
Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Volume Five, 1997

• Vol. 5, No. 1 1997	1
• Vol. 5, No. 2 Mid–Winter	7
• Vol. 5, No. 3 Winterset	12
• Vol. 5, No. 4 Peregrinations	18
• Vol. 5, No. 5 The Sowers of April	24
• Vol. 5, No. 6 The Rites of Spring	30
• Vol. 5, No. 7 Summer Solstice	36
• Vol. 5, No. 8 The Big Year	43
• Vol. 5, No. 9 High Summer	48
• Vol. 5, No. 10 Summer Storms	52
• Vol. 5, No. 11 Harvest Home	57
• Vol. 5, No. 12 Hunting Season	64
• Vol. 5, No. 13 Pearl Harbor	69
• If, by Rudyard Kipling	74

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 Not for publication.

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 1

January, 1997

1997

So here we are in the new year, the acknowledgment of which is always a matter of good cheer for the optimists and gloom for the pessimists. Our best advice is to ignore the scruffy and extol the exemplary. This is not easy, of course, since that which constitutes news is uniformly bad, while good behavior does not attract attention. We can do it, however, if we put our minds to it. 1997 will probably not rid us of the *Billary* menagerie nor of O.J. Simpson, but game management continues to be successful, automobiles continue to improve, South African wines continue to delight the palate and Lindy's new book has taken off like the proverbial big bird. In regard to this last, I must repeat that the book was not my idea. I did not write it nor edit it. I do not own the copyright, and I have no copies for sale. This is Lindy's operation exclusively, and all I can do is sit back and cheer.

We have never been enthusiastic about the use as a battle round of the 223, which is essentially a varmint cartridge, and our view is shared by most of the people who have used the M16 in close combat. However, we ran across an amusing anecdote from Vietnam which suggests that there are two sides to most questions. It appears that this marine sergeant became involved in a short-range daylight firefight in which his people were supported by two M48 tanks mounting 90 millimeter guns. As things developed the sergeant noticed a gook a short way off armed with a bazooka (RPG), which was aimed precisely at one of the supporting tanks and well within rocket range. The sergeant assumed a classic offhand firing position, right elbow high, left elbow under the piece, and with his weapon placed properly in the semi-automatic mode, he squeezed off his single round. At precisely that moment, the other tank, having noticed the same gook, touched off one round of 90 millimeter main battery ammunition, but there was so much going on at the time that the sergeant was not aware of the tank round. The gook was totally scrambled, and our marine looked wonderingly down at his little poodle shooter in amazement. "Jeez!" he said.

It may indeed be time to plan another scout conference – to be held this year. The YO Ranch in the Texas hill country has been suggested as a site, which can provide both conference facilities and a bit of shooting. If this activity indeed comes to pass, I propose the following agenda, which is fully tentative and open to all suggested corrections and additions:

1. The history of the concept
2. Dimensions
3. Actions other than bolt
4. Sighting systems
5. The shooting sling
6. Calibers
7. Stocks
8. Magazine capacity
9. Bipods
10. Pseudoscouts

I clearly have no copyright on the term "*scout rifle*," and a great many people have seized upon the term and put it to what I consider to be erroneous use. However, I am convinced by now that the scout concept has

proved itself in the field, and that everyone who has taken this weapon into serious action is convinced that this, indeed, is the way a rifle should be.

Still, we do not have a perfected example, but its evolution is a truly worthwhile project.

From *family member* Don Davis we get George Contor's *Law of Conservation of Ignorance*, to wit:

"A false conclusion once arrived at and widely accepted is not easily dislodged, and the less it is understood the more tenaciously it is held."

Put in the vernacular, we might repeat the old saw, "My mind is made up. Don't confuse me with the facts!"

We read a notice from Canada to the effect that

"The purpose of anti-gun legislation is to establish criminal supremacy over the citizen by awarding the goblins the status of being the sole armed caste of the population."

The publisher has gone on to state that the time has come to ask ourselves what is behind all this.

Well, we know what motivates the hoplophobe. He simply envies the man who can cope where he, the hoplophobe, cannot. A skilled, armed man lives on a plane of security and contentment different from that of others. This is not egalitarian! The man who cannot cut it, envies, fears and sometimes hates the man who can. This is all very clear, it is just a pity that so many people choose to hide their perfidious motivation behind what they claim to be "crime control."

From England we hear of a lady on the way to attend a theater performance who was accosted with the snarl, "What innocent, helpless creature had to die so that you could wear that fur coat?" Answer, "My mother-in-law."

I find it curious that various people find time to write me to the effect that popularity equates to rectitude. This has to do with my expressed annoyance of the barbarism of using the word "decimate" to signify "devastate." It seems to me essentially presumptuous to publish a lexicon in the first place, and, of course, we find that lexicographers disagree amongst themselves. The notion that if enough people do things wrong that will make a wrong into a right is essentially immoral. To say that a good many people use the word decimate incorrectly, and that therefore it is all right, is to justify such other phenomena as lying, infidelity, and public indecency. A decimal is a decimal. See "decimal point."

I was wrong about that "decimation" in the Texas War, as a number of correspondents have hastened to tell me, but I am not wrong about the correct use of the word.

We note with some dismay in Bill Buckley's *National Review* that the consensus of observers is that South Africa is going to crash after Mandela dies. Nelson Mandela's effective beatification has led many to believe that he has succeeded in solving South Africa's serious social and racial problems. He is not immortal, however, and the people around and behind him do not give the impression that they are the proper crew to achieve "peace in our time."

I hope the Buckley paper is wrong, but I still advise friends who intend to make that African trip to go now, even if they have to borrow the money.

Anyone who studies the matter will reach the conclusion that good marksmanship, per se, is not the key to successful gunfighting. The marksmanship problem posed in a streetfight is ordinarily pretty elementary.

What is necessary, however, is the absolute assurance on the part of the shooter that he can hit what he is shooting at – absolutely without fail. Being a good shot tends to build up this confidence in the individual. Additionally, the good shot knows what is necessary on his part to obtain hits, and when the red flag flies, the concentration which he knows is necessary pushes all extraneous thinking out of his mind. He cannot let side issues such as fitness reports, political rectitude, or legal liability enter his mind. Such considerations may be heeded before the decision to make the shot is taken, and reconsidered after the ball is over; but at the time, the imperative front sight, surprise break must prevail.

Thus we have the paradox that while you almost never need to be a good shot to win a gunfight, the fact that you are a good shot may be what is necessary for you to hold the right thoughts – to the exclusion of all others – and save your life. This may come as a shock to a good many marksmanship instructors, but I have studied the matter at length and in depth, and I am satisfied with my conclusions.

The SHOT Show is upon us now, and we hope to learn much that is new and interesting thereat. There should be discussion of new products, and beside that, the occasion will afford the opportunity to renew all sorts of pleasant contacts from both stateside and abroad. We will take notes and keep you informed.

Note that our old friend Jim Cirillo has just released his long awaited book entitled "*Guns, Bullets and Gunfights*." Jim's vast experience as a street cop is well expressed here, though his multicultural New York accents – of which he commands at least six – cannot be done full justice on the printed page. Jim Cirillo was the grandfather of the famed April Fool joke, which I have sometimes recounted myself, though with nothing like the expertise that ol' Jim can give it. "*Guns, Bullets and Gunfights*" is a welcome addition to the reference library of any fully qualified pistolero.

"A MiG at your six is better than no MiG at all."

Anonymous F4 pilot in Stephen Coonts' book "*War in the Air*"

Well, there speaks an honest-to-God aviator!

Again we recommend to you "*Unlimited Access*" by Gary Aldrich. It is unhappy reading, but it is absolutely necessary for an understanding of the workings of the Clinton menagerie. The American people voted those sleazemasters in, by due process, and in so doing they committed a deadly insult to our forefathers who made this country great. It is too easy to shrug the matter off with the opinion that politicians are basically unsatisfactory people. This outfit we now have in the White House is much worse than that. According to Aldrich – and I take his word for it – the prevailing mood in the White House is fear – not fear of death, as with Stalin – but simply fear of losing one's job. And these White House staff jobs do not even pay very well. The staffing policy appears to be to bring in battalions of incompetent camp followers and then threaten to throw them out again.

Having digested Aldrich twice, I conclude that Lucrezia Borgia ran a considerably more respectable court than Hillary Clinton. At least no one ever asserted that Lucrezia was a garbage-mouth.

Not long ago an old friend from Southern California cut us a snippet from the Los Angeles Times which presented a list of "Good Things To Do," setting forth various experiences which the author deemed contributory to a happy and fulfilled life. We read it over and, not surprisingly, we did not agree. Just what constitutes the good life is obviously a matter of opinion and, fortunately, people have different opinions. However, the exercise is rather fun. So I sat down to tally up a list of my own, which turned out as follows:

GOOD THINGS TO DO

- Hike the Grand Canyon
- Hike the Pass of Roland between Gavarni and Roncevalles
- Watch the sun rise on the Parthenon from the Piraeus
- Climb the Washington Monument
- Teach
- Top the Statue of Liberty
- Grow your own vegetables
- Execute a split-s in a light 'plane
- Learn French
- Learn Latin
- Study Greek
- Pole up the Okavango River in a mocorro
- Visit the Santa Cruz del Valle de los Caidos (Castile)
- Memorize Kipling's "If"
- Cut five hot laps on the Nurburgring in a fast car
- Play the Royal and Ancient at St. Andrews
- Hook, fight, land, clean and cook a prime salmon or steelhead (or a mahseer in India or a tiger on the Zambezi)
- Land a tarpon on a fly rod
- Design and build a house
- Spend a night completely alone in the wilderness
- Shoot, dress, haul out, butcher and cook your own venison
- Spend the afternoon in the Hofbräuhaus (München)
- Watch a great matador earn both ears and the tail
- Spend a weekend at the Connaught (London)
- Plan, select, prepare and serve an elegant dinner for six
- Dine at the Horcher in Madrid (I would have suggested the Walterspiel in Munich, but that is no longer there)
- Ski at Grindelwald opposite the Eiger
- Attend an opera at La Scala Milan
- Attend the Festpiel at Salzburg
- Attend the Wagnerfest at Bayreuth
- Take luncheon at Boschendal
- Sit out a storm at Cape Point (South Africa)
- Attend Men's Singles Finals at the Center Court at Wimbledon
- Write a sonnet
- Watch the Palio at Siena

What say we have a friendly little Schützenfest on the 4th of July at Ravengard? I have a couple of artifacts for which I can foresee no possible use, but which might make jolly good prizes.

I suppose all sports fans are aware of the case in which some Texas stripper claimed that she was "raped at gunpoint" by a member of the Dallas football team. What a quaint notion! The technical procedures involved in rape at gunpoint would seem exotic, to say the least. How does one do that?

As it turns out the whole thing was a hoax, which is not unusual in the circles involved, but it is curious that nobody in the press thought to ask any questions about that.

The United Nations has always impressed us as a frivolous extravagance, but sometimes it can be dangerous. Note that now there is a move afoot in the UN to disarm all "civilians," who constitute an obstacle to good government. Naturally, none of the little two-bit principalities that make up the majority in the UN have any

interest in political liberty. Your normal Third World bigshot regards his position mainly as a means of enriching himself, and naturally the notion of an armed peasantry upsets him. The thing is, those people are a majority, and they may be able to obtain decisive assistance from hoplophobes in major powers (such as Britain) and this could result in some very serious infringements – such as the total prohibition of international trade in smallarms. At this time I do not have any real notion of how powerful this foolishness is or may become, but it is there on the horizon. Take heed! Another such piece of oppressive regulation appears much closer to home – specifically in the Bureau of Land Management of the United States federal government. Some bureaucrat therein has suggested a total prohibition on the discharge of any firearm within 150 yards of any habitation or structure on BLM land. (Why 150? Who knows!)

Now why do these busybodies come up with foolishness like this? Is it that "civilians" (here's that dirty word again) have been doing things on BLM land which are endangering the republic and giving rise to various forms of health hazards? I cannot think of a single action which might be covered by this proposal that needs government restriction. We already have a plethora of laws forbidding murder, assault, criminal negligence, and property damage. (Interestingly enough we do not have laws against shooting other hunters by mistake.) Apparently the people at BLM do not have enough to occupy their time. Perhaps the bureau is ripe for "downsizing."

I have wondered a bit about the purpose behind the handheld laser range finder in the hunting field. I do not remember having the opportunity to take a range reading while I was getting ready for a shot, but if I had I do not know what difference it would have made. If you have a good rifle and a good zero, you hold right on out to the point where your group size is too large to be risked. However, we have now discovered an answer. These lasers are a great means of measuring the distance after your animal is down, which is frequently difficult or impossible in certain kinds of terrain. Also it obviates "short pacing" – not that any of us would ever be guilty of such a thing (!).

We are shipping the Bushnell offering off to Africa shortly, where it should prove most useful.

My professional correspondence includes a full measure of after-action reports, which I prize very highly, since only by continuous evaluation can I maintain the quality of my research. However, we do need an improved level of report writing. To the standard journalists' queries of who, what, when, where, how and why.

I need:

1. What range?
2. How many shots fired?
3. How many hits achieved?
4. With what effect?
5. What cartridge?
6. What bullet?
7. What firing position?
8. What mode of fire?

Please, amigos, keep the reports coming, and please fill in the details.

At least one major gun store in our big town has now instituted a procedure which radically increases its security. An unobtrusive but flashing blue light is turned on whenever Gunsite graduates (Orange Gunsite, of course) are present on the floor. The goblins may not know the significance of the signal, but staff and customers know that all is well.

We have discovered a marvelous use for the laser pistol sight. It is a nifty toy for pet dogs, who can spend many happy hours chasing that orange dot all over the living room.

We have been informed by our friends in the UK that it was not the Guinness Brewery in Dublin that was compelled to list as taxable income the two complimentary pints each worker rates per day. It was the Guinness Brewery in London that was required to commit this atrocity, which unfortunately tends to confirm the generally held opinion of the English by the Irish.

The awarding of military decorations is a subject open to considerable philosophical discussion. Different cultures in different nations have instituted various ways of honoring heroes, by military medals in modern times. What it is that is honored differs conceptually from country to country – in the US we put a premium on suffering, while the Germans primarily reward damage done to the enemy. The renowned French Croix de Guerre was issued in both world wars and one notable British–French heroine was awarded it twice. Mary Lindley, Comtesse de Millevilles, was a nurse in WWI and an escape agent in WWII, and she distinguished herself. But she refused both medals, on the grounds that the medals were rewards for bravery, and that she could not be brave since she did not know how to be afraid. Aristocracy has its points!

"Today's challenge is to raise a new generation of Americans who treat their fellow citizens with dignity and respect, a new generation that struggles for freedom – the very rock on which this nation was built. If that's the challenge, I have just the family for you. An American family committed to safety, responsibility and freedom. This American family – the NRA. When this American family wins, America wins."

Tanya K. Metaksa, Executive Director NRA–ILA

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 2

February, 1997

Mid-Winter

Our November hunt in Montana was most enjoyable, and all our freezers are full. *Rifle Master* John Gannaway used his standard 350 Super Scout, I used the Lion Scout, and Lindy used her Springfield with the new hopped-up Federal ammunition. Clearly we were all somewhat overgunned, but no harm came of that. Two shots were taken from vertical post rest, one from offhand, and one from sitting. Ranges were 40 paces, 83 paces, cross-canyon estimated at 200, and one quite long. It was impractical to pace the distance on this one.

There was nothing extraordinary about the hunt, but we are certainly enjoying the venison. Our long-time favorite method is fondue – bite-sized pieces skewered on long forks and seared quickly in hot oil. The Countess experimented with tenderloin tips marinated in our favorite Roman dressing (one-third olive oil, one-third soy sauce, one-third sweet sherry) and sauteed quickly. Superb! The sausage was particularly well composed and we have been enjoying it for breakfast on all suitable occasions.

We have not heard from Don Mitchell for some time, and Mitchell Arms was not present at SHOT. I must assume that the Mitchell pistol, about which I had high hopes, is not in the cards.

The SHOT Show and SCI Shows were pretty fascinating, though it does take a tremendous amount of walking to see all the necessary sights, and even then there is much missed. The most interesting thing that I saw was the Czech 97, a single-stack, single-action 45 caliber derivative of the Czech 75. This piece is in prototype stage at present, but it shares the necessary characteristics of a sound defensive pistol with the notably comfortable handling characteristics of its Czech ancestors. I have been invited to visit the factory in March in an attempt to clean up the act.

The Czech 550 series of rifles seems to be a promising development of the Mauser, but at present displaying an unsatisfactory trigger-action. That can be fixed, of course.

It is certainly difficult to render a calm and compassionate view of our current system of justice. After a legal friend of ours had his car trashed on the street, apparently just for kicks, he suggested that the proper solution to our inner city problem might be the mass drowning of street punks. Every month in a different big city we should sew up a thousand of them in a huge sack and dump it into the Mississippi. Such ideas may appear fanciful, but the decent people of this country are increasingly driven against the wall. We have now made clear to the world that you should not cut the throat of the mother of your children – for fear of being heavily fined. While the federal ninja drive around in their black uniforms and face masks, we note that they never seem to bother the street gangs. Kids who have parents seem to have no fear of chastisement, and certainly those without do not even consider the possibility of retribution for their sins. It is a bad scene, but as Bill Buckley recently put it, "Exasperation must never edge over into despair."

