-weight barrel the base may be fastened thereto with screws with no need for a custom forward extrusion. We hope to play with this piece next year in Africa, and we expect that it will prove out well.

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*Family member* Tom Berger sends us an extract from a piece of fiction called "Flying Finish," by Dick Francis, which points up a peculiar aspect of post-modern sociology that I had not thought about before. The idea is that in an emasculated society there is no accepted outlet for the natural combativeness of the young male, except in crime. Apparently it is considered uncouth for a young man to say that he wants to fight, no matter how much he does. This poses no problem for the counterculture, whose members grow to adolescence with no ethical or moral base, but it becomes an increasing affliction for young men brought up by decent parents. If Louis Farrakhan gets his way, this difficulty may straighten itself out in fairly short order.

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"This situation has turned congressional hearings into somewhat of a joke and has made it obvious that federal law enforcement cannot be expected to investigate itself."

Robert K. Brown in *Soldier of Fortune*, December 1995

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"The government against which our ancestors took up arms was a mild and distant irritant compared to the federal scourge that rules us today. Constitutional restraints on tyranny are to our masters only a hazy memory as they exercise powers beyond the dreams of history's most famous dictators. Louis the XIV never required an annual accounting of every centime every Frenchman earned. He would never have dared then to demand a third of it in yearly tribute. Ivan the Terrible never told Russian merchants whom they could or could not hire, nor, heaven help us, where they could have a smoke."

Jared Taylor, Louisville, Kentucky

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"If the wound is large, the weapon with which the patient has been wounded should be anointed daily: otherwise every two or three days. The weapon should be kept in pure linen and a warm place, but not too hot to scald lest the patient suffer harm."

That was written in 1662, and after three hundred years some of our legislators still insist on treating the weapon rather than the wound. (We get this from David Kopel at a presentation at the University of Oklahoma.)

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Cross-eyed shooting – that is shooting right-handed and left-eyed, or vice versa, is not difficult with a pistol, and it is not much of a problem in slow-fire rifle shooting. It does become difficult with the rifle snapshot. The shooter can dim his weaker eye by taping over his shooting glasses, or by wearing a bandanna or eye patch, but while these expedients suffice for the target range they are unlikely to be useful in the field. We can take some comfort from observing that the snapshot with a rifle is a rare occurrence, but the problem is still there and I do not have an answer for it.

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All of this "whingeing" (British word) about our termination of the war in the Pacific is interesting in view of McBride's observation about his sniping in World War I. "We killed them when we could and we damned them all to Hell. They started it and by God we finished it!" This calls to mind the advice of Gunsite's Grand Patron Theodore Roosevelt to the effect that you should never start a fight, but once you are in it you should finish it. This is a principle which a series of recent American presidents seem to have missed.

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*Family member* and military historian Barrett Tillman tells us that Jim Coxen, who did a tour with the 5th Marines, has now been shooting with new devices and new techniques for sport. He maintains that he wished he had a Scout rifle up in I CORPS. He feels that he would definitely have bagged more bad guys. Well sure! Wouldn't you prefer a properly set up Scout to an M16?

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Despite the best efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, we now have access to a photograph of Lon Horiuchi, who shot Vickie Weaver in the face but who still has not been brought to justice. Col. Bob Brown ran it down in a West Point yearbook and it appears on page 38 of the December issue of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. It is not very clear, and it is twenty years old, but it is better than nothing.

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An Indian Summer here in the Arizona highlands maybe assessed as evidence of God's goodwill to men. We count our blessings.

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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. 3, No. 14

November, 1995

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## Thanksgiving

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This is the time to count our blessings, and despite the degenerate nature of the world at large we still have much to be thankful for. I suppose good health is the greatest gift of God, and those who have it can always place it at the top of the list. As the Spanish toast puts it, "Salud y dinero, y tiempo para gozarlas." (Health and money, and time to enjoy them.)

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The weather has continued fine here at Gunsite up to the time of writing. It has enabled us to enjoy the countryside to the fullest. A Phoenix contingent recently showed up for a small and friendly shoot on the Ravengard Range, where we set up the Swiss qualification course which calls for 300 meters and the Swiss government target, of which I have a small supply. To my considerable satisfaction daughter Lindy fired a "Swiss possible" with her Springfield pseudo-Scout, shooting from sitting with a set of buffalo sticks that I whittled out personally way back in *the Dark Ages* before the fall. The thing that tickled me was that Lindy was shooting with the scoutscope against an SSG and a Remington 700 bull-gun, both of which were fitted with target scopes. Those misguided souls who insist that the Scout rifle is simply a brush gun have clearly never met one in action. Now what Lindy needs to work on is her "quick fix with the sticks."

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Hunting season has provided us with a good supply of prime venison, courtesy of *family member* Mark Federn. Trying to decide between prime mule deer and prime elk is a delightful challenge.

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It is a considerable annoyance to discover that the paperback edition of "*Meditations on Hunting*" by José Ortega y Gasset has now been discontinued by Simon & Schuster. If you have not got your copy, or even if you have, you must now hunt around for it in gun shows and used-book stores. Ortega's classic has been praised by some as the greatest philosophical work of the 20th century, and it arms all of us solidly and pointedly against the bleatings of the bunny-huggers. No proper home should be without its copy.

A piece of good news comes from

"Wilderness Adventures Press," Box 627, Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730 (800-925-3339).

These good people have prepared a gold-plated luxury edition of the "*Meditations*" available now at \$60.00 a copy. I cannot think of a better Christmas present for the man who has (almost) everything.

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The question arises as to the proper condition of readiness for the house shotgun. I do not feel entirely sure of my ground here, having only the skimpiest number of examples to draw upon, but for my own purposes I rack a shotgun in Condition 3, with the chamber empty and the hammer down. I put one round of No. 6 low-base in the magazine, and then stuff three rounds of high-base 00 buck forward in the buttchuff and three rounds of rifled slug at the rear. I feel that if I have to get out of bed and man that shotgun I will have time to rack the action once as soon as I seize the piece. One round of No. 6 low-base should suffice for any uninvited guest, and if the action threatens to continue it is the work of a moment to select either 00 or rifled slug as circumstances may warrant.



In nearly all short-range shotgun engagements one properly delivered charge is sufficient, and a short double gun has much to be said for it. The classic "Iupara," with its 18-inch barrels and exposed hammers, still keeps up with the best as a house gun.

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Bumper Sticker:

"If he wants to take my gun he can't have my vote."

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If any of the faithful happened to catch McMurtry's *"Streets of Laredo"* on the tube you will have noticed that this piece is distinguished primarily by absolutely atrocious gunhandling. Clearly nobody involved in that presentation has ever fired a shot or seen one fired. The proper and dexterous handling of firearms seems to be fading from the screen – along with the management of a square-rigged sailing vessel.

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Assemblyman Pete Ernaut (R-Reno), speaking at a Carson City luncheon: "What a great and unique state is Nevada! Where else can you drive 75mph with a concealed weapon while breast-feeding your baby?"

*The Reno Gazette Journal*, via Family member John Clark

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One of our ingenuous newsmen in the Phoenix area has begun viewing coots with alarm. It turns out that these birds are swarming over the ponds reserved for golfing geezers in "The Valley of the Sun." I have some experience with coots (which we used to call "mud hens" in my youth), and I discover them to be excellent eating, providing they have been living in an unpolluted water source. Down on the mud flats of southern California they tend to taste of petroleum effluent from the ocean-going vessels frequenting the ports, but when they are feeding on grass along the shores of a freshwater lake they approximate mallard in flavor.

Thus the proper thing to do with coots is to eat them. It has been pointed out that there is some sort of legal injunction against harassing coots, and I suppose eating them would be considered a form of harassment. However, if the law is wrong it is up to us to change it, or at least that is what Thomas Jefferson thought.