At the SHOT show Smith & Wesson introduced a bitsy 22 revolver that packs eight rounds and weighs just 9 ounces. Its concept is delightful, but its execution is severely handicapped by its trigger-action. The double-action pull weighs 14 pounds. (The DA pull on the Countess' M-60 goes at 9.) We had three different

girls try it and each insisted that the action was much too heavy for precise shooting. If a 22 is to be used for defensive purposes, precise shooting is absolutely essential, since the only successful target is the eye socket of the attacker.

When we complained about this trigger to the management, we were told that it could not be smoothed up or lightened in view of the unreliability of ignition in rimfire cartridges. I shoot 22 rimfire regularly – several times a week – and I had not run across this problem until now. It may be that the quality control in rimfire ammunition has been degenerating, like many other things, while I was not looking.

We heard the Feds recently insisting that those are not *black helicopters*, they are dark green. Sorry about that.

Our good friends the van Graans from Africa tell us of a splendid procedure that they have set up at their hunting lodge for the indoctrination of their growing daughters, Tanya and Liezl. When the girls need spending money, they are permitted to go out on the ground and harvest a medium-sized blue wildebeeste. (They are forbidden to take trophy wildebeeste, which are reserved for visiting clients). They use their mother's 308 and they are allowed to keep all the meat and sell it on the market at Nelspruit for cash. They are required to do all the necessary work except driving the meat to market.

What a nifty way to raise children! Danie and Karin are to be heartily congratulated.

It has been suggested that a handheld laser range finder may be obtained on request in the "gun writer mode." The yards it measures are 20 inches long.

The winter meeting of the NRA in Arlington produced exactly the amount of bitter squabbling that we expected. The leadership spent practically its entire time in infighting, to the delight of the Schumer/Schroeder/Feinstein/Brady crowd. The "palace coup," of which you may have heard, was not successful, but the vote was so close that the losers survived to fight another day – presumably at Seattle.

Please do not regard the reduction in our cash reserves from 80 million to 50 million as a disaster. Our cash is not simply to keep, but rather to spend judiciously, and our progress has been considerable. The periodic reports from headquarters serve to keep you informed of battles we have won, as well as those we have lost. The war continues but we remain ahead of our adversaries in altitude, airspeed and gunpower.

One of the curious legalisms we discover back in *the Darkest East* is the fact that while New York state has an open season on deer and permits its citizens to take the field with a rifle, the state policy on training insists that a student may not even be allowed to touch a rifle that is not his. Apparently they do not mind if you take to the woods, but they do object if you try to learn how.

My special interest over the past months has been the updating and rewriting of the NRA Personal Protection Manual. The committee assigned this task consisted of T.J. Johnston, Leroy Pyle and Jeff Cooper. We put together what I think is a good paper, but due to certain obstructive proposals, we almost did not get it approved in the time allotted. Due to the outstanding efforts of T.J., who stayed up all night clarifying the documents, we were able to place the program in the hands of the headquarters staff for editing in accordance with headquarters literary policy. There remained a couple of obstructionists lurking in the shadows, but with good luck and a tail wind, I think we can present a new personal protection program to our membership which will bring NRA doctrine in line with the modern technique. High time!

Additionally we discover that that Bureau of Land Management nastiness is temporarily on hold and may well be terminated without further discussion. These people keep trying to slip things over on us when we are not watching, but fortunately for us the NRA is watching, and almost all the time we are informed.

The Steyr Mannlicher display was interesting, though, as we had been told, the production scout was not yet in evidence. Several of the features recommended on the scout, however, were included on the "sporting rifle," such as the double magazine-detent, the trigger-guard adaptor, and hammerhead sling sockets to accommodate the Ching Sling. The factory people suggested that they might be able to put on a demonstration of the production scout in the states sometime in the fall, possibly in connection with the proposed Scout Conference. We will see.

The proliferation of right-to-carry laws throughout the states has drawn plaintive complaints from the criminal element. They feel that it makes their profession too dangerous when the streets are full of "civilians" who may or may not be armed. Poor babies!

When discussing rifles we must take care to watch our terminology. In the matter of sights, let us make sure that we know that iron sights may be either open sights or aperture sights. The ghost-ring is a certain type of aperture sight which provides speed, full observation and precision. It is properly mounted well to the rear on the receiver bridge, the cocking piece, or sometimes on the tang. The open sight, on the other hand, is a notch mounted well forward, with resulting reduced sight radius, and it demands a triple focus on rear sight, front sight and target, which is physiologically impossible. Contrary to widespread belief, while it is quicker to use than the ill-conceived aperture sight on the Springfield 1903, it is measurably slower than a ghost-ring, and it obscures the lower half of the shooter's field of view, which can be distinctly dangerous under some circumstances.

I am very much in favor of the ghost-ring but I do not favor any form of open sight. The so-called "express sight," which is a certain variety of open sight, has been favored for a century for use on heavy rifles and dangerous game. It will do for this purpose, but it is not as fast as a ghost-ring, and life and death situations with dangerous animals take place at ranges so short that small increments in accuracy are meaningless.

(Incidentally, a telescope sight is a poor system for use on dangerous game. Anything that is big enough to kill you is easy to see, and even the best telescope is excessively fragile for crawling around in the underbrush.)

A correspondent sent us a clipping describing a recent occasion in Louisville in which a group of old poker-playing codgers had their game interrupted by three masked, shotgun-wielding goblins who beat in the door. The geriatric squad neatly repelled boarders, leaving one dead. ("You should have seen the two that got away.") As we have taught for decades, a properly organized defender has a distinct tactical edge over an armed robber. By the time the goblin has discovered that his proposed victim is not going to do what he is told, it may well be too late.

Curiously enough, a very similar situation occurred with some friends of my father's at the LA Country Club back in *the Middle Ages*. When the goblin lined up the sportsmen and proceeded to search them for valuables, one old gentleman took the situation in hand and shot the miscreant neatly through the head with his Colt 45 "Double-Action Army." The NRA motto now is "I refuse to be a victim." So be it.

We took some time to check out the "Kimber Clone" at the SHOT Show. It seems to be a well-made arm, but it does not include any of the minor, but important, modifications which might make the 1911 better. Specifically it is not slimlined, and it retains the annoying grip safety.

When I put out that list of *Good Things To Do* in a previous issue, I apparently did not get my point across. Several correspondents have written in to extol various acts of heroism, which are certainly good things to do, but which are not for just anyone. I intentionally excluded from my own list those acts which are beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen, such as quarterbacking the Super Bowl, climbing the north face of the Eiger, or killing a buffalo with a spear. Some of the items on my list do call for a certain amount of money – spending a

weekend at the Connaught, for example – but it costs nothing to write a sonnet, or memorize Kipling's "If", or study Greek. The list that I prepared was one of pleasures; heroics are another matter.

When some time ago I opined that "The kindest words of tongue or pen are these: It has already been taken care of," I was taken to task by a correspondent for utilizing a terminal preposition. I was taught in sixth grade English a preposition is properly placed in front of something, rather than behind it. Understood. However, we should be careful not to confuse a preposition with a proposition. An example of a terminal preposition is "Where are you at?" For a terminal proposition we like daughter Lindy's suggestion: "Feeling lucky, punk?"

"The best thing that government can do is get out of the way."

Milton Friedman
Nobel Prizewinner in Economics

We do not know whether to be amused or annoyed by the repeatedly held injunction of the lawmen to the miscreant that "Somebody may get hurt." It has always seemed to me that was the idea. The bad guy ought to get hurt, and he should understand full well that he is the "one most likely." We would have a much better society if those who choose to prey upon us understood that the proper response to a homicidal threat is a bullet up the nose.

In observing our political scene, it is necessary to remember that in any democracy the absolute goal of the politician is power. Not money, power. This means that the only thing of any consequence to a politician is re-election. He will walk on eyeballs to be re-elected, and the only time that principle means anything to him is when it happens to coincide with what appears to him the best course towards his own re-election. Now the only way to get power is to take it from someone who already has it. Under our system, the theory is that the people at large are sovereign and have the power, but the only way the politician can achieve power is to take it from the people who already have it – or should have it. This makes for a permanent conflict in principle between the voter and his representative. This is not cheerful, but it is nonetheless a fact.

Of the three systems of government enunciated by Aristotle – monarchy (tyranny), aristocracy (oligarchy), and polity (democracy) – polity (democracy) is the best, not because of its inherent virtue, but because of its basic lack of efficiency. An inefficient government is best for the people, simply because it is inherently incapable of doing anything well, and the less it does the better.

The following nifty anecdote from our old friend Ian McFarlane, the professional hunter from Botswana:

"About 03:00 we received a radio message that a Bushman tracker had returned to one of the camps with a chest shot from an AK and was brought into Runtu Hospital by helicopter. On notification that the patient had arrived and was in theater, we found him standing there smoking a cigarette. He had a wound on the left chest in front and in the back. We took X-rays and found indeed that it was through and through. We cleaned and closed the wound, and kept him for a week in case of infection. This did not happen, but during that time we found out that the Bushman had been wounded early in the morning of the previous day. He tracked his antagonist during the day for about twelve hours. He said he could have shot his man a few times during the day, but he wanted to shoot him in the abdomen so that he would die painfully and slowly. Just before sundown, he got his shot properly placed, and then walked another eight hours back to base."

The wound, of course, was delivered by the 30 caliber Russian Short cartridge of the AK47. Presumably the bullet had an iron core and a copper jacket, allowing no deformation. Still, getting shot through the chest with a 30 caliber Russian Short might be thought to be enough to spoil one's appetite, but these Bushmen are great

little guys. I have associated with them just enough to appreciate their admirable qualities.

"Hunting inculcates patience, demands discipline and iron nerve, and develops serenity of spirit that makes for long love of life."

Archibald Rutledge

"The fear and hatred of crime and criminals by the right, and the fear and hatred of the right by the left, serve to enlist both sides of the conventional political spectrum in promoting the new police state. The avoidance of publicity about the abuses of federal police agencies tends over time to normalize such behavior in the minds of citizens; to legitimize it and to render it a routine part of government functions."

Samuel Francis
in *Chronicles*

After sitting through three days of long winded and often acrimonious discussion in Arlington, we come back to the truth of the venerable aphorism, "The trouble with politics is people."

We repeat Colman's law to the effect that in any sidearm the probability of hits is inversely proportional to the number of rounds in the magazine. The more rounds you have available, the less likely you are to hit anything – unless, of course, you are an expert combatant. There are not many expert combatants, and so we see the increasing popularity of fully automatic handheld fire using pistol cartridges. I will not forget that the last time anyone tried to kill me (whom I could see trying to do it) he had a 30-round magazine in his machine pistol and he went dry and lost the fight. There is one important advantage to handheld automatic fire and that is intimidation. A great many people are seriously upset when anyone starts to hose them down with a "machinegun."

On the occasion when our son-in-law Bruce had the night watch up on the line with I CORPS, his first response when someone reported a penetration was to make sure that everybody in the command had his M16 set on the semi-auto mode. He got his medal for keeping his head when a lot of people around him might have been expected to do otherwise.

Our usually impeccable source from the Washington scene insists that there is no truth in the rumor that Hillary is pushing O.J. Simpson for Attorney General.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 3

March, 1997

Winterset

As the bulk of the cold weather drifts behind us, we are off to Bohemia to consult with the Ceska Sbrojovka about new designs. If my advice is worth the seeking, we should be able to promote a superior successor to the excellent Czech 75, in major caliber, and to launch a series of heavy, bolt-action, hunting rifles. The choice of calibers will be interesting. At present the 416s are all the rage, but I think of a 400-grain, 40-caliber bullet as something of a half-measure – rather like the 41 Magnum revolver.

My old favorite is the 460 G&A Special, which has served me with distinction for twenty years, but this remains a wildcat for which the shooter must fabricate his own ammunition. Therefore my present choice leans toward the 505 Gibbs, famed in song and story.

We expect to go from Czechia to the IWA at Nurnberg, a presentation I have long been told that I must not miss.

We will have interesting information for you upon our return.

You may have noted that Lyman is now re-issuing their folding aperture tang sight, which is great good news. By removing the target disk, this setup affords an instant ghost-ring at the flick of a screw driver. I believe the company decided upon this product because of the popularity of black power weapons, but it has found its best employment on the tang of a "Brooklyn Special" 30-30.

"The only things I regret in life are the things I did not do."

Hemingway's attribution to his grandmother

We are told that a literary poll taken in Britain has established "The Lord of the Rings," by J.R.R. Tolkien, as the greatest book of the 20th century. We are great admirers of Tolkien, but we must mention that school of readers which holds that "*Meditations on Hunting*," by José Ortega y Gasset, is the title to take the prize. Fortunately this need not be an either/or proposition. I re-read Tolkien and Ortega with equal pleasure, and quite regularly.

We have an interesting after-action report from *Darkest Kentucky*, in which a bank manager totaled a would-be robber with his 1911. This in itself is not surprising, but it does bring out a couple of points. The shooter planted only one shot in the upper chest area of the intruder. When asked why he did not shoot twice he said that by the time he hauled the barrel down out of recoil, the target was not there anymore. Now as we all know, the 45 auto does not recoil very much if you hold onto it – only if you shoot it one-handed with a limp wrist. The IPSC people have long sought to reduce recoil by gadgetry, when the answer, as Jack Weaver showed us, is in muzzle control. In a proper Weaver Stance, the muzzle of a 45 rises less than half an inch. This is why we see people shooting in competition from the isosceles position in which recoil is evident. If you insist on shooting with a straight left arm, you may indeed need a reduced charge and a muzzle-brake. That, however, is not the way to go.

This "kinder and gentler" age we live in has produced a crop of overcivilized urbanites of an innocence one can hardly believe. The state of Montana has been a mecca for timid and wealthy Californians who like the idea of a wilderness environment but lack all awareness of what a wilderness is about. It turns out that one such immigrant had her pet dog scarfed up by a bobcat. This is very sad, of course, but her response was quite unbelievable. She complained to the Department of Fish and Game about the incident, and requested that an armed patrol be placed around her ranch to shoo off bobcats. (Hard as that may be to believe, that is the way we heard it.)

"Power is nothing without control."

Pirelli (tires)

I did not put anything about buffalo sticks into the forthcoming *"The Art of the Rifle,"* even though I see them advertised for sale in all the magazines. I whittled out a set of those for myself when I was a mere tad, and found out after some attempts in the field that they were much more trouble than they were worth. If you know how to shoot a rifle, you do not need any help in holding it up. A proper shooting sling takes care of the weight problem as long as there is support for the elbow, as in prone, sitting, kneeling or squatting. Any portable support for a rifle useful in the standing position would hardly be portable.

The buffalo hunters of the Great Plains actually did use buffalo sticks to a certain extent, but the conditions involved in that shooting were rather specialized. In the first place, the grass was too high to allow a prone position to be taken. Secondly, the buffalo men hunted from horseback, and portability was not an issue. Thirdly, the shooting sling had not been invented at that time. And fourth, the slaughter of the buffalo was a slow-fire proposition at medium to long range.

Buffalo sticks may indeed be an answer to a certain kind of problem, but that problem simply does not come up anymore.

"What we can say with confidence is that Rome fell gradually, and that Romans for many decades scarcely noticed what was happening."

Thomas Cahill

Does that not suggest a parallel?

After attending a recent training course for the machine pistol, *family member* Bob Shimizu declared his MP5 as "handy as a football bat." (So I have long held.)

When in a previous issue I listed some *"Good Things To Do,"* I had no intention of speaking of heroics, I was speaking of pleasures. The heroic act may be pleasant, but usually it is not. Most people who have pulled off heroic acts have not enjoyed them. I must hasten to add that I have not personally enjoyed the 30 odd pleasures I listed, for among other things, I do not enjoy playing golf, or spending extravagantly in London's best hotel. Tastes differ, fortunately, and I was trying to cover the field.

We note a feature in the current *American Rifleman* about the Krag-Jorgensen rifle once issued to our armed forces. The article is historically interesting, but does little justice to the virtues of this excellent arm. I have been a Krag fancier since early childhood, when I used one to shoot goats on Catalina Island and sharks in the Catalina Channel. When fitted with a really good trigger, such as can be had on order from the Kongsberg Factory near Oslo, this is a really nifty gun. It has the smoothest bolt-action ever manufactured, and its charging system is so neat it can be operated eyes-off at a dead run in the dark. When you flip that gate open

to the right, you have only to drop a cartridge in. You do not have to seat it or place it accurately – as long as you do not throw it in backwards, it will feed. This allows the shooter to top off his magazine without opening the bolt and taking the weapon out of action. The piece is generally found in caliber 30–40, at one time referred to as "30 Army," which is quite a respectable cartridge, though not quite up to the 30–06.

The principle drawback of the Krag action is that it is designed for a low pressure cartridge and uses only one locking lug. This single lug is quite strong enough, but it stresses the bolt asymmetrically, sometimes giving rise to a hairline crack at the rear of the extrusion.

If I were up in the bucks, I would engage a designer and manufacturer to produce a modern high–pressure version of the Krag. It would be necessarily expensive, since that feeding system calls for precise and delicate machining; however, when I see the prices charged for essentially obsolete double–express rifles, I can hardly view expense as a serious drawback.