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If you are in the market for a rifle, remember the basic weight test. Hold your piece by the small of the stock, arm's length, shoulder high, muzzle up – for 60 seconds. If that exercise is painful for you, either you need a lighter rifle or you need to get in shape.

---

If you read the gun press at this time you may learn that one-minute accuracy is commonplace, or even substandard. From this you may derive the idea that if you cannot put all your shots in a fingernail, way out past Fort Mudge, something is wrong. This, of course, is foolishness, as anyone who has access to a range can prove, and it is further aggravated by the advertisers who insist that one element of the combination is all that is necessary for perfection. In the recent *SCI* for example, one advertiser maintains the rifle action he produces is good for a quarter-minute – in and of itself.

Now then, absolute accuracy is a combination of several ingredients. The rifle action is certainly one, but only one. The barrel is another, but still only one. When the barrel and the action are properly mated, it is then necessary to fit the assembly into a stock system, and that is a third item. If action, barrel, and bedding are all perfect, there is yet another item missing, which may be the most important of all, and that is ammunition. (I am disregarding the sighting system, which is independent of the entire combination.) Ammunition is the largest single element in rifle accuracy. No rifle sitting in the rack can produce premium accuracy. Unless it is fed premium ammunition the combination will not work, and premium ammunition is not all that easy to come by. What is offered over the counter for sale may or may not measure up.

I recall that when I first met the SSG in Austria, I fired a 5-shot one-holer in their 100 meter test tube. When

I took delivery the company representative implored me by the bones of Saint Cuthbert never to shoot that piece except with the very finest of premium ammunition, either factory or hand-loaded. Subsequently in the Philippines I ran across an SSG which the owner was willing to discard, since in his words it would not stay on a copy of *Time* at 50 paces. I found this astonishing and I asked him what kind of ammunition he had been using, and he answered, "Philippine Army GI." Well, now! We were able to dream up a box of Hirtenberg match ammunition, and using that, the rifle printed into a teacup at the greatest distance we could find on the plantation, which was 270 paces.

As I have often pointed out, accuracy that you cannot appreciate is useless, and if you, the shooter, cannot hold on a dinner plate at the length of a football field the fact that your shooting combination of action, barrel, stock and ammunition will shoot into your thumbnail at that distance is of no concern.

I remember once faring forth into the Kaibab with three sportsmen from Hollywood, all of whom were armed with the then-new 264 Winchester rifle, which I was told would do at 400 yards what a 270 could only do at 300 yards. With his new 264 one of the party proceeded to miss a standing buck clean at about 75 yards, shooting from offhand. He not only missed it, but he threw dirt all over it.

As somebody once said, it's the shooter, not the weapon, that gets the hit.

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Gazing at my planning calendar for 1996 I begin to think that we will have to cancel the month of April for lack of space.

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Have you noticed in recent advertisements that the excellent Enfield No. 4 battle rifle is now available in the larger stores for \$70 a crack! This is a very superior utility weapon, and you should snap it up while it lasts. If you have a safe place to store your weapons you ought to buy at least two of these pieces, together with a satisfactory supply of ammunition. As it comes out of the box, the piece will do ("for government work"), and if you want to play around with customizing it, you can turn it into a pretty nice approximation of a Scout. Take heed!

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As both joggers and cougars proliferate they seem to have found each other. It is the basic instinct of the predator to run after anything that runs away, and the cougar and the jogger seem to have arrived at a happy symbiosis.

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I have always found it queer to discover that there are many shooters who are not hunters, and many hunters who are not shooters. I know a considerable number of law enforcement people (who ought to be shooters) who have no interest in hunting, and up in the Pennsylvania woods I understand there are tens of thousands of hunters who are not interested in shooting, in any serious sense. And then, of course, there is the rich kid who spends his riches conspicuously on "safaris," usually knowing almost nothing about riflecraft and displaying no desire to learn. I think people who are one but not the other lead diminished lives, but that, of course, is a subjective view.