(In case you are interested, the name is pronounced "crock," but do not tell anybody I said so.)

Riflemaster Larry Larsen plans to show us his new Christensen action at the April conclave at Whittington. As you know, the Christensen rifle features a paper–thin barrel wrapped in plastic thread, granting stiffness and bulk without weight. This may be a good idea, but Larry has got to be content with a model 700 action, which is one I would never choose for myself.

"Day–by–day, case–by–case, the Supreme Court is busy designing a Constitution for a country I do not recognize."

Justice Antonio Scalia

Did you happen to hear of that Chinese fire drill that took place in the mountains of southern Colombia? It appears that a private pilot made an emergency landing in the forest. Since his radio was working, he called for help, and a search–and–rescue team was sent to find him. This team did not find him, but after a short stay on the ground it called for additional help, claiming that they could not get back into their helicopter since they were beset by wild pigs. A second search–and–rescue team was sent to rescue the first, presumably armed with peccary repellent. This effort was successful and both choppers got into the air, eventually finding the downed pilot, who was injured.

But that does not end the tale. When sliding the rescued pilot into the helicopter, things were not managed very well and he slid overboard when the aircraft was well underway. At last report, the poor fellow was still unaccounted for.

The people who made that film called "*The Gods Must Be Crazy*" certainly ought look into this matter as a basis for a new movie.

Family member Tom Russell informs us that he was told by someone at the Gunsite Training Center that I am "absolutely retired." I find this pretty amusing in view of the fact that the only thing that I ever retired from was the Marine Corps, and that was a long time ago. Come to think of it, if working for wages is the antonym for "retired," I have been retired for most of my life.

It has been discovered by some safety committee or other that driving while phoning constitutes a distinct road hazard. If they had asked us, we could have told them that.

"The scoutscope doth not a scout rifle make." The first time I used what has been referred to as Scout I down in Central America, it had only the ghost–ring setup, and no telescope at all. The current notion that no rifle is

of any consequence unless it has a glass sight on top probably does well for optical companies, but it ain't necessarily so. I started using telescope sights in my teens, way back in the *Middle Ages*. These caused considerable comment and astonishment when I showed up in the Rocky Mountains with that doodad on my Remington 30S. I have used telescope sights ever since, and they do make shooting a little easier, but they are only really necessary under specialized circumstances; and in some cases they are a positive hazard.

The scoutscope is indeed handy on a scout rifle, but the scout rifle is a conglomeration of characteristics of which its sighting system is just one. The principle virtues of the scout are compactness, light weight and handiness. The scoutscope is faster than a conventional glass in snapshooting, but I discover that a good many hunters go their entire career without ever having to attempt a snapshot.

The fact is that a properly designed and mounted scoutscope is handy, but tying one onto a conventional rifle does not give you a scout rifle. I wish people who do not understand the concept would quit trying to fabricate and sell pieces they do not understand – but that, of course, is too much to expect.

I spend a considerable amount of time scanning the reports of gunfights taking place all over the world, and I have come to the conclusion that if we speak generally, geezers are more deadly than young studs. I think this is because old geezers derive their sense of dignity from a different culture and are much less likely to submit to being pushed around by street punks. Young moderns are all too frequently apt to heed the advice of the social worker to give up so nobody will get hurt. (This despite the statistics which tend to indicate that one is more likely to get hurt if he gives up than if he fights back.) We seem to be living in an age of indignity – but not all of us.

In that connection let us rephrase the identity of *the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* to bring them into step with the times. In my view the four horsemen of the modern apocalypse are:

- MENDACITY
- INDIGNITY
- VULGARITY
- COWARDICE

With all this news about China on the front page, we must not overlook the ancient Chinese saying to the effect that "a bowl of rice is the noblest wok of God." (Sorry about that.)

It has been suggested to me that we are very fortunate that our adversaries have not discovered the combat efficiency of the scout rifle. I do not think we have a problem here, because a hoplophobe can never discover the good qualities of any firearm since he does not want to think about firearms at all. The hoplophobe worries about buzz words like "assault-rifle" and "automatic-weapon," and can never accept the fact that the weapon is the man and the firearm is just the instrument in his hands. With this in mind it is pertinent to observe that several recent army recruits have been told that the enemy they are preparing to fight is not the English, or the Spanish, or the Germans, or the Vietnamese, or the Chinese – but rather the good old boys in rural America who constitute an armed militia. The question arises, of course, as to how the unorganized militia, no matter what their politics or determination, can stand up for an instant against the United States Army. Well, let us hope it never comes to that, but if the army is teaching it, we had better realize that they are. The atrocities of the ninja are certainly beating us into an unpleasantly confrontational society, but if worse comes to worse, I think that we can assume that the private citizen who owns, cleans, loads and shoots his own personal weapon is a considerably more serious antagonist than the trooper who has to turn his weapon back in every time he uses it. This is probably the principle reason why socialists never cease their attempts to disarm the private citizen.

"Consumerism is a virulent form of materialism developed in the United States in which advertising ensures that demand is created for products for which there is no real need."

Michael Gardner

Hartmann had the highest air-to-air score, as anyone who follows aviation knows, but when he was asked by his Russian captors if he were not the greatest German flier, he denied it. They asked him if he did not in truth have the highest kill score. And he said, "Yes, but that does not make me the top gun. The best is Marseille." And they said, "But, you shot down twice as many aircraft as Marseille," and he answered, "I shot down Russians. Marseille shot down Englishmen. In the Luftwaffe we held that one English pilot was worth three Russian pilots."

This did not endear him to his Russian captors.

But about Marseille, there was a marksman. On one occasion in the western desert he shot down seven aircraft with less than twenty rounds of 20mm ammunition.

Marksmanship such as this must be coupled with that of Rudel, and it is obviously not something a man can be taught. Neither Marseille nor Rudel could teach anyone to fly and shoot the way they did. A man can be taught to use his weapons very well, but genius is in the genes.

We learn that *Riflemaster* John Pepper has been awarded a Swiss decoration for his help in qualifying Swiss citizens on their rifles when they are resident in Washington. Good show!

In thinking about heroic airmen, my mind turns to the pilots of the observation aircraft on America's war ships in World War II. These people flew the OS2U, which stands for Observation Scout Second Model from Chance-Vought. This aircraft was both low and slow, and was almost unarmed. It could carry a small bomb or depth charge if occasions demanded, and the rearseat man handled a pair of 30 caliber Brownings, but this certainly did not make it up into a formidable air-to-air vehicle. But the flying characteristics of the OS2U were only the beginning of the problem. The lads in those aircraft had to be fired off the ship whenever we cleared for action, and that was regardless of weather or time of day. On a full dark night in a spanking gale, those boys were shot off the quarter deck into the dark, whether they could perform their observation mission or not, and getting airborne was only part of the problem. They had to be plucked out of the ocean while taxiing alongside on their single float. This is about as hair-raising an operation as I can call to mind, but I regret to say that it did not arouse any particular adulation amongst the other members of the ship's crew. In a major war heroism is almost irrelevant in the mind of the hero. In a long war with a major power, the question is not whether you are going to get it, but when. "And he that dies this day is quit for the next."

I saw those observation pilots in operation quite a lot, and I can fully understand why one of them sought refuge with his violin in his cabin when he could. It would take something like violin virtuosity to get his mind off his truly awful predicament.

Any man who flew an observation plane off of a cruiser or battleship during World War II does not have to tell his tale, his job tells it for him. Putting a full cruise in on that duty in the Aleutians may not be worthy of a Medal of Honor on the face of it, but I cannot help thinking of it as "above and beyond the call of duty."

"The government is mainly an expensive organization to regulate evil doers, and tax those who behave. Government does little for fairly respectable people, except annoy them."

E.V. Howe, via Bill O'Connor

This from Russ Orchard in Essex, England.

"I hope America is watching and learning from what is happening here. We were not strong enough nor united enough when the man came knocking. I must not bore you with our troubles any longer, so I wish you the best that life can bring and hang on to your guns."

We learn from our friends in law enforcement that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), which we frequently refer to as the "*BATmen*," is now commonly termed "F Troop," by other members of the federal service – presumably because of their astonishing predilection to foul things up. Could be.

That noisy shooting at Laurel Canyon in North Hollywood brings to mind the punchline from one of daughter Lindy's recent poems: "Ain't many troubles that a man can't fix, with seven-hundred dollars and a 30-06." Two shots from a 30-06 should have been enough to terminate that confrontation, and, of course, the \$700 might serve to buy an extra rifle for the squad car.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 4

March, 1997

Peregrinations

So it came to pass that on very short notice the Countess and I took flight for Moravia, at the invitation of the Ceska Zbrojovka, which organization has pretty much preempted the Czech smallarms industry. The city of Brno is the cultural capital of Moravia (as Prague is the cultural capital of Bohemia), and most of the products offered by the Czechs have heretofore been referred to as "Brno" weapons (usually called "Bruno" by the Colonials). Now with free enterprise taking over in the Czech Republic, the newly organized factory is located in a place called Uhersky Brod, which is about the size of Chino Valley, Arizona, if you include the Ruger factory. Since Ceska Zbrojovka is practically impossible to pronounce, I have nicknamed the operation "Chessbro." I do not know if this nomenclature will catch on, but I do feel that referring to the corporation as "CZ" will prove clumsy, especially since the letter Z is pronounced *Zee* in America, but *Zed* throughout the Empire. So now we have a forthcoming line of "Chessbro" rifles and pistols, which will be distributed in the United States by CZ-USA, temporarily located in Oakhurst, California.

My business at the factory had to do with the design of an idealized service pistol – a 45–caliber, single–action, single–stack development of the renowned "Czech 75" 9mm service pistol. I preferred the single–stack configuration, since I believe only thus will it be possible to reduce the butt circumference of the weapon to make it suitable for small hands. The factory designer said he could shrink the butt and still retain a double–column magazine. I doubt that this is possible, but I am willing to be convinced. The outstanding thing about this whole arrangement is that it can be given a superb trigger "right out of the box." I know, because I have tested it. Your trigger is your contact with your target, and nearly all self–loading pistols today (with the exception of target 22s) are furnished with triggers which do not encourage good shooting. If this new Chessbro pistol can be offered with all the good features necessary, as it comes over the counter, a great leap forward will have been achieved.

As you might suppose, the "user–friendly" butt configuration of the Czech 75 has been retained.

I strongly recommended a spring–loaded thumb safety, but the idea was rejected.

Naturally, no one can promise any realistic production date.

Also on the agenda at Uhersky Brod was the replication of "Baby," my 460 heavy rifle, which has so distinguished itself in Africa, along with its five clones. While I felt that the 460 G&A Special cartridge, designed almost 30 years ago by Tom Siatos, would be awkward to provide, the consensus was that the weapon would have more glamour if it were offered in its original caliber, and that we could make up the ammunition on contract in both Europe and America. The 460 G&A Special seems to provide the best combination of features of any of the current heavy–caliber rifles for dangerous game. Starting a 500–grain, 45–caliber bullet at 2400f/s from a 22–inch barrel is a truly splendid confidence–builder. It has taken many elephant and a score of buffalo with complete consistency, and on two occasions it has killed two buffalo with one shot – inadvertently, of course. *Riflemaster* John Gannaway once used it to knock an elephant out cold with a head shot that missed the brain. The bullet went clear through the skull to exit into open air, but the concussion of its passage was sufficient to turn off the beast like a light.

The 460 G&A Special cartridge was deemed to be the best choice in a replication of Baby, and the rifle itself will be very nearly identical. It will not employ the 602 action of the original, but rather the Magnum version of the new action designed by Chessbro, and the great good news is that it will feature a modern version of the aperture rear sight previously furnished on ZKK bolt-actions. To my mind, this was the best feature of the whole enterprise, since that rigid, serviceable ghost-ring rear sight was one of the best features to come out of Europe in the post-war era. Insofar as I have any influence, these great new rifles will not be fitted with telescope sights, as such provide not only no advantage on dangerous game, but can in some cases become a positive hazard.

The wood stock on the original Baby will be replaced by very high-impact-resistant composition. (All wood stock rifles so far built for this cartridge have shown a tendency to crack at the tang after extended use.)

Whether one is sensitive or not, the big cartridge kicks, so the Baby replicas will be fitted with integral muzzle-brakes. Sling attachments will be flush, and overall finish on the pilot models will be matt black. (Fancy presentation versions may be obtained on order at a later date.)

So our visit to the land of Good King Wenceslaus, at the behest of Kerby Smith, president of CZ-USA, seems to have been an entire success. We will not know for sure until the guns are fabricated, tested and produced for sale. My experience with these matters in the past has not been successful, but I have high hopes for these two items.

The nation that used to be known as Czechoslovakia is now composed of the Czech Republic on the west and Slovakia on the east. The two cultural elements of what is now known as the Czech Republic are Bohemia and Moravia, wherein people speak the same language, with slight dialectic variations, and take cultural pride in the music of Smetana and Dvorzak. For the most part, the Bohemians drink beer and the Moravians drink wine. There is excellent hunting in both regions. Halfway between Prague and the German border lies Plzen – where the beer comes from. Naturally, we stopped in at the brewery and were not surprised to discover that the product was really excellent. For those who favor a cleanly-flavored blonde beer, Pilsner stands as the standard of the world.

Our next stop was at Nürnberg, where we attended IWA, the primary European arms trade fair. IWA resembles the American SHOT Show, in a rather slicked-up guise. Among other things, the food and beer available are outstanding.

We visited all sorts of the people at the show, including Steyr Mannlicher, Beretta, Sig Sauer and Blaser.

The latest information on the production scout rifle from Steyr Mannlicher is that a kick-off ceremony is scheduled for somewhere in the US along about September, probably at the Black Canyon Range just north of Phoenix. They have pared the "all up" weight, including the telescope, down to 3.1kgs. The new SBS action, basically designed by Ulrich Zedrosser, will be used in its short version taking the 308 cartridge. It has been about seven years that I have waited for the production of a true scout rifle, and in that time all sorts of glassy-eyed approximations have taken off in all directions. Nonetheless, I think this one is going to go. I just hope I live long enough to see it.

We were much pleased by our stop at the Blaser display, where we enjoyed the courtly hospitality of Gerhard Blenk (the *High Blenk of Blaser*). It is always a pleasure to deal with a Czar, because what he says goes. Gert does not have to get approval from a board of directors or from any stockholders' committee or marketing manager. The way he wants it to be is the way it is going to be – and right now.

He showed us one of his "cliffhangers," a feather-weight, top-break, single-shot rifle designed for people who hunt in vertical landscapes. A pretty thing it was, and I admired it so much that Gert immediately took

down my specifications and sent them to the shop. I do not intend ever to hunt sheep or goats again, but I will have the perfect instrument for the task for those who wish to do so.

We learn from a correspondent in Milan that the Italian government has now "declassified" the 45 ACP cartridge. This means that Italian citizens may now buy, own and shoot 45s. Whether they will or not is another matter entirely.

We have received a flurry of exasperated comment from people all over the country complaining about the shooting at Laurel Canyon in California. The wrathful question is "*Why can't these people shoot better?*" I believe the answer is that they can but they don't. They certainly receive enough basic training to enable them to hit a man-sized target at short range. The point is, however, that winning a gunfight is not so much a matter of marksmanship as of mindset, a point we have been emphasizing for lo these many years. All that was necessary to stop that action as it started was concentration on the command "front sight, surprise." To maintain control under conditions of lethal stress calls for a warrior mentality, and that is something that cannot be simply inserted into a police officer in the course of a training session.

Of course, it is obvious that one rifle of even modest power in one of the police squad cars would have brought that action to a conclusion immediately, but the media keep insisting that what the cops need is more ammunition. Some of these journalistic types are even insisting that the cops should have 45s in place of 9s, even though a 45 normally has less penetration in body armor than a 9. It would be nice if people who do not understand the subject would stop popping off about it. That Laurel Canyon incident exemplifies a great many things about gunfighting, but caliber and action-type are not among them.

Remember the classic statement attributed to General Merritt Edson, US Marine Corps –

"One hundred rounds do not constitute fire power. One hit constitutes fire power."

While the production scout is due to be over-the-counter before the year's end, we must remember that the proper sight and mount system is still to be designed and produced. I am in communication with the Nickel Optic Company in Germany on the subject of building a compact, high quality scoutscope with no moving parts – adjustments to be obtained in the mounts. Dan Bechtel of B-Square now makes mounts which are adjustable both fore and aft, and could accommodate such an instrument. And if the production scout rifle picks up steam and begins to sell, we may be able to demonstrate enough of a market there to go ahead with the production of a proper telescope. Let us hope that that does not take another seven years!

I went over to the Czech Republic determined to find out why a Czech is not a Bohemian. After all, Prague has always been the ancient capital of Bohemia. As it turns out, all Bohemians are Czechs, but so are all Moravians. I attempted to straighten out the historical narrative of Central Europe some years ago when I was thinking of doing a job in Hungary. After several nights of intensive reading, I gave the whole subject up as a bad job. Questions revealed that these people do not know their own history any better than I do, and what I know is almost non-existent. Consider that the world famous title for the beer is Pilsner Urquell. I asked and asked at the brewery and nobody knew what Urquell means. The best answer I got was "It's just a name." Well, no matter what you call it, it is truly an excellent beer.