Whether we admit it or not, man is a carnivorous predator, as his teeth will attest. This animal is programmed to hunt and kill his prey for food, and the instinct to kill things is rooted way down in his genetic program. One has only to watch little boys and see them grow up to discover this. Hand a 6-year-old a slingshot and he will immediately want to sock a bird with it. You may tell him he should not, but that does not eliminate the instinct.

If we consider these increasingly popular "drive-by shootings" endemic to the underclass, we see the instinct in full cry. Such shootings accomplish nothing at all except to relieve instinct pressure inherent in the species. For ages this pressure has been properly directed by civilized men into hunting channels. As hunting possibilities decrease with the urbanization of the world, the undirected and morally irresponsible youth turns

naturally to killing people, for lack of a better plan. Without the family and without the church this phenomenon is not going to disappear. The State is not only a bad master, it is also inefficient.

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As the English language continues to decompose, we find an increasing tendency to use the word "civilian" to mean "other than us." The law enforcement people have long referred to private citizens as "civilians," apparently not realizing that cops are civilians, whereas it is soldiers who are not. Now we see this spreading to the corporate world in which people outside the inner circle of the major corporations are frequently referred to as "civilians." The next step, I suppose, is for teachers to refer to parents as "civilians," and for holders of Ph.D.s to refer to the rest of the world likewise. In correct usage if you are not a soldier, sailor, marine, or airman, you are a civilian, but then journalists at large may not be expected to know that.

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The following from Jean–Pierre Maldonado in Pennsylvania:

"A missionary working among Vietnamese immigrants in the Souderton–Telford area states that there are four or five Vietnamese–born miscreants in his region who prey exclusively upon Southeast Asians. When asked why they don't attack Americans, it turns out that they know that most American families are armed."

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That, of course, is why the American "Wild West" was so much safer for the individual citizen in the 1890s than American cities are in the 1990s. A recent note in *"The New American"* points out that armed robbery in the American West ran about 7 percent of what it is in New York City today, and that rape was unknown. Such homicides as took place occurred largely between drunks in bars. Of course everybody was armed, and as we all know, an armed society is a polite society.

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*"Ain't many troubles that a man cain't fix  
With seven hundred dollars and a thirty aught six."*

How many of you know the rest of the words to that song?

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Another anecdote we unearth from McBride has to do with hard hats. When the first steel helmets were issued to the Canadian troops in World War I, they were most unpopular, and men endeavored to get by without wearing them when they could – why I cannot say. McBride, himself a sergeant at the time, was chewed out by his captain for wandering around with his helmet slung over his shoulder. Properly chastised, Sergeant McBride left the presence properly helmeted. Within minutes of his dressing–down a large piece of steel from an air burst banged him so hard on top of his head that he was knocked to his knees. Presumably he got the point.

In my military days I always fancied the helmet. Not only does it save lives, but it makes a warrior look like a warrior – as George Patton was fond of pointing out.

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From Hawaii the following fascinating anecdote:

"G had been ordered to attend an 'anger management' class for beating on his concubine. He showed up at the meeting drunk and disorderly.

M, who was conducting the meeting while on probation for an attempted murder conviction, thereupon pounded G into the ground. G subsequently died after life support was disconnected because of brain death.

M, the anger counsellor, has pleaded innocent to manslaughter charges – possibly because he was angry at the time."

All of this took place in Honolulu. Aloha to all!

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*Family Member* Dan Predovich of Colorado points out that the Color Code, as now standard, cannot be applied to an individual who simply will not accept life as it is. Dan says that if you are not aware of the world you simply will not believe the Color Code, no matter how accurately it is explained to you. I have always felt that no one would sign up for instruction unless he was aware of the world, but in some cases – especially in law enforcement – the student has not knowingly accepted combat duty, and the Color Code is lost on him. This may well be true, but it does not affect my teaching doctrine. Those who are not prepared to learn will not learn. As someone once said, "There is none so blind as him who will not see."

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On the one hand we are continually warned against drinking while driving. On the other hand we note that all the new cars are issued with cupholders. Now what is to be made of this?

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It has been suggested to me that I give the impression that I scorn domestic manufacturers in favor of Europeans. I would like to correct that impression insofar as I may. The reason I favor German and Austrian rifles is that they come over the counter with excellent triggers. In my opinion, trigger action is the most significant single component in the "hitability" of a rifle. Domestic manufacturers apparently feel that if they put a good trigger in the rifle as it comes over the counter they will be libel for lawsuits. Most of them additionally point out that if anyone works on the trigger to make it better the factory warranty on the weapon is invalidated.

In this *Age of Litigation* in which we find ourselves, a great many people feel that excellence is irrelevant.

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"The root cause of crime is that for certain people predation is a rational occupational choice."

Daniel D. Polsby in the *Atlantic Monthly*

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The following delightful anecdote comes from Bill McKay in Illinois:

"At a recent local VFW meeting the Mayor of Oregon, Illinois, opined that the cannon on the public square did not portray the feeling he wanted to represent the town, and he asked that it be moved. The vets promptly responded by seconding the motion and ordered that their cannon be moved so as to point directly at the Mayor's house. The motion was carried."

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Vol. 3, No. 15

December 1995

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## Winter Solstice

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According to the politically correct (for that read "Cravenly Intimidated") it is now considered unsatisfactory to make a fuss over Christmas. Christmas, after all, is a celebration both elitist and Eurocentric. One of the cards we just received greeted us in four languages, three of which mentioned Christmas specifically, while the other in English did not, wishing us only "Season's Greetings." To find a prefabricated Christmas card today which actually says Merry Christmas on it is quite difficult. Another sign of the times, it would seem. Be that as it may, we take this means to wish you all in the *Orange Gunsite Family a Very Merry Christmas and a Full Measure of Joy in the Celebration of the Birth of the Redeemer*. Those others whose political or religious faiths prevent them from sharing our joy at this season elicit our sympathy, but not to the extent to have us change our traditions.

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It is pleasant to learn from Don Mitchell that his new pistol, which bears my signature, seems to have been enthusiastically received at the recent trade show. Naturally, I think it was a step worth taking – otherwise I would not have signed it. There is always a risk of difficulty between conception and execution, but the pilot model seems very well made indeed, and it does embody a series of significant improvements.

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I was amused recently to discover that rumor now has it that my material is "ghost written" – that is to say that I do not write it. This is fascinating. If I do not write my own material I cannot but wonder who does. Someday I would like to meet him.

---

Our good neighbor Bob Young informs us of a recent case in Connecticut in which an adolescent male shot himself in the genitals when he tried to show his girl friend the sawed off shotgun in his britches. The technique he employed escapes me, since the news account does not draw any diagrams, but I suppose where there is a will there is a way.

When the police showed up, they arrested the victim on suspicion of reckless endangerment and illegal discharge of a firearm, there being no offence on the books entitled "self-castration." He was held on \$100,000 bail, presumably to prevent his running off before trial, which seems to us an unlikely development.

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If we need further evidence of the depravity to which our culture has sunk, consider this: At a recent "high power" rifle match held at the Marine Base at 29 Palms, two "greenchicks" showed up to compete – accompanied by their respective "fancy men." I suppose we should hope that the boys are good cooks.

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Now Dan Wesson offers the "445 Super Mag" revolver. What one is supposed to do with such a piece is not explained, but whatever it is it might be fun to try.

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In further pursuit of the "dumbing down" of America it now appears that you can be considered to have scored a perfect score on the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) even if you commit four mistakes. Here we have a concept which goes beyond the realm of education and into that of theology. A "perfect" paper must be free from any mistakes whatever. Any error renders it, by definition, less than perfect. I do not know who comes up with exercises like this, but it would certainly indicate that at least some responsible members of our

educational establishment no longer pay any real attention to what they say. We have noticed this in conversation, but we are still somewhat surprised to see it extended to the matter of scholastic aptitude.