It was painfully apparent at Nurnberg that gunhandling is no better in Europe than in the United States. The customers and spectators fingering those excellent Czech pistols at the counter were enough to give one the horrors. I guess if nobody anywhere in the world teaches gunhandling, we cannot expect anybody to learn it.

These big gun shows are entertaining in many ways, but they are populated almost entirely by "business men." Clearly the world needs business men, who probably do improve the quality of life for most people, but the inclusive company of business men over a period of several days is enough to deaden one's spirit.

Preoccupation with money, to the exclusion of the more elegant side of life, can develop a *pretty poisonous personality (PPP)*. We gun lovers go to the gun shows because we love fine guns, and enjoy the chance to examine them in detail. These business men care nothing about fine guns – what they care about is money, and total preoccupation with bucks truly makes Jack a dull boy.

When discussing the desirable characteristics of the idealized buffalo rifle, I was hit with the question "What do you do with the buffalo after you have downed him?" After a short pause to organize my thoughts, I treated the assembly to the nature of protein deficiency, or kwashiorkor, amongst the Bantu. I bet that gentleman wished he had not asked me that question.

Some years back, when sociological rot had set in on the campus of Stanford University, our alma mater, the academic punks were given to chanting "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Civ has got to go." Well, it is on its way, and I hope they are satisfied. As of this year, Hong Kong, a lapidary outpost of Western civilization in the darkest Orient, will be given back to the natives. In our lifetime we have noted the lights going out all over the world, and in the gathering gloom the tidal wave of ignorance continues to advance. In a specialized society no one appears to be interested in anything but his own little specialty, and that is just not what civilization is about – Western or otherwise.

We mention it now again, and we do not feel like ceasing to do so, even if the news is old fashioned. It remains true that the murderers of Nicole Simpson, Vickie Weaver and Vince Foster are walking free, and as far as I know, bragging about it. Those are things we should not forget.

Our good friend Ulrich Zedrosser, who was the chief design engineer for Steyr Mannlicher for many years, has separated himself from the company, and is now maintaining an office as an independent design contractor in Steyr. His handiwork may be seen today in the new SM bolt-action (SBS), as well as in the production scout. He is the only "outsider" ever to use a true scout in the field, and his enthusiasm for the concept was principally responsible for its fruition. We hope to visit with him again later in this year in connection with the Matterhorn expedition being explored by son-in-law Bruce and grandson Tyler. We hope that he does not find his new working arrangement too exhausting. There is nothing like "retirement" to overload one's circuits.

In considering the recent biography of Butch O'Hare, just released by Naval Institute Press, we discover once again that the great aerial marksmen all got their shooting foundation while tramping farm and field with the family 22. O'Hare, and Joe Foss, and Chuck Yaeger, and Sailor Malan – not to mention Manfred von Richthofen, Eric Hartmann, and Ulrich Rudel – all got their start with a little 22 rimfire cartridge. Long may it crackle!

Please note that the weapon now being advertised as the CZ 97 is not our pistol. I want the idealized service pistol under design consideration to be termed the "CZ XXI," in hope that it may do for the 21st century what the 1911 Colt did for the 20th. I do not know if I can make that stick, but I am going to try.

The Czech language is simply awful! I have a modest amount of Spanish and I can knock around in German. I can order a meal or read headlines or watch movie subtitles in French, Italian and Portuguese. I can give range commands in Thai and military Mandarin, but this Czech speech is simply off the scale. It is of the Slavic family, but to the unpracticed ear it sounds even more unintelligible than Russian. (The Czech word for beer is pivo. Now, really!) Holding a design conference through interpreters, Czech to English and back again, is a weird experience. Several times we had to repeat the dialogue on the same topic at a later hour just to try to make sure that specific points were agreed upon. I will be pretty fascinated to see how the decisions I thought we reached will eventually turn out.

The hammerhead sling sockets, long featured by Pachmayr of Los Angeles, are so much better than any other system that I find it hard to believe that they are not universal. By sheerest coincidence we discovered that they were designed and built originally by Dan Bechtel of B-Square. Now that both Steyr Mannlicher and Chessbro are featuring them as a standard item, perhaps someone else will get the word.

It appears that the street punks are so fond of tucking away their pistols in the front waist band that the "castration shot" is ready for a code number in police reports. When they bring them in on a stretcher the call can simply be, "Oh sure, it's just another 609."

The general drift of our discussions with Chessbro established the dichotomy of principle that the manufacturer must face. Should he follow the trend of the times and produce instruments which are essentially the same as those already on the market, hoping to become economically successful through a program of low pricing; or, on the other hand, should he move radically in the direction of innovative design, seeking to corner the market regardless of price by offering the customer something he cannot get anywhere else? If you build a basic product reasonably well and undersell your competition, you may succeed, but inevitably there will be short-cuts in production, resulting in a generally inferior product. On the other hand, if you go for innovation you may frighten the market with features not previously understood. Naturally I endeavored to present my case for the second option. Since it is not my money that is involved, I will always push for excellence rather than economy. I am convinced that a better mouse trap should be its own reward – but then, I am not a "business man."

We found the food in Bohemia/Moravia to be hearty, bland and uninteresting. In Nurnberg, however, we were regaled again with the world-famous Nurnberger bratwurst. I have not been able to discover why Nurnberger bratwurst is so much tastier than what is passed off as bratwurst in this country. It is extravagant to say that Nurnberger bratwurst is worth a trip to Nurnberg, but it certainly is an encouragement in that direction.

Further experimentation with the ghost-ring principle on the pistol suggests that this arrangement fosters focus on the target rather than the front sight. I am not sure that this is true, but I have heard it from three independent sources, all of whom know a good bit about pistolcraft. I must look into this further.

You have doubtless heard about the founding of the International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA). This organization is currently headed by Bill Wilson, of Berryville, Arkansas, and it is an attempt to correct the errors into which IPSC has fallen. I guess we all know that IPSC has long ago gone astray after strange gods, but whether IDPA can bring truth back to competitive pistol shooting remains to be seen. The motivation and dedication are certainly there – the execution is the tricky part.

Our April rifle class at Whittington is filled. Whether we will have space to run another rifle school later on in the summer is uncertain. On this first occasion, we will see what kind of progress has been made on the proposed field rifle course. A modest piece of change has been amassed by this time, so at least we can get started. A field reaction range is not something you find on everybody's back lot, and Whittington certainly should have one.

The enemies of liberty in this country have been vastly encouraged by the re-election of the *Billary Administration*. They are sleepless and they never let facts get in their way. The fight is always there, and it is up to us, the shooters of America, to keep the pressure on. The National Rifle Association of America remains liberty's teeth. The organization is not perfect, but it is still the most powerful and articulate champion of personal and political liberty left in the world. If you do not like the way it is conducting its affairs – and I must say that there is an unpleasant amount of internal bickering apparent at this time – get in there and move to change it, but whatever you do, do not give up the ship!

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 5

April, 1997

The Sowers of April

Our working schedule for the immediate future has become so crowded that it is going to be difficult for us to keep up the production of this paper on any regular basis. Right now we seem to be booked up practically back-to-back until late July. We will do our best, however, to keep the material coming as best we may.

Note down September 24, 25 and 26 on your calendar. On these days we have reserved the Ben Avery Shooting Range just north of Phoenix for the kick-off party for the production scout rifle from Steyr Mannlicher. If obstacles do not intervene, Steyr Mannlicher, with their US distributor Gun South, will present an exhibit of the production prototype of the piece intended for commercial availability at the SHOT Show in '98.

This operation makes it convenient for us to announce the next *Scout Conference*, to be held at the same time and place. Plans are still tentative at this time, but insofar as we can predict it, all systems are *go*.

Naturally this news fills me with delight. I have messed around with firearms design for much of my adult life – without conspicuous success. This time, however, I may be able to leave a "footprint in the sands of time." I praise the management of the venerable Steyr Mannlicher organization with total sincerity. Unlike most industrialists, they are prepared to take a bold, innovative, forward step and hope that the market will respond. The action of the production scout is mainly the work of Ulrich Zedrosser, long-time chief design engineer for the organization. The rest of the piece, in both major and minor aspects, is my own brainchild. Riflemen are a conservative lot and mistrustful of new departures, but it is my earnest hope that the radical nature of the scout rifle really does constitute "a better mouse trap."

Whether it will succeed on the market or not remains to be seen, but the important thing is that it is there, and at last those who understand riflecraft will be able to buy this unique and excellent exemplification right over the counter. Sound the trumpets and beat the drums!

In addition to the foregoing good news, we can report that the development of a really new and excellent service pistol is underway at Uhersky Brod in Moravia. If past experience is any guide, this item will take some time to perfect, but if all goes well, it will combine my own design concepts with the proven excellence of the Czech tradition of weaponry. That should really be a distinct forward step available for the next breed of pistoleros.

Over and above that, we can now look forward to the "Chessbro Baby," which, while in no sense a large-volume item, ought to develop into the prestige piece for the coming generations of hunters of dangerous game. Naturally I can say nothing about production dates or prices, but bear in mind that price must always be a secondary consideration in the purchase of a personal firearm. A good gun lasts forever, which is a lot more than you can say about a car, an airplane, a steak dinner, or a house. A cheap gun, like a cheap wife, is not likely to enhance one's living standard.

Our nomination for the *1997 Waffepösselhaft Award* goes to the police carbine utilizing the 9mm pistol

cartridge. Large numbers of people – especially those in public office – seem to have lost track of the idea that any firearm must strike a blow sufficient for the task. They seem to feel that as long as a hit is achieved the results of that hit are unimportant. Thus we were all wryly amused watching minor–power pistol bullets bouncing off the body armor of those two clowns in the Laurel Canyon shooting. The "V" in **DVC** stands for *vis*, which is power. If you do not strike with sufficient power, neither speed nor precision will do you any good.

There is a Marine Corps slogan to the effect that the purpose of a Marine is to do whatever needs to be done, to do it right, and to do it now. This notion can be extended to a much wider range of experience. If there is something you think needs to be done, get on with it now. No one has promised us tomorrow.

And that notion brings up the subject of the 22 pocket pistol. Obviously the 22 rimfire cartridge does not dispose of any considerable power; however, it will penetrate the skull of a human being (most of the time), and if it is properly placed, it may render good service. A pocket 22 pistol in the hands of a delicately constructed lady with slender wrists and modest musculature may indeed suffice as a personal defense weapon, especially when one considers that a defensive pistol serves its purpose more than half the time by its mere presence, regardless of whether it is fired or not. The 22 rimfire cartridge offers a much larger opportunity for practice than any centerfire round. When the ladies and children of your household discover how much fun it is to plink with a 22 pistol, they may well practice enough to develop the sort of skill necessary to render the little gun quite serviceable for personal protection.

The leaders in this category for much of the 20th century have been the Walther PPK and PP – in caliber 22 long rifle. I now discover, to my dismay, that these little pieces are almost impossible to locate for sale in this country. Their clones, manufactured in Hungary and Turkey, are equally hard to come by. Many years ago when we were living in California I purchased four PPKs for distribution to various ladies in our immediate circle. Would that I had bought fifty! For that reason, I put forth at this time to the recipients of this paper a request that if they can locate a Walther PP or PPK in 22 LR, they grab it at once and let me know.

The new Smith & Wesson development in this line, which is a 9oz., eight–shot, double–action revolver, has great possibilities, but not until its trigger action is extensively modified. If the 22 is to be used in a defensive mode, a high degree of precision is necessary in its bullet placement, and the trigger that comes on that piece now works against that. If some member of the Gunsite *family* locates a smith who can do a good trigger job on that little gun, I hope he will let me know immediately.

Family member Jack Buchmiller sends us an article from the *Wall Street Journal* pointing out that our current reliance upon gadgetry seems to be decreasing human competence. People are now taking to the woods with one of these satellite position locators under the impression that that is all that is needed for their safety and safe return. They do not know terrain. They do not understand topography. They rarely have a map but they often do have a cellular phone, believing that if they get in trouble in the woods they may simply ring up somebody and produce a helicopter. The article even mentions a bizarre case in which a hiker was found in dire straights in the wilderness without any sort of competence and no canteen. What he did have in his pack was a laptop computer. Now where do people like that come from!

We are invited by the faithful to boycott the Jack–in–the–Box food chain because of their policy on personal weapons.

I find it most curious that there are still people – even people of some cultivation – who object to the metric system. I discovered as far back as grade school that the metric system of measure makes sense, whereas the English system does not. In case it was not explained to you in your childhood, a meter constitutes one ten–millionth of the distance from the pole to the equator, measured along the curve. With that as a base, we proceed to convenient measurements such as a kilometer (1000 meters), a millimeter (one thousandth of a

meter), and so on. Measuring distances in feet, inches and miles seems to be just silly. (I do remember from my Basic School days that there are 63,360 inches in a mile. Pretty fascinating?)

Do you know what the "Big Twenty" is? The *Big Twenty* is the placement of 20 shots in a 20-inch circle in 20 seconds at a 1000 yards. Old time target shots claim that this is impossible, but then for most of the 20th century it was held that it was impossible to run a mile in 4 minutes.

We have been enjoying a delightful response to our comments about our encounters with the weird Czech language. One correspondent wrote to tell us that the Czech language has three genders, five plurals, seven cases and very few vowels. It appears that it is possible to write a complete sentence in Czech without using any vowels at all.

And on the matter of the famous brew "Pilsner Urquell," we discover the reason why nobody in Pilsen knows what *Urquell* means is that it is not a Czech word, but rather German. *Quell* in German signifies spring or fountain. And *Ur*, as a prefix, indicates venerability. (The word for grandfather in German is *Grosvater*. The word for great grandfather is *Urgrosvater*.) Thus Pilsner signifies origin in Pilsen, and Urquell signifies, approximately, "venerable fountain." The suggestion is that it's the water that makes the beer so good.

We were recently treated to a bizarre exchange between a hapless Englishman and some *BATchick* in some front office in Washington. Our English friend was inquiring about bringing his arms into the United States, and was told that he could not import a Peacemaker (Colt Single-action Army) because it had no "legitimate sporting purpose!" Now, apart from the fact that "legitimate sporting purpose" is a blatantly unconstitutional interpretation of the Second Amendment, it is apparent that these poor souls who are confined to the District of Columbia cannot keep up with the times. Clearly the girl involved had not heard of the proliferation of "Cowboy Action Shooting." I stuck my oar in to tell her that this sort of bureaucratic behavior gives ignorance a bad name. I guess I can expect the *black helicopters* any night now.

In regard to daughter Lindy's book, "*The Soul and the Spirit*," I must point out again that this book was not my idea. I did not write it. I did not edit it. I did not proofread it, and I do not have any copies for sale. Lindy tells me that the book is selling very well, which is comforting to both of us, but I cannot get one for you. For your copy contact

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

Examples of evil judicial behavior continue to grow. Here in Arizona, a group of innocents who were endeavoring to prepare for Der Tag were busted by the BATF and their head man was sentenced to nine years in the slammer, with others receiving lesser sentences. Now what these people did was apparently against the law, but they did no harm. They threatened no one. They damaged no property. They deprived no one of liberty. They did not march nor demonstrate, but they were treated by this particular judge as atrocious felons, evidently for what they were thinking, rather than what they did. I can see how a citizen might justifiably be fined or even given a short jail sentence for messing around with firearms against the regulations of the *BATmen*, but nine years is more than a lot of people get for murder! The judge in this case obviously lost his marbles, and I fear that there is nothing we can do about it.

Colonel Bob Young, our neighbor to our immediate west, appears to have located a cougar in his close vicinity. This is the best news we have heard since the appearance of the desert bighorn sheep in the Bradshaw Mountains near Prescott.

As we understand it, it was the aim of Karl Marx to achieve a classless society. What the Clintons have achieved, however, is a classless White House.

Sport hunting is unquestionably the preeminent recreation of man, but sport hunting comes in so many forms and in over such a tremendous period of time that it defies classification. Some years ago the good old boys on the Hunter Assistance Committee of the NRA sat around and quizzed each other as to what was the finest hunt they knew. The discussion covered a lot of ground, and while I was not at all surprised to learn that the bighorn of the American Rockies stands among the highest on everyone's list, another hunt that I knew nothing about claimed almost equal eminence. This was the southern plantation bobwhite. We all admit that the hunt is a ceremony as notable for its atmosphere as for its results, and apparently a Sunday morning on a southern plantation, complete with grits and red eye gravy, handcrafted corn whiskey, the mule wagon, the dogs, and the traditional hunting staff must build up into a very enjoyable occasion. To go farther afield, many opine that *Syncerus caffer* (the "joined-horned infidel") is the top experience. Others may choose the canvasback duck, the favorite of Diamond Jim Brady, and a good many Europeans would place the Auerhahn at the top of the list. And then there is *Panthera leo*, the king of beasts. To my mind it is all good, and the more different ways I have enjoyed it, the richer my life has been. If any readers would like to put forth their particular choices in this matter, we would be glad to discuss them further.

It seems that our military forces are well aware of the nature of the enemy. The enemy is not Russia, nor Iran, nor Algeria, nor China – it is Bubba. Bubba is the good old boy who knows his way around the countryside, packs grandpa's 30–30 in his pick-up truck, and will not be pushed around. The Army at Fort Bragg recently conducted an anti-Bubba operation against a small town in North Carolina. They told the mayor they were coming, but asked him please not to tell the townspeople, which seems a very foolish request to me. In due course the ninja swept in, properly airborne, and landed all over the place. The amazing thing was that nobody was killed. Perhaps Bubba is not really as dangerous as the ninja think.