(We get this exotic information from the excellent newsletter put out by *family member* Doctor Arthur B. Robinson, President of the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine.)

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We congratulate Orange Gunsite *family members* Ronin Colman, Paul Kirchner, and Rebecca Wyatt on their bursting into print. The more true believers can get published, the better it will be for the Republic.

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We have in hand the new Leupold Scoutscope, and we are certainly pleased to see a new entry into a field in which there was previously no competition. The glass is of 2½ diameters magnification. It is belled at both ends, and its eye relief is right on 9 inches. The first version we examined displayed a reticle which was too fine for my own taste, but an optional version features a reticle that can be seen quickly in reduced light.

Too frequently we see equipment designed essentially for the bench rest. This is understandable because, of those American shooters who work out with rifles, most use the bench as their primary testing ground. This is wrong, of course, because a proper rifle must be "field-worthy," and one does not carry a bench rest around with him in the field.

You will be able to examine the new glass at the SHOT Show next month.

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As the mail keeps floating in we notice an increasing number of missives addressed to Ms Cooper. The trouble with that mode of address is that it is very difficult to pronounce. When one tries the result sounds sort of antebellum (as in "Lans' sakes, Miz Scarlet!"). The Countess finds it vaguely insulting and tends to discard all mail so addressed without opening.

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When Andrew Johnson ran for the Senate in 1855 he heard that his life had been threatened at an upcoming appearance. When he took the podium he pulled out a pistol and laid it on the table in front of him. "Fellow citizens," he said, "I have been informed that part of the business to be transacted on the present occasion is the assassination of the individual who now has the honor of addressing you. I beg respectfully to propose that this be the first business in order. Therefore, if any man has come here tonight for the purpose indicated, I do not say to him, let him speak, but let him shoot." In those days we elected a higher type of man.

via Paul Kirchner

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Note that murderers of Nicole Simpson, Vince Foster, and Vickie Weaver are walking free. The ancient Greeks held that nemesis would hound such people to their graves. With the general disappearance of the concept of morality from our society, we may doubt if the three transgressors aforementioned are suffering much. However, we can always hope for the best.

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I have just finished ordering a "Co-pilot" from Wild West Arms in Anchorage, Alaska. This piece, which we have mentioned before, is a cutdown Marlin 45-70 featuring an 18½" barrel (with muzzle brake), a ghost-ring sight system, and which is capable of complete takedown into two components small enough to be carried neatly in a backpack. This seems to us to be the ideal backup weapon for an outfitter who guides sportsmen after bears or lions. When such a piece is called into action, the range is very short, but stopping power is of vital importance. A 45-caliber lead 500-grain bullet does not need much velocity in order to accomplish this – only enough to get all the way in. I hope to take this piece to Africa next March, and it ought to constitute a true breakthrough for the professional hunter.

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"To be of practical service, the soldier must be able to take advantage of cover, able to search out individual men of the enemy, and in the midst of the turmoil of battle, to shoot at and hit those individual targets."

"It is not easy, but by all the gods of war it can be done! Having tried it, I know."

McBride

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As a long and satisfied advocate of the cartridge commercially referred to as "350 Remington Magnum" I am somewhat unsatisfied with the prevailing terminology. At the behest and advice of John Gannaway, we now load it with a 250-grain semi-spitzer bullet slightly extended, permitting a 2½-grain increase in powder capacity in cartridges to be fed through actions slightly longer than the parent Remington 600 and 660. This combination shows a starting velocity of 2500 foot seconds from the 19-inch barrel of the Lion Scout, which is based upon the ZKK 601 short action. These ballistics duplicate those of the 35 Whelen, but are obtained in a much more compact weapon, which has proved itself to me as "the Lion Scout." Therefore, I intend to refer in the future to this cartridge as the "360 Short," as a slightly improved version of the original "Fireplug" cartridge. This avoids a lot of unnecessary explanation.