Family members who have completed the rifle course with credit should remember that if they intend to hunt buffalo and are somewhat intimidated by the cost of buying a buffalo rifle they only intend to shoot a few times, I have down in the Armory an excellent heavy gun on the Kimber action taking the 460 G&A cartridge. This piece is available as a loaner on demand.

Remember the axiom that you are only "outgunned" if you miss. Only the old-timers among us remember the deserved adulation heaped upon Butch O'Hare, after whom the Chicago airport is now named. In his magnificent exploit he was the only Navy fighter plane available in the air when nine Japanese Betty's were observed in attack formation heading for the Lexington battle group. These Betty's were twin-engined medium bombers with rifle caliber machineguns forward and sideward, plus a 20mm automatic cannon as a tail stinger. The Nip formation was a V of V's flying very close together and protecting each other with their own guns. O'Hare was flying an F4F-3 armed with four 50-caliber Brownings and packing 200 rounds per gun. In plain sight he tore into that Jap formation and destroyed five bombers before he ran out of ammunition and the fight broke up.

Let our current handwringing journalists observe that he was not "outgunned."

I regret to report that the revised personal protection program of the NRA has run upon shoal water. I previously reported that we on the Education and Training Committee would have the staff work finished by the forthcoming meeting in Seattle, and that certain National Rifle Association policies would be brought up abreast of the times. I reckoned without the obstructionism which is the essence of life in Washington. If you live and work in the District of Columbia or environs, you discover that the only way to succeed is never to give a straight answer to anything. Back in our younger days in the military, "yes" meant "yes," and "no" meant "no." That is no longer clear.

Question for your next philosophy class: "Does competition automatically destroy ethics?" This would have been easier to answer one hundred years ago when we had a full allowance of gentlemen. Today it is

somewhat more complicated.

Principle: Competition is the most valid evaluator of technique, but only if it is relevant to the goals the technique seeks to achieve.

The United Nations Organization proceeds to evolve from the silly to the sinister. As long as it just met and paid exorbitant salaries to flakey delegates from graustarkian countries, it was little more than wasteful, but now various of its members propose serious attempts to transfer national sovereignty incrementally to this bizarre agglomeration of ineptitude.

What hits us squarely between the eyes is the proposal that the UN step in and mandate the production, trade and transfer of smallarms by its members. Now this is a line on which we must stand firm. When such nations as Japan, Britain, Australia and Canada presume to tell the United States that we should abrogate the God-given rights of our citizens the way they do, it is time to cry *Halt!* The evil thing is that these international destroyers of liberty have a full share of advance-men in our own camp – and unfortunately in some positions of power. The ultimate definition of political liberty is the right to keep and bear arms – the right of the individual to keep and bear his own personal arms. Without that right all other rights are meaningless. We must make that point clear to everybody on both sides of the argument – only thus will we make our enemies aware that we are very serious about what we preach.

Among the other terms it would be nice to see disappear is "plains game." I do not know who thought that one up, but I wish he had not. In truth some game lives on the plains, but a good amount does not. Certainly the Tragelaphus people (bushbuck, nyala, kudu, situtunga, and bongo) are furtive forest dwellers, not to be found on plains. Today, however, if you are not hunting elephant or buffalo, some people like to say you are hunting "plains game." I guess terminology should never be taken seriously.

As to that, it might be suggested that we replace the vulgar barbarism "hiorshi" with "it."

We have discovered a proper use for this communication system newly termed "ebonics." We discovered that when we asked the question, "What is Windows 95?," it sounded wrong; and when we changed that to, "What are Windows 95?," that also sounded wrong. By using ebonics we can say, "What be Windows 95?," and now we are all right. (We asked someone who knows about such things just exactly, "What be Windows 95?," and his answer was, "Windows 95 be coool.")

We have had recent occasion to mix with the bright young people on a university campus. We discover that now everyone is supposed to be entitled to a "college education," the term has lost its meaning. Today college can be regarded as "remedial high school." The four high school years are apparently spent doing something, but being educated does not seem to be it. This makes the position of the visiting professor pretty entertaining. These bright young people in your class appear to be astonished when confronted by even an elementary awareness of what used to be called "common knowledge." Out in the corridor one overhears variations on, "Well, I never thought about that before," all the way to the parking lot.

Note that "*The Art of the Rifle*," my latest effort, is now being serialized in *Guns & Ammo* magazine, starting with the May issue. The book itself ought to be available by early summer.

Now we learn of a new pistol cartridge formed by necking the 45 ACP down to 40 caliber and calling it the 400. Just what is to be gained by this is unclear, but when you ask people "What is it good for?" you often make yourself unpopular.

From darkest New England we learn of what may be called "punk repellent," which is, quite simply, good

music. When these grubby types assemble on street corners or in parking lots, they can be quickly dispersed by a solid dose of Bach, Beethoven or Brahms. Real music is unbearable to people conditioned to rock. Thus we now have what may be called "the defensive boombox."

At Nurnberg I had occasion to examine the new Heym straight-pull rifle. This incorporates an innovative "ball lock," which is very smooth to operate, but which calls for a rather obtrusive bolt handle. The Heym people have a good reputation and we must assume that their bolt system is thoroughly tested. At this point I have no grounds for critical opinion.

I am encouraging daughter Lindy, "the publisher," to undertake a hypothetical autobiography of the wife of Sir Samuel Baker, who accompanied him on the discovery of the source of the Nile – among numerous other adventures. She derived from the Hapsburg aristocracy, but was abducted by brigands during a revolution and put upon the slave block in Constantinople, where by sheerest accident she was discovered by Baker, who purchased and subsequently married her. She was a remarkable person who led a wildly romantic and adventurous life, but to our great dismay she never put pen to paper. The story needs to be told, and from a woman's viewpoint in the first person. I do hope that Lindy will give it the full blast. Her name was Florence von Sass, but she was always referred to by Baker as "Flossy," and that should be the title of the book.

The news may be too late to reach you, but Saturday the 19th of April has been designated "Patriots' Day," on which all patriots are invited to display their right to keep and bear arms just as far as the law allows. Carry your piece openly and exult in the knowledge that you remain a citizen of "The Land of the Brave and the Free" – the last best hope of Earth.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 6

May, 1997

The Rites of Spring

So much has been happening in the first half of 1997 that it becomes very difficult to sort things out. At the head of the list of new goodies in weaponry, we still have the Blaser R93 rifle, the "Wild West" Co-pilot carbine, the various "pocket rockets" giving us major caliber in miniature pistols, and, of course, the forthcoming production scout rifle from Steyr Mannlicher. We should also include the souped up 30-caliber ammunition from Federal and the tiny 22 revolver from Smith and Wesson. We can expect at least one major innovation from the Czechs later on in the year, but we will have to wait and see how that comes out.

In addition to new equipment, there is now an infusion of new blood at the NRA, which may be an excellent thing. The appearance at the head table of *Holy Moses* (Charlton Heston) may be startling to some, but it should turn out to be a major forward step in the long run. Heston's "gun politics" may not be entirely above reproach in the eyes of the pure, but his public image is very powerful and may serve to impress numbers of those in the middle to whom we need to appeal.

At this point I wish to thank those who voted for me as a director of the NRA. I have not been able to accomplish as much in that capacity as I had hoped, but I intend to keep up the pressure for at least another term of office.

Certainly any hunter should be an active member of the National Rifle Association. Without the efforts of the NRA, he would no longer be a hunter. There is some difficulty in getting this message across, since it is estimated that there are 20 million hunters in the United States and only 3 million members of the NRA. In exploring this odd situation we run across the attitude held by a great many outdoorsmen that the NRA is in there fighting for American shooters and is doing a good enough job on its own. Well, the NRA is doing a good job, but think how much better the job would be if we recruited even half of those 20 million hunters. There must be a way to attack this problem. As a member of the Public Affairs Committee of the Association, I promise to give it my full attention.

In my continued search for the design of a general-purpose rifle, I have been attacked by a couple of correspondents who feel that the ideal is to have a whole lot of cheap guns – one for every separate occasion. The idea is that any well-made firearm is too expensive, and that the answer is to explode into diversification. Well, everyone has a right to his own opinion, but I am surprised to hear the matter of price brought up in this connection. One of my critics in this regard is a coal miner whose communications suggest that coal miners command a good deal more ready cash than stock brokers. Personally I deplore the idea of specialization – in either people or firearms. I remember Heinlein's dictum that "specialization is for insects."

Recent vote tallies at the National Rifle Association suggest that I am esteemed by the troops, but disdained by the officers. This does not bother me. I have more than enough to do with business as it is than to look for additional special committees or executive assignments.

The AK47 has long been the weapon of choice by the bad guys of the world, and especially by those in South Africa. The supply is not inexhaustible, however, and now the violent felons in South Africa have begun to

show a distinct preference for the baseball bat. In recent attacks on rural homesteads, the baseball bat has proven ubiquitous. The goblins usually go straight for the face, leaving the victims, if they survive, permanently disfigured. Clearly if the farmer can put his hand on his gun, nobody with a baseball bat is going to get to him, but farmers do not always display the warrior mentality necessary for survival in a troubled world.

After reading an unconscionable number of windy organizational reports recently, we have propounded the dictum:

"If it won't go on one page, it needs a synopsis."

The Laurel Canyon shoot in Los Angeles recently has brought forth a torrent of commentary – most of which demonstrates an almost unbelievable level of technical ignorance.

To begin with, a whole platoon of journalists insists that the LA police were "undergunned." Now, as we all know, one is undergunned only if he misses. It may be suggested that the standard 9mm pistol cartridge is not sufficient to penetrate body armor and that, as a result, the police should go to a major caliber, such as 45 ACP. Anyone who is qualified to have an opinion on the subject knows that a 45 ACP provides less, not more, penetration than a 9mm. For years we have pointed out that if your first two hits to the body do not suffice, you shift your aim to the head. This is, of course, the renowned *Mozambique Drill*, taught by that name at all reputable schools of pistolcraft.

Another body of journalistic opinion has held that the LAPD needs more and better training in marksmanship. I know something about the level of marksmanship training in the Los Angeles Police Department and I do not think that the technical ability to hit a target is the issue here. What wins in a gunfight is "mindset." Here in Arizona we have access to a ludicrous camcorder tape which shows the minions of the law kicking up dirt around the target at short range, when, of course, they can all hit a beer can reliably at such distances.

One man armed with a Model 1894 30–30 deer rifle could have stopped that Laurel Canyon shooting within seconds after its start, but he would have had to display the proper mindset called for by the circumstances. I am convinced that it can be taught, since I have taught it successfully for about twenty years. Why it is not taught is a sociological rather than a technical question.

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

Theodore Roosevelt

At the Whittington Shooting Center we are in the process of laying out a field rifle range to be called a "game walk." John Gannaway and Larry Larsen have collaborated in laying out the trails and target positions involving a right–side walk and a left–side walk, which will enable shooters to return to base down a defiladed trail between the two arcs, allowing continuous operation on steel targets.

The facility will include a range house for shelter and storage, a couple of portable rest rooms, and ample parking.

I blush to admit that it is tentatively to be termed the *J&J Game Walk*, and that *family members* who wish to have their names displayed in the range house may achieve this for return of a tax deductible contribution of \$1,000 or more. At this time we have accrued two fivers and a handful of oners. We are at work on the design of reactive steel targets and should have a nearly complete facility in time for the *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* in October.

"If you can get closer, get closer." Indeed, yes, but a couple of years ago I discovered that when optical sights are used it is quite possible to get too close. The Lion Scout carries a scoutscope, and when I mounted the rifle at a range of eleven paces, all I could see was an indefinite expanse of yellow hair. I had to switch back to my tracking eye in order to discover an aiming point. Now in a recent account of the Yom Kippur War on the Golan Heights, I read of an Israeli tank commander who ran into exactly the same problem on a much larger scale. He encountered a Syrian tank at range so close that through his sight he could not tell what part of the tank he was looking at.

It is my considered opinion that a telescope sight has no place on a rifle intended for dangerous game. Just what kind of sighting system is appropriate for arms-length tank combat is an interesting question.

In this age of political correctness, it begins to appear that believing is seeing. The truth is irrelevant to those who operate on "gut feeling." If it is true, as the saying goes, that the truth will make you free, what may we expect when we no longer seek the truth nor care about it?

However, we must not give up the fight. To sigh that that is just the way things are is cowardice, which is, of course, the most repulsive of the *Four Horsemen of the Modern Apocalypse*.

Note that the "*Gargantuan Gunsite Gossip*" is available, for the time being, at the Rutgers Book Center for \$40.00.

Growing up back in *the Middle Ages*, we young people were taught to dress in a manner appropriate to the circumstances appertaining. Our mothers insisted that we appear neat, clean and moderately dignified in public. On today's streets there seems to be a strong movement on the part of young people to dress to disgust. Such oafishness is apparently accepted in certain levels of society. Fortunately this trend is not entirely universal. We just attended the graduation ceremonies at the University of Mississippi, deep in the Heart of Dixie, where the student body was making a conscious effort to tidy up. It may be that the Deep South is the last locus of gentility.

You have doubtless heard of the grim command, "Kill them all. Let God sort them out!" This has been attributed to a number of military situations over the years, up to and including Vietnam, but I have run it down, and it looks like this:

The Albigensian Crusade in the south of France in the early part of the 14th century was conducted jointly by the French King and the Pope, with the intent of stamping out the Donatist heresy. Among the various "heretical" towns and cities beset by the royal troops was Beziers. When this walled city refused to surrender, the chief of the besiegers – one Amal Ulric – gave orders that the town should be sacked and all survivors put to death. One of his henchmen remonstrated, saying that there was an appreciable number of "good Catholics" inside the city. The chief of the besiegers was reported to have responded, "Kill them all. God will know his own." Now, he could not have said this because he could not speak English (the English language not having been invented at that time). We do not know exactly what he said, because no one was taking notes, but several months later a German monk reporting on the incident put the equivalent down in Latin, *Neca eos omnes. Deus suos agnoscet*.

Horrible as that sounds today, it made quite good sense in the Middle Ages, at which time most Christians felt that life on earth was simply a brief interlude in preparation for the hereafter. If one led a Godly life, God would know of it, and the reward would be eternal paradise. Thus Amal Ulric was making good sense according to his concepts of righteousness. If all those in Beziers were killed, the good would go to Heaven and the bad would go to Hell, and thus he was doing God's work.

I regret to report that no progress was made with the NRA's Personal Protection Plan, by which we on the Education and Training Committee had set much store. In my opinion, the prescribed chain of command has been temporarily circumvented. We on the committee will not give up on this matter, but we can expect a delay to continue as long as anyone can be found to delay it.

New parliamentary rules laid down by the Guru:

- No speech over ten minutes,
- No comment over three minutes,
- No question over one minute.

This is easy to enforce since the microphone can simply be timed to shut off as appropriate.

I might take this opportunity to point out that I as a director never considered Neal Knox to be "too radical." As the man said, "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice." The media would have you believe that Neal lost his vice presidency because he was too much of an activist. Such is not my view of the case.

Rule: Never shoot your rifle from the offhand position unless you have absolutely no other choice.

In this age of ostentatious ignorance we hear continually of the reprehensible nature of "antigovernment" propaganda. We repeat the wisdom of *the Father of Our Country*:

"Government, like fire, is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it or their revolutionary right to dismember it or overthrow it."

Abraham Lincoln, *4 April 1861*

We would appreciate any detailed reports available on the Davis Mountains shoot. As we understand it, one of the rebels took off into the hills, but was killed by police action without any effective resistance. We have no opinions about the morals of this case, but it would seem that an armed fugitive in wild country should be able to score at least once before he gets it. Perhaps the subject was simply incompetent, since he seems to have a record as a fairly unsatisfactory citizen. But still, we would like to know details as to calibers, ranges, number of shots fired, and such like. *Family members* are invited to fill us in on this.

A liberated society. As of now you may keep the guns you have, but you will never be able to acquire any more. Let freedom die of old age.

And now that the Brits have gone down the tube, our publishing houses discover that no periodical displayed in Britain may show a handgun on the cover. *Guns & Ammo*, for example, is now producing two different covers for at least half of its issues.

In the last issue we asked for suggestions about particularly fine sorts of hunts. What we have received up til now is from *family member* Walt Mansell in California, who tells us that the "jacksnipe" is his very favorite. A jacksnipe is evidently a sort of woodcock, and I have always heard that woodcock constitute an extremely demanding target for the wingshooter. I do not know any place where either woodcock or jacksnipe are plentiful enough to hunt at this time, but the idea is worth putting on the list for further consideration.

If Lon Horiuchi has killed himself, the press has done a marvelous job covering it up. Certainly he has a much better reason than did Admiral Boorda, the ex-Chief of Naval Operations, but maybe he just does not have the viscera to handle the job. Speaking of viscera, Horiuchi's Japanese ancestors have long had a proper solution to this difficulty.

Though it is not yet June, we must still start thinking about next year in Africa. Providing we are still here and Africa is still there, this may be set up for the month of May. I confess that my own blood lust is somewhat slaked by now, and I have no special targets in mind, but all hunting is good hunting and I particularly enjoy showing friends the African scene.

You do not need a special gun. Your 30-06 will do just fine – with the right bullets. Of course, if you want buffalo, you will need a buffalo gun, but it just happens that I have one available for loan to distinguished Orange Gunsite graduates. But the buffalo adventure is expensive and probably should not be attempted on one's first visit. You can have a fine hunt without buffalo, and you can always reserve that beast for your next time around.

If you hold with the Founding Fathers, you know that rights can neither be granted nor repealed by the State. Neither can rights be abrogated by those to whom they are granted. If we were to repeal the Bill of Rights in legal fashion, the God-given rights of man would not be negated. What God has granted, let not man deny!

In our recent rifle class at Whittington, a student showed up whose right arm had been amputated about 8 inches down from the shoulder. I certainly could not have shown him how to operate his rifle with that handicap, since I simply do not know how it is done – but he did it. He used an extendable bipod without a sling, but worked the bolt with his stump. It was an inspiring performance, and renewed our faith in the human spirit.

We continue to hold the notion that recoil effect on the shooter is about 85 percent mental. Actual recoil can be measured, of course, but what the shooter feels is more what he thinks he will feel than the actual weight of the blow. From my youth I remember that Osa, the diminutive wife of the photographer Martin Johnson, steadily backed up her husband with a 470 Double Holland. She was about the size of Marion Hammer yet she never complained about recoil. Stock fit has a lot to do with this, of course, but the actual cartridge involved is less important than a lot of people think.

Now we hear of a mature lady of 70 years in Moldavia who carried a hand grenade in her purse "for self defense." Nobody told her those things shoot both ways.

The consensus of the masters at the last Whittington class was that stainless steel does not rub well against stainless steel. There are various sorts of stainless steels and some do better than others, but generally speaking, while both black-on-black and black-on-white will do fine, the galling of white-on-white promotes premature wear.

"Liberals don't care what you volunteer for, as long as it is compulsory."

National Review

Now that we have a production scout nearly in our hands, several people have suggested that a production version of the Lion Scout might be a good idea. Right now my Lion Scout is strictly a one-off proposition, with no means of replication. However, our new friends in the Czech Republic may very well be prevailed upon to produce what may be called a field carbine for the "350 Short Magnum, Improved," which could give us excellent medium-power performance in a very compact weapon. It would not be a true scout, of course,

because it would take a peculiar cartridge, but that problem might well be handled by the proximity of the Selliers & Bellot organization up in Prague. When the ammunition factory and the arms factory are in close proximity, marrying the cartridge to the chamber is no great problem.

Just what the medium "Fireplug" cartridge is good for is moot. It is too much gun for deer, but it works splendidly on moose, elk, bear, and all African game short of buffalo. We could probably get its overall weight down to 8½ pounds – "all up." If you like this idea, let us know.

We have now discovered why we let Saddam Hussein get away. We ran out of batteries.

As the hoplophobes in public office continue to rant and rave, I should point out that three places I know of still have excellent gun laws – Switzerland, Bolivia, and Czechia. Here in the US we still have some nifty state laws, most particularly those of Vermont. If you mention Vermont to the gun grabbers in Congress, they will not argue with you. They simply change the subject.

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

John Adams

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 7

June, 1997

Summer Solstice

So now June is busting out all over, as it says in the song. The hot weather has already hit us here in the Southwest. School is out, and the African hunting season is at its best. Householders are comparing the progress of their tomato crops throughout the land, we are still enjoying last year's venison, and doing what we can about the delights of fresh mountain trout – despite the heckling of the catch-and-release fishermen.

As to this matter of "catch-and-release", it seems to have permeated all sorts of our social activities – sometimes to the good, and sometimes not so. Catch-and-release fishing is probably OK, albeit puzzling to the non-fishermen. We have heard that it upsets the fish, but that is a rather hard point to establish.

Personally I am rather fond of a form of hunting which has some similar aspects. In this game one stalks and squeezes with maximum care, but with chamber empty. When the striker goes forward in the rifle of a good rifleman, the point has been established, whether or not the piece was loaded. If you can shoot, you know where that bullet went – or would have gone. I rather like this game, though certainly not to the exclusion of the real thing.

I suppose we could call alcohol-free beer an aid to catch-and-release drinking. Now it remains to produce alcohol-free whiskey.

On the bad side is this current custom of catch-and-release law enforcement. The cops catch'em and the courts release'em.

Being an old codger, I tend to disdain these half-baked procedures, in most cases, as a form of social anemia.

As we approach the Glorious Fourth, we are increasingly distressed to learn that large numbers of our young people in school simply do not want to hear about it. They seem to have been taught that war is so bad that even victory is to be deplored. Such people are slave-minded, and they will not survive as a race through the 21st century.

The first after-action reports from this year's African adventures have begun to trickle in. One correspondent, Bob Dickerson from Ohio, did all his proper reading and preparation, and then went down there to get the full blast. He says that his adventure started out great, progressed to fantastic – and then got better. In our experience the only really bad thing about the African adventure is the trip home.

Bob's outfitter opines that the 35 Whelen is definitely the best all around choice for an African cartridge. He had not heard about the 350 Remington Short Magnum, which provides the same ballistics in a more compact package.

We hear good reports about the new Kimber clone of the 1911 pistol. It appears to include a number of good features, if not all those most desirable. Additionally, the length of the front end of the frame prevents the press check. This is not an important point, but one wonders why the designers would introduce an

unnecessary backward step.

We will doubtless see a number of the Kimbers at our forthcoming pistol session at Whittington in July.

The Scout Rifle Session, to include both the 4th Conference and the introduction of the Steyr Mannlicher production scout, remains on the schedule for late September. We will keep you posted.

Department of Absolutely Essential Information

The Czech word for beer is *pivo*. More than one beer is *piva*. Five or more beers is *piv*. Fancy that!

The question "What is a good shot?", which I address in "*The Art of the Rifle*," has been producing various interesting responses. There is an association of descendants and admirers of Alvin York who have informed me that I need look no further than their ancestor, who is established in their minds as the ultimate good shot. Certainly Sergeant York could shoot, and he put his rifle skill to proper use as the occasion demanded, but marksmanship skill is a talent with such varied aspects that I cannot consider the matter closed. We stand in awe of the demonstrated marksmanship of Alvin York and Sam Woodfill and Billy Dixon and Marseilles and Rudel and Bell, not to mention Jack Weaver, Elden Carl, Thell Reed, and Ray Chapman; or Harry Reeves and Bill Blankenship. Our admiration does not settle the case. I suppose all that can be said with certainty is that the man who can do everything with his weapon that his weapon is capable of doing – every time – is truly a good shot.

Department of Bureaucracy Amok

Part 1

"The National Marine Fisheries Service has recommended that Congress allow the shooting of protected sea lions off the Pacific coast in order to protect the endangered salmon, which is a favorite meal of sea lions. The problem is the sea lions are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, but the salmon are protected under the Endangered Species Act."

Part 2

Seems this girl wanted to go out for baseball in the capacity of pitcher. Current rules require that any youngster playing as pitcher must wear a codpiece – a tin cup protecting the testicles. Trouble is, this girl does not have any testicles to protect. No matter. Rules are rules. Wear it on your ankle, dear.

We hear continuously of shooting failures by the police because these items make news, whereas victories do not. Thus it is refreshing to read of a neat tactical achievement on the part of the Phoenix Police Department, who stalked a professional bank robber for several months, finally catching him in a traffic jam through full and accurate communications, and neatly settling his hash when he chose to shoot it out. It is nice to be able to cheer for the winners now and again rather than sneering at the losers.

Doubtless you know that Swarovski can now provide you with a telescope sight for your rifle which includes a built-in laser range finder. The item is huge and expensive, and its utility is highly specialized. You do not have to know the exact range in any form of hunting that I know of, except for the prairie dogs of the High Plains. This activity does not require any hiking, since you conduct it from your car, so bulk and weight are not important. On the other hand, the target is very small and the range is whatever the shooter wants to make it. It does seem problematical for that laser to range in on the head of a prairie dog out there a third of a mile away, but perhaps it works. Here we have a nifty birthday present for the kid who has everything.

"Diplomacy is the art of saying 'nice doggy' until you can find a rock."

Will Rogers

We hear of a contest now being held on the public sector side for an arm known curiously as a "police rifle". This seems to be the proper niche for those curious instruments which are in effect semi-automatic machine-pistols. (Note the oxymoron.) I felt that there must be something you could do with a semi-automatic squirt gun, and now I know.

Immersed as we usually are in Civil War history, it is interesting to note how few of the men called up for service in that war were able to provide their personal weapons – especially at the beginning. Consider, for instance, the case where Stonewall Jackson put a totally unarmed brigade into infantry action with the mission to follow close enough behind the assault elements so that men could pick up the weapons of those who had been hit in front of them. I would have thought that the mythical "average man" of that era would have brought his own personal rifle to war. Here we have evidence again of the fact that a disarmed citizenry is in deep trouble – at home or abroad.

A couple of correspondents have asked us recently what we think of the Israeli "flat stance" in defensive pistol shooting. If you have seen the training films you know that the Israeli procedure is to rotate the pistol 90 degrees to the left so as to make it easier to operate the slide when the pistol is pointed at the target. It has been pointed out to me that a number of cinema presentations have featured this technique – apparently in an attempt to latch onto anything new.

It happens that Mossad, the Israeli attack squad, fancies the use of the 22 pistol as a murder weapon. This is quite sound when the pistol is used in a totally offensive mode, since the subject is confronted just out of arm's length and hit ten times quickly in the chest area. Ten 22-caliber holes in the thorax are fatal, as any qualified thoracic surgeon will tell you. In employing this system the weapon is carried in *Condition 3* until the moment of confrontation, whereupon it is drawn, pointed straight out and the action is racked with the left hand. This is somewhat easier to do if the weapon is held flat rather than vertically. Accuracy does not matter and sights do not matter. Ten quick hits will do the job, whereupon the agent drops the pistol at the scene (for the laboratory to puzzle over) and walks quickly away.

Since the pistol is a totally defensive weapon, this Israeli flat technique is of only academic interest to us.

In our political discussions we note a certain confusion between the terms "liberty" and "freedom". The semantic problem here is not insignificant because both liberty and freedom are abstracts for which men are ready to die – some men at least. I think this is one of those cases where we really should understand our terms, but I wonder if our professors of political science are fully prepared to tackle that question.

"Consumerism is a virulent form of materialism developed in the United States, in which advertising insures that demand is created for products for which there is no real need."

Michael Gardner

So now we have a rush in Congress, presumably at the behest of the manufacturers, to require that American shooters install "trigger locks" on their firearms. A trigger lock is another example of a solution in search of a problem.

"Americans don't need the federal government to tell us how to store our property in our homes. That is our responsibility and it is one that we are willing to accept."

NRA Fax Alert 27 May 97

Furthermore, we Americans do not need the manufacturers of gadgets prodding Congress to buy their products. And still further, we do not need *Big Brother* to save us from ourselves.

We have an amusing case from England recently in which a woman driver was attempting to light her cigarette at a stop light with the window down. When a street goblin stepped up brandishing a handgun (as you know, handguns are illegal in Britain), the lady driver proceeded to set him on fire with her cigarette lighter. Now we may expect new regulations by the leftist government in England banning cigarette lighters.

"We have now won the Cold War. It now remains for us to win the war with ourselves."

Carlos Widmann

Yes, indeed. As Pogo said,

"We have met the enemy and he is us."

I coined the term "hoplophobia" in 1962 in response to a perceived need for a word to describe a mental aberration consisting of an unreasoning terror of gadgetry, specifically, weapons. The most common manifestation of hoplophobia is the idea that instruments possess a will of their own, apart from that of their user. This is not a reasoned position, but when you point this out to a hoplophobe he is not impressed because his is an unreasonable position. To convince a man that he is not making sense is not to change his viewpoint but rather to make an enemy. Thus hoplophobia is a useful word, but as with all words, it should be used correctly.

So now we hear from *family member* Steve Munden in Maine of an affliction called "hooplaphobia". Our analysis would seem to be an unreasoning panic in the presence of excessive partying or dancing in the streets.

It certainly would be nice if we all made an effort to find out what we are talking about.

The State of Vermont, "land of green mountains", remains the state with the best gun laws in the Union. This is a dreadful fact for the gun grabbers to face. It would be nice if the State of Vermont printed on its license plate "Sweet Land of Liberty" so as to proclaim the triumph of good over evil.

In a new biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest I discover that the general preferred his recruits to show up with shotguns. Forrest was a great believer in close shock calvary action, and one can see how a double-barreled fowling piece might be just right for this sort of thing.

Forrest spent his war well over on the Western Front near the Mississippi, where, it seems, most of his recruits provided their own armament – as opposed to the more civilized Virginia boys on the Potomac.

Family member Colonel Sverker Ulving from Sweden reports that his scout rifle provokes astonishment amongst the Scandinavian hunters. They insist that it is too small, too short, and generally too untraditional to be efficient in the field. And then they see it work – and they go away muttering.

This is certainly a major consideration in the forthcoming issue of the production scout from Steyr Mannlicher. We can expect prospective customers to divide themselves among those who consider the scout concept to be too utterly radical, and those who see it as the wave of the future. It will be fascinating to find out which view has the larger following.

Reports back from the Gulf War suggest that the single-column, large-bore magazine of the 1911 stood up well to the intrusion of sand, whereas the double-column, small-bore magazine of the Beretta did not. I do not have incontrovertible proof of this, and I am not likely to get it, but common sense would tend to support the point.

More on semantics. I have always held that a "blood sport" is one in which the practitioner voluntarily places himself in physical danger, and he does so for fun. You engage in a blood sport for your own recreation, but if you make a mistake you may well die.

Now, especially in England, it seems to be customary to call a blood sport any activity in which blood may be shed, voluntarily or otherwise.

According to my view, motor racing, rock climbing, and dangerous game hunting are blood sports. According to the other view, any form of hunting, plus such activities as cock-fighting and rodeo are blood sports.

(Bull-fighting is not a sport, but rather a demonstration, and thus does not fall into either category.)

To no one's surprise, the newly elected leftist government in England is out to forbid any form of hunting – and possibly fishing – in the UK

Well, "You pays your money and you takes your choice", but we really should define our terms before we choose up sides.

When a commissioned officer takes the oath, he swears

"To support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies foreign and domestic."

We know about these foreign enemies of the US Constitution, but who are the "domestics"? For my money the most conspicuous domestic enemy whom I have sworn to confound is the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. (Note how they have tried to avoid the B in that title. They are a bureau, but apparently they do not like to be referred to as "BATmen". I understand they do not like to be called the "F-Troop" either.)

It is not clear to me that the BATF does anything that needs doing. Contrarily, it does a great deal that does not need doing. I do not know how many people are currently employed by this unpleasant agency, but I do feel it to be my duty to support the US Constitution against domestic enemies by advocating abolition of the BATF. I have been told by people in Washington that when I make statements like this, I am laying my head on the block. So be it. Better men than I have done just that.

We understand that cattle rustling has taken on full military status in Africa up north of the Zambezi. When thievery is conducted by hundreds of well-armed men and results in the death of scores of people and loss of herds of cattle numbering in the thousands, banditry has become elevated to the scale of warfare. This sort of thing requires a command structure, communications, supply, and reasonably competent administrative procedures. That is apparently what is going on in Kenya and Tanzania, but we do not go to those places anyway.

We are annoyed at these bleeding hearts who whimper aloud over what they call to be "the sending of American boys overseas to die under the command of foreigners."

First, the profession of arms is traditionally hazardous to one's health. When one puts on the uniform he

accepts the prospect of his death in action. Ours is a volunteer army and people are not at this time drafted into it. When they join up of their own free will, they know – or certainly should know – that they may well be killed in the line of duty.

Second, no one sends soldiers "out to die". Soldiers are sent out to kill. As Patton put it,

"I don't want you bastards to die for your country. I want you to make those other bastards die for their country."

The critical issue here is that of sovereignty. We would have thought the case of Michael New would have brought this matter to a head, but obviously it did not, and the government is still weaseling on the question. Spc New was clearly guilty of insubordination when he refused to go fight on a UN team. A much larger question, however, is whether he could legally be ordered so to fight. If United States troops are placed under the command of foreign nationals, United States sovereignty is annulled. This apparently does not matter to the *Billary* crowd, but it certainly should matter to all Americans who pledge allegiance to the flag and pay their taxes to the government of the United States.

Forget this dying bit. The question is, "Who is in charge here?"

Personal reports from the scene in South Africa suggest that life is going on much as before the revolution, but continues to degenerate in several specific areas. Television has gone almost completely under, but our correspondents suggest that this is not so bad a thing. Public education has decayed quickly and radically, as has public health service. Corruption, which used to be fairly commonplace at the upper levels, is now less on high, but has increased by leaps and bounds at the lower or local levels. Street crime continues to increase, but the good thing about African street crime is that you can shoot back. There are, to be sure, certain legal responsibilities to be observed, but you can still carry your personal arms and you can still legally shoot a runaway, providing that you can establish that was what he was.

The situation is probably not going to get better, but people learn to live with what they must. A good man can face up to almost anything as long as he is adequately armed.