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I have recently been called to task by Doctor Kurt Welgehausen for my use of the word "gender" in place of "sex." The professor makes it clear to me that gender and sex are not synonymous. To quote, "I think that the current reluctance to use the word sex comes from the current and frequent misuse of the word to mean sexual intercourse, as in 'they had sex,' which I find to be an abominable phrase."

I must agree, and I am glad that somebody has the interest in the matter to write it up.

---

At a recent shooting session out on the Ravengard Range I introduced granddaughter Amy to the HK91, which, as you know, is a semi-automatic-only version of the G3 battle rifle. Amy is solidly qualified on the Scout rifle, having used Sweetheart in Africa last year with conspicuous success. She was, however, somewhat distressed by the G91. It is splendidly accurate and fires the same 308 cartridge, and it has a surprisingly good trigger for a semi-automatic piece, but Amy found it essentially "unfriendly." This is interesting because the primary and most notable characteristic of any well-designed Scout is exactly friendliness. Perhaps the proper term for that is ergonomic, but I am not sure that this covers the whole subject. A properly designed Scout gives the shooter the distinct impression that the weapon is "on his side," while this is not, as a rule, true of any GI battle rifle. My conclusion is that a well-made Scout rifle surpasses all others in its "hitability," for want of a better term. It is thus at once more friendly and more deadly in the field than any other personal firearm.

Now, of course, we must content ourselves with custom-made Scouts, which are not the easiest things to obtain. With a bit of luck and a tail wind, Steyr-Mannlicher may be able to provide us with a proper piece of this sort some little way down the line.

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Note that Walther has now introduced its "Big Bore" pistol in caliber 45. This piece is not only of major caliber, but it is also of major mass. It is portable somewhat the way the Walker Colt was portable, but probably it is a very well-made piece. The Walther reputation is a good one.

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On the front page of our local *Arizona Republic* for 28 November we noted the headline "Clinton Defends GIs in Bosnia." What a picture that conjures up! We can see Bill standing out there on some hilltop in the snow holding back waves of disaffected Balkans with his M16, while Hillary hands him magazines and advice. A further statement maintains that the President will accept "full responsibility for casualties incurred in this operation." That is a term we have heard before from this administration, most pointedly from Janet Reno. I suppose if we exacted proper incarceration as retribution for this responsibility, it would be unconstitutionally

cruel and unusual to lock up Bill and Janet in the same prison.

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According to the new Texas concealed-carry law you may not display the weapon you carry concealed. That is, you may not carry your pistol openly, as in Arizona. When you are issued your ticket you are informed that no matter how good your reasons are for defending yourself, the shooting of a non-combatant will not be excused by law. Now we hope that this injunction applies to private citizens, police officers, and pointedly, federal agents.

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Gutter language is a manifestation of inadequate vocabulary. Besides, it diminishes force of expression.

#### The Guru

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On the day before Thanksgiving our sovereign neighbor to the north passed into law an edict requiring the registration of all firearms, irrespective of type. You know why the leviathan wants to register all weapons, don't you? His only reason is to enable him to seize them from the people at such time as he becomes insecure of his own position. Well, the Canadians have not confiscated them all yet, but insofar as their new law may be enforced they will shortly be in a position to do so, and thus another light of liberty has been extinguished. God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen!

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In watching football, as we sometimes do, we note an increasing tendency to what may probably be referred to as "capering" as a means of self-adulation. Seeing it on the field after a touchdown re-enforces one's belief in Darwin. In the tradition of Western Civilization, to which at least some of us are the heirs, a gentleman does not pat himself on the back. But, of course, in *the Age of the Common Man*, the gentleman is an endangered species.