On the subject of street crime, we understand that a region in southeast Los Angeles around the intersection of Pico and 37th street is now being considered by the city council as a prospect for isolation as a war zone. The cops cannot do anything in the face of massive civil resistance, armed or otherwise. The presence of an armed enemy camp within the borders of a free state is something rather new. It is possible that this is something a free society cannot endure.

Interesting times we live in!

Our Arizona newspaper reports that the Gila River Injuns – sometimes referred to in the vernacular as "pesky redskins" – are now objecting to the proximity of the newly titled "John Wayne Highway". Seems to us that if we can have a "Cochise County", we can certainly have a "John Wayne Highway". (It might be a good idea to declare a 100 year moratorium on racist peckishness.)

Recently *Rifle* magazine devoted a whole issue to varmint hunting, which was a good idea except that it ignored the prince of varmints, which is the baboon. This beast is plentiful, destructive, obnoxious and dangerous to women and children. (Consensus holds that he will not attack a full grown man.) He is intelligent and wary, and the shooting is apt to be at long range. His upper canines are longer than those of a leopard, and in a group he can wipe out your whole corn crop overnight. There are those who hold that it is uncouth to shoot baboons because they are "so much like people". There are others who maintain that this is the principle reason for shooting them.

In any case, babejaan is a very sporting target. 'Tis a pity that he lives so far away.

The new name for that region of the Transvaal surrounding Johannesburg and Pretoria, is "Gauteng". Some wag has noted that in view of the current street crime situation in Joburg, the appropriate anagram for Gauteng is "get a gun".

Our *family member* Walt Mansell of California reminds us that big game hunting differs from most other sports in that its triumphs are re-livable. Your score on a deer or an antelope or a lion is an event that does not die out of your memory. When you sit in your living room and consider your trophy, you can call back the occasion at length and exult in your performance yet another time. It is possible that big game fishing can match this, but I cannot call to mind anything else that might. Victory in a tennis match or a motor race or a giant slalom is a wonderful thing, but you cannot replay it. With your buffalo you can.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 8

June, 1997

The Big Year

The production scout from Steyr Mannlicher has arrived. The working prototype was brought over in person by the factory engineer, and it looks to be splendid. It has now gone back to Steyr to be set up on the production line. Demonstrators will be available at the Whittington Shooting Center on 24, 25, 26 September, and orders may be taken at the SHOT Show in January. I have no estimate as to selling price, since marketing is an art beyond the grasp of simple men, but I am led to believe that it will be "reasonable," whatever that means.

The completed piece is such an agglomeration of nifty features that its basic worth may be somewhat obscured by minor considerations. For example, it will be the first production piece to be completely fitted with a Ching Sling, utilizing 3–point hammerhead detachable sockets. It will feature a rounded heel to facilitate the quick mount. Its integral bipod is totally out of the way when not in use. It can be set up by the owner for either 5–round or 10–round capacity at a touch of a screw driver. The composition stock is fully adjustable for length. These are all fairly small matters, but the important thing is that the piece will be ready out of the box, without recourse to any tinkering or gunsmithing.

The rifle incorporates the new "SBS" SM action, which was the brainchild of Ulrich Zedrosser, who is no longer working for SM, but operates his own consulting service in Austria. His action is of the 90–degree turnbolt variety and includes enough special engineering to warrant a separate article. It does not resemble previous Steyr Mannlicher bolt–actions in any way. For people who are accuracy happy, we can say that barrels and actions from SM portray a tradition of excellence that is difficult to match. Naturally that clean, crisp, light, Mannlicher trigger is the primary aspect of the hitability of the weapon.

Whether this piece will sell is an interesting question. For some it will be entirely too radical. For others, its futuristic aspect may be its strongest point of sale. It has taken me about seven years to bring this artifact to life, and naturally I did not do it all myself. It is very hard to convince a major producer to take a bold leap into the future. All those genuine riflemen to whom I have introduced the various scout prototypes have been completely carried away by the delightful usefulness of the weapon – generally referred to as "friendliness" – but there aren't many riflemen around, and many of those are too specialized in their particular activities to understand the virtues of a truly general–purpose instrument. My profound hope is that "a better mouse trap" will deliver at the marketplace. The factory has taken a chance on this and we pray earnestly for its success.

We mentioned running across the "*Bitsy Smith*" at the SHOT Show. This is their neat little 8–shot aluminum 22 wheel gun. It was fun to handle, but its trigger system was enough to render it unserviceable as issued. Now, however, Giles Stock has shown me a piece on which the trigger–action is quite respectable. The work was done by Charley Crawford of Tucson, and he stands ready to duplicate this job for \$75. For those who are in need of such a thing, the telephone number is (520) 896–2554. As properly set up, the piece is a sheer delight.

Well, McVeigh has been sentenced to death, as no doubt he should be, but we are reminded by our friend Glenn Jacobs that when you find a turtle on top of a fence post you can be pretty sure he did not get there by himself.

We extract the following comment from a presentation delivered by Dr. Andrew Tadie at a recent NRA gun collectors' committee meeting.

"G.K. Chesterton is much more concerned that children are being deprived from developing riches of nobility. For Chesterton, all boys must play games – cops and robbers, Robin Hood, the Sheriff of Nottingham, and cowboys and Indians. Boys must play at being the knight or the soldier in order to develop the noble virtues of courage, justice, discipline and self-sacrifice. If boys are not allowed to develop these virtues when they are young, they will not develop them later. To deprive children of bows and arrows is to form men and women without self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-regard. It is to form men and women without courage, conviction or commitment. For Chesterton, possessing bows and arrows, in fact, weaponry of all kinds, is not some sort of an eccentric, aberrant or deviant behavior. It is rooted in a most precious human attribute, the inspiration to act nobly. Chesterton admits that bows and arrows can be instruments of destruction, but the good they do is greater by far than their potential harm, because they are instruments by which children are naturally inclined to reach a higher human potential."

Work on the steel reactive targets for the new field range at Whittington is proceeding apace. We hope to have a set installed in time for the Mannlicher demonstration in September.

It is interesting to infer that Bill Clinton invented slavery – for which he is being called upon to apologize. If we antedate Bill somewhat, we discover that the only thing the United States government ever did about slavery was to abolish it. Perhaps that was a mistake, but I do not feel inclined to apologize for it. As Aristotle tells us, slavery is the normal condition of much of mankind, and has been a feature of all civilizations from the Bronze Age downward. Perhaps, while we are at it, we should apologize for gravity. That certainly causes a lot of trouble.

Among other fascinating information we acquired in our wanderings was that Flight 800 was definitely shot down by a missile. The most careful examination of all relevant facts by *Accuracy in Media* leaves no doubt about this.

It now seems an official policy of one of the obscure branches of the United Nations Organization to declaim that firearms in the hands of private citizens are a "problem." It seems quite obvious that privately owned firearms do not constitute a problem but rather a solution. Privately owned firearms are not only the strongest means of combating crime, but they are additionally the ultimate answer to tyranny. I suppose that idea is too difficult for a UN official to grasp, but it is all the more reason that the United States should resist the tendency to take the UN seriously.

Last week we were honored to deliver the dinner speech at the annual meeting of Doctors for Disaster Preparedness in San Diego. This association is the brainchild of *family member* Dr. Art Robinson, who is one of the distinguished minds of our time.

The program occupied two days, and included presentations by a selection of the most impressive savants of the country. We learned about global warming, the prospects for the stock market, the creeping horror of the rejection of objective reality in academia, the prospects for the colonization of Mars, and the "Chicken Little Syndrome." This last is the tendency of various sorts of people to wring their hands and view with alarm phenomena about which they have not the slightest technical preparation.

Those attending the conference were primarily scientists and medical men, and they were one and all dismayed by the sort of public hysteria promulgated by people who are not only ignorant of the subject at

hand, but have no desire to correct their ignorance.

It is hard to assess the motivation of these *Chicken Little* types. There does not seem to be any financial advantage in crying that the sky is falling, but perhaps the simple desire to be noticed is at the root of these things.

The Countess and I felt enormously enriched by the entire experience, and feel doubly honored at the invitation to address a group of this distinction. It was a great weekend.

Rumor has it that the regulatory or "busybody" gene has been isolated. This is that aspect of the personality which compels the sufferer to keep stepping into other people's affairs and attempting to straighten them out. For example, the US Humane Society is now presuming to advise the Sub-Zambezi Africans in matters of wildlife conservation. Wildlife conservation south of the Zambezi has been one of the triumphs of late 20th century civilization. Those people know what they are doing, which would appear to be more than can be said of the US Humane Society.

Another example of the proliferation of the busybody gene is the Peace Corps, which spends its time sending people to remote parts of the world to tell the locals how to do what they already know how to do. The list goes on and on.

The FBI has got Lon Horiuchi teaching marksmanship at Quantico. In view of the fact that the party line there is that he was shooting at somebody else when he killed Vicky Weaver, it would seem that perhaps they have the wrong man in that job.

You doubtless caught that knot-headed remark by Sean Connery about firearms regulation in England in which he exhorted people to "remember Dunblane." What we remember most about Dunblane was that there was nobody around who was either willing or capable of terminating that goblin while he was killing children. It may be in the nature of show business celebrities to talk first and think later.

"The Art of the Rifle" has now been shipped and is available from Paladin Press in Boulder, Colorado. Please note that I do not have any copies of my own for sale. Likewise, I have no copies of Lindy's book. For that please address,

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

As I may have mentioned, daughter Lindy pulled off a very superior shot last November in Montana. We could not measure the range at that time because of snow and difficult terrain, but Roy Coneen has now put a laser range finder on the site and discovers the distance to have been 287 yards. (That works out to about 625 gun writer's yards.) Target angle was about 090°, and the shooting position was the fist rest. A shot at this distance verges upon the edge of bad sportsmanship, but everything worked out for the best. The load used was the Federal "Enhanced Energy" 30-06/180. The bullet entered about midway up the barrel in line with the foreleg and exited with good expansion. The beast ran a few paces and fell. Lindy says that she would not have taken the shot except that it was nearing sundown on the last day of the hunt and she really wanted to fill her freezer. The elk was so far away that it was not feasible to pick out a particular aiming point on the shoulder, so she held dead center and hoped for the best. If she had had high magnification available, she could have seen her target better, but she could not have hit it any better. The rifle, of course, was the Springfield pseudoscout. At 8lbs it is a bit overweight, but – in the right hands – it shoots up a storm.

Family member Tom Graziano points out that he must be considered "a radical" – because he can read. He may have something there. Certainly the majority of our masters in Washington never seemed to have mastered the art. At least they have never read the Tenth Amendment to the US Constitution.

Among the recent Clintonisms is his ambition to forbid firearms to minors. It would not occur to the sleazemaster to reflect on the problems of marksmanship training, but certainly I think we all realize that adolescence is the proper time of life to take up shooting. I think rifle should come first, and then pistol, and then shotgun, but I do not feel strongly about that. In any case by the time a young man reaches the age of 18 he should be fully in charge of a number of physical skills – most especially shooting skills.

There seems to be some confusion about the dates for the forthcoming *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* at the Whittington Shooting Center. Put down 17, 18, 19 October.

We have been involved in some interesting correspondence concerning the concept of "personalized killing," which we mentioned in a previous issue. It appears that some people think it would be nice if we were to keep war impersonal. Each to his own opinion, of course, but this does not seem to be a good line of thought. In the first place it is impossible. People get killed in war, and while it is certainly true that in today's wars death is not frequently caused by the individual act of an individual soldier, to shy away from this concept is to diminish the soldier's motivation to do his duty. It has been so long now since we have had a full sized war that a large part of the population cannot remember the essential wartime propaganda which was fed to us. It is my own belief that hatred is necessary to the successful conduct of war. This may be unpleasant to contemplate, but I do not think it can be successfully denied. When a man is required by his duty to put his life on the line, politics is usually the last thing on his mind. I remember how I felt, and I feel that my emotions were more the rule than the exception. The Nips hit us without warning when we were sleeping in on Sunday morning, and our response, for the most part, was completely savage.

I think this has always been so. In a recent bit of dialog I dug up concerning Stonewall Jackson, he had just completed the evening survey of a battlefield on which thousands of men on both sides lay dead and dying. Jackson was a very reserved man, not given to outbursts, but as he returned to his tent he exclaimed:

"How horrible war is!"

His aide responded. "It certainly is, General, but what can we do? They have invaded our land."

Jackson's response was a shout. "Kill them! Kill them all! Every last man!"

War has got to be personalized. If you forget that, you will lose.

People attending pistol classes should remember that they should not show up with a piece that cannot be cocked. If only trigger-cocking is available on your firearm, you cannot be brought to the skill level you expect for your money.

Fred Wells, the famed custom gunsmith of Prescott, recently showed us a most curious artifact. Fred makes his actions up from scratch, and in this case he had incorporated the elegant old rotary magazine of the Mannlicher rifle into a Mauser action, seeking the best of both worlds. Those rotary magazines – Krag, Mannlicher, Savage 99 – have always appealed to us, but they are certainly not common. I suppose they are simply too expensive for modern industrial procedures.

Action reports keep trickling in from Africa. *Family member* Mark Feddern tagged himself a spectacular kudu, but more than that he became involved in a rather cozy confrontation with an elephant. No shooting was necessary, but there was a certain amount of acrimonious dialog.

One of our British correspondents reports with alarm that things have really gone to hell on Pitcairn Island way down there in the South Pacific. It seems that the 25 surviving citizens are disregarding their gun laws. What is the world coming to!

In that connection, we learn from a Greek correspondent that while private enjoyment of shooting is out of the question in Greece, it is very popular on Crete. On Crete, as in most of Europe, there are all sorts of restrictions on firearms, but the Cretans solve this problem neatly by simply disregarding the regulations. Let us hope that sets an example for the rest of the world.

While in San Diego we discovered that the town is very big on bumper stickers. Two we had not seen elsewhere were:

"Shoot hunters for food and sport."

And another announced:

"If we'd known they'd have been such a nuisance, we would've picked our own cotton."

Certain observers have recently raised a point about Thomas Jefferson's insistence on "a wall of separation between church and state." What Mr. Jefferson intended was the avoidance of a state church, such as the Church of England, but certainly not the abolition of any religious observance on government land.

More pertinent today might well be a wall of separation between state and school. We may not wish to be taught how to think by clergymen, but to me it seems much worse to be taught how to think by politicians.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 9

August, 1997

High Summer

Now again we can enjoy two of the great luxuries of life – tomatoes fresh off the vine and corn just minutes off the stalk. The haute cuisine has much to recommend it, but no degree of artistry can improve on God's natural handiwork. We must take note of these things consciously and carefully; all too soon they will not be ours to enjoy.

Now we note a new 1911 clone from Israel called "The Bull." At first glance it appears to be excessively large and heavy, but it probably shoots very well.

5 August is "*Lion Day*," our own personal holiday commemorating the lion that Danie van Graan fetched up for us five years ago at Engonyameni. We note with gratification that Danie was able to bring off another specialty lion for Dan Predovich, our *family member* just returned from his great adventure. All members of the Predovich tribe had a nifty time "way down upon the Crocodile River." The van Graans have a masterful touch in organizing these affairs, and we consider ourselves very fortunate in having run across them. *Family members* who plan the Great African Adventure should take note.

We discover that Karamojo Bell in his last published article (*The American Rifleman*, December 1945) declared that if he were to go back to Africa he would go by choice with a 308. In view of the outstanding results my grandchildren have had with that cartridge in Africa, I have no reason to disagree with his choice.

If you plan to attend the Scout Party at the NRA Whittington Shooting Center in New Mexico on 25, 26 September you had best make your reservations now. I have no way of predicting the number of the faithful who will want to attend that event, but accommodations are not unlimited. Steyr Mannlicher promises to have ten of the rifles on hand for examination. (Some 40 have already been sold, without announcement of any price.) But while there will be plenty of opportunity to fire the pieces, much time must be devoted to the theoretical considerations involved in the scout concept. So many new and unusual features are incorporated into the Steyr scout that I discover it is going to take me a full page of copy just to list them. I believe what we have here may truly be called "a great leap forward," though I do not want to run the risk of building the idea too much. Let us just point out that the most outstanding attribute of the scout is a characteristic which may be termed "friendliness." This is very hard to describe, but it is quickly appreciable on contact.

Now it appears that we have a very popular movie being shown entitled "*Men in Black*." Naturally we thought that the men in black are the Ninja – cop spooks who show up in the middle of the night carrying squirt guns and wearing black armor. Apparently in Hollywood they do not think about such things.

We were impressed with Scalia's ruling on the Brady Bill, in which he pointed out that the purpose of the US Constitution was, as much as anything, to save us from ourselves. This is the point that the Political Left has never been able to understand, but, of course, many of its exponents never seem to have read the Constitution.

I am sorry to report that our ambitions for updating the personal protection program of the National Rifle Association have been vitiated by the new committee assignments going into effect in September. T.J.

Johnston, Leroy Pyle and I constituted the sub-committee charged with re-writing and updating NRA defensive pistol doctrine and bringing it up to modern times. All three of us were fired, and I have no hope that the new committee (still under the previous chairman) will be able to wade out of the morass of antiquated precedent.

Well, we tried. I doubt if our failure will result in anyone's death or dismemberment, but it will probably serve to embarrass those involved in the personal defense program.