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In perusing a recently released study of country life in Russia under the Czars, we ran across some interesting anecdotes. It appears that the Russian land-owning aristocracy was plagued with bureaucrats who would pay them visits now and then for purposes of enforcing various sorts of regulations. One nobleman had a standard answer for such occasions. When he learned that the coach was on the way, he would station himself in the middle of the road with a pistol in each hand and open up on the intruders enthusiastically when they got within range. Naturally, he had a staff of servants to keep his pistols reloaded and primed.

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Pursuant to the forgoing, we are informed that a county recorder in Wyoming has flatly refused to turn over county records to the IRS, claiming that her office forbids her to release confidential documents, and that she would therefore be guilty of malfeasance in office if she did so. As we understand it at this time, the feds are incensed, since they have long held themselves to be above the law. It should be highly entertaining to follow this matter up.

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"The Tenth Amendment is not to be left up to the federal government to interpret for itself. The essence of our Constitution is that power must not be allowed to define its own limits."

Doctor Clyde Wilson

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This is the last issue of Volume 3 of these commentaries, and the thirteenth volume of the original and continuing newsletter. We look forward to 1996 with enthusiasm.

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Joy to the world!

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Lindy's Poem

October 1995

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This poem was written by Jeff's daughter Lindy about the O.J. Simpson trial, and may be of interest to "Commentaries" readers.

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## The Verdict – October 3, 1995

*Score one for the Prince of Darkness!*  
All hail to the grim lord below!  
*The forces of evil have triumphed*  
And laugh at their helpless foe.  
*Blind justice lies trampled and bleeding.*  
Her blindfold is ripped from her eyes.  
*She gazes in horror and sadness*  
Where truth in the gutter now lies.  
*"I'm sorry." she says, "Please forgive me.*  
I've tried to remain firm and strong.  
*But where money is greater than morals*  
I can't remain standing for long.  
*Just law operates within standards –*  
An ethical code you must share.  
*Without it you have no foundation.*  
The fabric of justice will tear.  
*The lawyers and judges and juries*  
Indulge in a vast complex game  
*Where cleverness wins over honor*  
And trickery obfuscates shame.  
*Your altars are all economic.*  
You've lost sight of what's right and what's wrong.  
*Your civilization is crumbling.*  
Your leaders sell souls for a song.  
*It may be too late to return to*  
A system where justice prevails.  
*But failing to try would be sinful*  
With all that great failure entails.  
*You must take control of your courtrooms,*  
Your chambers where new laws are made,  
*Your classrooms and churches and townhalls,*  
And your media – don't be afraid!  
*You must speak out strongly, forthrightly*  
For justice and honor and good.  
*Vote it and speak it and write it*  
And start with your own neighborhood."  
*Blind justice regains her feet slowly*  
To stand with her scales at the head

*Of a growing and strong congregation*  
Which has heard her and listened with dread.  
*We must re—weave the fabric of justice*  
And agree upon standards so high  
*That our children inherit a country*  
Where integrity beats out a lie.  
*Where the good that is in us can flourish.*  
The the best ones among us can fly.  
*Where the symbol of justice keeps shining*  
As bright as the sun in the sky!  
***Lindy Cooper Wisdom***  
October, 1995

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# Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

*Previously Gunsite Gossip*

Lyrics by Lindy

December 1995

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When our daughter Lindy married Joe Wisdom he brought to the alliance among other things six hundred dollars in hard cash and an old sporterized 1903 rifle. A phrase slipped out of the woodwork and into my ear that might fit into a Country Western-type ballad. To wit:

"Ain't many troubles that a man cain't fix with six hundred dollars and a 30-06."

Since the saying needs another syllable in order to make it bounce properly, I raised the six to seven and thought we might use it to start off something that Johnnie Cash might sing..

The years went by and I never thought about it further until Lindy took up the writing of verse. I suggested to her that we had the makings of a song here, but that I did not have any more words, so just now the poem "Grandpa's Lesson" has turned up in the mail.

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## Grandpa's Lesson

*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***

December, 1995

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