It is curious to note that it is practically impossible to acquire a firearm that is fully ready for use "out of the box". This means that when you buy a rifle or pistol you must take it immediately to a gunsmith before you fire a shot out of it. This keeps the gunsmiths in business, of course, but we find it increasingly difficult to get a gun back from a gunsmith once he has taken it aboard for modification.

(We hope that the Steyr scout will be ready out of the box. If so, this will be one of its most outstanding innovations.)

In a recent issue of *Magnum magazine* we were treated to the wistful wail of the African professional hunter. Where else, the author asked, can you find a job that keeps you out in the fresh air and sunshine from morning til night, endeavoring to please a stranger whom you do not know and who may kill you at any moment?

The life of a PH is indeed fraught. It appears marvelous at first glance, but it has its drawbacks. Our friend Ian McFarlane of Okavango once estimated that the job of an African PH was 50 percent public relations, 20 percent camp management, 20 percent motor maintenance, and 10 percent hunting. Ian once told us the tale of a customer who really did not want to get out in the bush, but rather to lie around drunk in his tent all day while the PH collected his trophies for him. Ian said that was the most fun he had on a hunt for many years.

Back in an earlier day, the term "role model" was not encountered. The term we used in my youth was "hero." Now that there are no more heros we point up entertainers as role models, and our appreciation of them is based almost entirely upon the amount of money they amass. Now I have nothing against money, (I think everybody should have some), but I cannot conceive of it to be admirable in itself. A very wealthy man may indeed be an admirable character and make use of his money in a way that may enlarge his true worth. Howard Hughes and Jim Hall are examples. But the idea of a role model seems personified in one to whom the youth can look up and say "I want to be like that." It seems tragic for the young to feel that the only thing worth doing is to make money, totally oblivious to the question of character. In that earlier day a young man could look at Theodore Roosevelt or Blackjack Pershing or Thomas Edison and say "I want to be like that." Today he is more likely to contemplate the wealth of some illiterate slob who plays games or makes tasteless noise for a living and say "I want to be like that."

Something is wrong here, and we cannot blame it all on television.

Liberation proceeds apace in South Africa. It would appear that mayors as a group are leading the march. Consider:

- Lulamile Nazo (East London) charged with pointing a firearm.
- Mzukisi Mpahlwa (Grahamstown) drunken driving.
- Siphu Kroma (Oudtshoorn) drunken driving and driving without a license.
- Lungisi Nyembezi (Kokstad) driving under the influence.
- Patrick Sempepe (Tarkastad) attempted murder.

I guess this is social progress.

Of course, there is a good side down there too. In Johannesburg recently, a felon fleeing from the police racked up his car in the zoo. In attempting to escape he jumped into the gorilla cage. What happened next is unclear, but the felon apparently felt he was unpopular with the gorilla and shot him three times (with his 9mm). The gorilla won this engagement and was congratulated by the police. He was not seriously hurt.

In further good news from South Africa we find that car owners are increasingly refusing to be victims. Two carjackers were shot dead in one week, as reported in *Vuurwapen Nuus*. The police response was,

"We cannot combat crime anymore now that our standing orders have been changed and we cannot shoot criminals. Our hands have been cut off. It is totally beyond us, so the public will have to do it for us."

Street crime has certainly been increasing in South Africa, but the good side of that is that you are encouraged to fight back.

In theory, one should acquire wisdom with age, but sometimes it seems to me that the older I get the more things there are that I do not understand. Among these things is recoil effect. When you shoot, your launcher bounces back in rough proportion to the momentum of the projectile and the weight of the weapon. We all know this and we accept it, but it seems to me that many people apply unnecessary concentration to what we used to call "fighting the problem." It is true, of course, that a very powerful cartridge fired in a relatively light weapon will kick. This kick can be measured, and obviously it varies from one weapon to another, but within reasonable limits its effect is far more mental than physical. Fred Wells of Prescott has been building very powerful weapons for many years, and I have fired a couple of them. Fred says that the effect of the recoil of the weapon on the shooter is 85 percent mental, and I am inclined to agree with him.

Recently a friend of mine, who is female and not at all used to rifle shooting, decided that she wanted to get a piece for her own use and was torn between the 308 and the 7-08. Somebody had told her that the 7-08 will kick less, presumably because its 7mm bore is smaller than that of the 30 caliber. If there is indeed any difference in recoil between the 7-08 and the 308, it certainly will be too minor for my friend to detect, yet she regards this choice of calibers as a major problem.

I have heard both sides of the discussion about whether a big man is better able to absorb recoil punishment than a small – or vice versa. Pointless argument.

The fact is that the blow delivered by the butt of the rifle or shotgun to a shooter is simply not heavy enough to bother with. Anyone who plays contact sports is subjected to heavier blows than will be delivered by the butt of his rifle, and more continuously.

The best thing to do about recoil is to ignore it.

Another thing I do not understand about is the shooting stick. It appears that shooting sticks are the rage now in Africa, probably due to the discovery by the professional hunters that their clients as a group are conspicuously lousy shots. In Africa, of course, one has a crew along to carry the water bottle and retrieve the game, if any. Such a crew can also carry shooting sticks. As it happens I whittled myself a set of shooting sticks as a youth and discovered they are far more trouble than they are worth. They can be useful in high grass, but ranges in such cover tend to be short, and a reasonably competent marksman ought to be able to handle the problem without cumbersome gadgetry. I have hunted in that high grass on several occasions, and I have always been able to find a convenient tree, shrub or fence post when necessary. I took my first three buffalo in high grass, but in each case the shot was taken from offhand without any artificial help. A buffalo at killing distance is a big target.

But now I have even heard of people using shooting sticks with a pistol. Gadzooks!

Family member and shooting master John Gannaway has finally realized the ambition of a lifetime. He has been "drawed" for desert sheep! For thirty years, John has put in unsuccessfully for a sheep tag, and now he has it. I can think of no greater challenge in the hunting field than the desert Bighorn. John has done everything else that an Arizona hunter might aspire to, and now has come the Great Day!

Tony Blair, the new Prime Minister of England, has announced officially that his government's grotesque gun laws are not expected to have any effect upon crime, but rather to eliminate what he calls "the gun culture." If he succeeds in eliminating the gun culture in Britain, he will presumably feel good. Isn't that sweet? Well, we ought not to jeer too loudly at the Brits. Just look at what we have elected!

From *USA Today* we discover that there is a Senior White House Advisor named Rahm Emanuel. In his words, "A gun in the hand of an adolescent is either an accident or a crime waiting to happen." Whether he intends to say that all adolescents are criminals, or just mechanically incompetent, is not clear. A man who can say that must be an inhabitant of another planet and thus cannot be expected to communicate accurately in English.

There may be a few people who did not catch *family member* John Milius' great work "*Rough Riders*" – but not many. John has rendered a distinct service to the Republic in presenting the case for heroism at a time when we sadly need it.

Theodore Roosevelt was without doubt the greatest American of modern times, and fully deserves his graven image on Mount Rushmore. The great events of his life are too numerous and cover too broad a scope to be rendered in one piece of cinematography, but his adventures in the Spanish American War are enough to fill one gigantic piece of movie making, and friend Milius has done full justice to the task.

One cannot escape the conclusion that we produced better men a hundred years ago – in all respects. To quote Chilton Williamson, Jr.:

"[The men who fought in those wars] were men indeed: offspring of a culture in which physical strength and stamina, resourcefulness, courage, and stoicism were balanced by cultivation, learning, fluency in self-expression (written or spoken), and the gentleness that used to be called gentility."

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 10

September, 1997

Summer Storms

OK already, it wasn't Bowie, it was Hickok. I know that, and you know that, and how that slipped into the copy is going to remain a mystery forever. Unfortunately, the second printing of *"The Art of the Rifle"* was initiated without correcting that error. When we get around to setting up the book properly, with the illustrations in color (we have the negatives), we will clean up the copy.

Egg on my face department. As the man said, "Once I thought I was wrong, but it turns out I was mistaken."

Now we learn about the "45 Super," which by means of a heavier case and a modified barrel is designed to push the 230-grain bullet up to 1,000f/s. Just what this will accomplish is not at all clear, but the purpose of innovation is only occasionally improvement of the product. What is important is only to sell. Ask any businessman.

Just last week we saw the camcorder report on the Feddern family in Africa. These good people went out with Danie van Graan, and *family member* Mark secured a very splendid kudu. Cindy and the kids worked out on impala and warhog, but the supreme excitement of the trip was the encounter with a bull elephant on a narrow forest road. The old boy was annoyed and ordered them off the property in no uncertain terms. The elephant "demonstration," which is not a true charge but rather a threat, is one of the most impressive sights in nature. When he spreads his ears wide, screams like a steam engine, and starts towards you, the effect is marvelous. The Countess and I can recommend this experience to all those customers who enjoy scary movies. Usually you can differentiate a demonstration from a charge, but you have to know the body language, and even then the signs are not necessarily infallible.

We take great pleasure in goading our friends into undertaking the African adventure. Certainly it is expensive, but no one who has tried it has failed to get far more than his money's worth.

We are informed by J.P. Denis of Brussels that he is contemplating running for re-election to the presidency of the International Practical Shooting Confederation. IPSC has fallen upon parlous times, and it may not be possible to coax it back to the path of righteousness, but if anyone can, J.P. is the man. He not only has the means and the talent to take over the con, but he also understands the principles on which the confederation was founded. We wish him the very best of fortune in this endeavor should he decide to make it, and we will lend him all the help we can.

Have you noticed the beautiful new Remington ammunition, done up smartly in black and silver? One expects that it shoots very well, but even if it does not, it makes up a striking desktop conversation piece.

In perusing Bill Buckley's excellent new book, *"The Right Word,"* we took delight in examining the abstruse subject of English usage. For example, should the currently popular putdown "bambiist" be capitalized or not? And is it common enough to be used without italics or quotations? Similar questions occur with "bunny-hugger" and "tree-hugger," and both of those involve hyphens. On another tack I would like to point out that the term "hoplophobe," which I coined back in 1962, does not designate simply a person who has an

aversion to firearms, but rather to one who is afflicted by a mental illness which results in his considering an inanimate object to have a will of its own. Anyone who thinks that a gun has a personality that makes it apt for evil should admit the fact that he is not making sense, and therefore should stay out of adult discussions.

A phobia is an irrational, unfounded terror such as some people feel towards snakes or spiders. In current usage the solecism "homophobe" has begun to intrude. Upon analysis this term signifies an irrational terror of being the same. It is used to designate one who is disgusted by sexual perversion, in which sense it is quite incorrect, because fear or terror, either reasonable or unreasonable, is implied. Perhaps we should all brush up on our Greek.

At another point in Buckley, I was startled to find that the word "unalienable" as used by Mr. Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, or "inalienable" as is more popular now, was used incorrectly in the Declaration. The proper word in that context is "alienable" since those rights are. We need to take legal steps to protect our rights, because they can be infringed upon if we do not take such action. Rights given by God may not properly be threatened by man, but they certainly can be improperly so threatened, and are.

Nearly a dozen of the faithful have written in to us to explain that the trigger action on the *Bitsy Smith* can indeed be improved very considerably, despite protestations to the contrary from the factory representative, I know a fairly good trigger can be installed in a *Bitsy Smith* because I have had one in my hand and shot it. The question is not whether it can be done, but rather how much it may cost.

It is curious to note that while the English, the Australians, and the Canadians have gone totally bonkers on the subject of firearms legislation, the French have not. The French do have some extremely complicated rules about firearms ownership, but they do not imply that firearms ownership is in itself antisocial, as Mr. Blair does in England. In France, weapon types are indeed categorized as to their political acceptability – you may have two of these, or three of that, and so on – but they never fall into the popular error we see in this country as saying that "This gun is good, but that gun is bad." When there is a shooting in France there is an official inquiry as to justification, and in most instances the subject is dropped without furor. One wonders why those crazies in the British parliament did not at least study the matter before making such complete fools of themselves.

Note that the state of Louisiana has opened the season on "car jackers" – under proper controls, of course. The consensus of the legislature was that if someone chooses to approach a driver, gun in hand, that is sufficient reason to assume that he is a legitimate target. One commentator wailed that this amounts to no less than "a license to kill." Well, sure. Car jackers are not yet an endangered species, but it is high time that we made them so.

I have been using the Fireplug cartridge (the 350 Remington Magnum) for many years now with unqualified success. I think it is a nifty design, despite the fact that it has achieved no popularity in the United States. A lot of people who extol the excellent 35 Whelen cartridge, both in America and Africa, seem frequently never to have heard of the Remington "Short Magnum," which provides the same ballistics in a more compact package.

It seemed obvious to me on the first appearance of the Fireplug that the 250-grain bullet was by far the best choice. But strangely enough the manufacturers and loaders have fallen into the error of using the 200- and 225-grain bullets, which decrease the efficiency of the round where mass is required. I have used the Fireplug principally on good-sized animals – moose, kudu and lion – but I can report first-hand that it performs brilliantly on impala, tsessebe and mule deer as well. I have heard of bullet failure at short range with both Remington factory ammunition and Nosler partition, but the Swift bullet has proven totally reliable. If pushed to the wall I guess I would have to say that my favorite cartridge of all is the 30-06, but when I go hunting nowadays I usually go with the Lion Scout, not so much because it is better, but because I simply have

developed an avuncular affection for it.

Those of you who are building rifles will be pleased to learn that *family member* John Cook, of

37 Sundog, Gillette, Wyoming 82718 (307-682-9149)

has acquired a small supply of Pachmayr hammerhead flush sling swivels. He is asking \$6.00 for each combo (socket and loop). You will need three sets for one complete set-up. This is good news, and we thank John profusely.

The most recent studies of the matter estimate that the population of whitetailed deer in New England when the Pilgrims landed ran to about eight animals to the square mile. The best estimate now places that figure at 79 beasts per square mile. In some forested areas outside of Chicago the tally may well reach 100. This sort of thing must drive the bambiists up the walls. The wild deer are marvelous, and we thank God for their proliferation, but by golly we have too many of them now. These modern-day hip deer do not forage mainly in the wild. They prefer gardens and orchards. They are pretty good people, as a rule, but they are wild, and they are not only voracious feeders, but they can be pretty darn tough when crowded. Personally I am delighted at the increased wild animal populations of the Republic, but brutal confrontations do occur and will continue to do so. When I was a lad there was no recorded instance of a cougar attacking a human being. Now this sort of thing happens quite regularly, and bears get in the act as well. Coyotes have taken infants out of the crib in Southern California, and of course bison stamp on tourists every now and then. While we certainly feel sorry for the victims of these mishaps, we must insist that it is not the business of the state to intervene in these matters. A man should look out for himself and not depend upon *Big Brother's* henchmen. Let not the bunny-huggers worry too much about the beasties; they seem to be doing very well just as they are.

Perhaps you caught that essay in the *Wall Street Journal* by John Milius concerning his splendid TV presentation on Theodore Roosevelt. John covers the subject well, and one point that pleased me very much was his observation that whatever else he might be, TR was not cool. This current juvenile slang tendency to use the adjective "cool" as a synonym for "good" has long been due for recycling.

15 July 1997

Letters to the Editor
Arizona Republic
PO Box 2244
Phoenix, AZ 85002

Dear Sir:

In your letters column we note a continuing rumble on the part of certain people calling for the prohibition of chicken fighting in Arizona. While we must certainly admit the presence of ruffled feathers on the part of those who are distressed by chicken fighting, we must at the same time protest that it seems uppity for us to deny our Latino residents such pleasure as they may derive from the conduct of one of their public ethnic enjoyments.

Let us not wring our hands over the plight of the fighting cock. Roosters love to fight, and they do not need chemical encouragement. To suggest, as some correspondents have, that these roosters are somehow "drugged" in order to heighten their belligerence, is to talk foolishness. The breeders of fighting cocks are highly competitive, and even if it were feasible, the idea of somehow increasing a rooster's desire to fight would result in conflict

amongst breeders which would extend well outside the arena.

I have attended various cock fights in both Latin America and the Philippines, and as with vodka, while I have not been enthused, neither have I been repelled. The birds lay into each other with unaffected enthusiasm. The end they suffer in the ring would seem preferable to that which they would otherwise suffer in the barnyard.

Besides that, if people enjoy attending cock fights, it would seem insufferably presumptuous to tell them they must not. To do so would be to accentuate cultural diversity in an arrogant and unnecessary manner.

By all means let the roosters have their fun!

(Note that the *Arizona Republic* did not choose to print my letter.)

Danie says that the thing prospective African hunters must cultivate is *quick acquisition of position (QAP)*. Indeed, yes. I have always found it so and conducted my teaching sessions accordingly.

And I would add a point. The second principal of personal defense is decisiveness. The hunting shot is only seldom fired in a purely defensive mode, but nonetheless it remains difficult for the novice to make the life-and-death decision when necessary. Once you have acquired your target in your sights, do not dally, dither nor delay. Do it right, and do it now. This does not mean that you should rush your shot or mash your trigger, but that once you are on, you go for score. I have seen this practice neglected in the field often enough to feel strongly about it. I do not know exactly how to teach the matter of decisiveness to a student on the range, but the demand remains "If you are going to do it, do it now. Do it right, but do it now."

While I have never owned a 45-70, I was allowed to use one fairly often as a shark stopper on the Catalina Channel. This old bruiser has been sadly underrated ever since our adoption of the smokeless powder cartridges along about the turn of the century. It is, however, a great cartridge – probably unsurpassed to this day for the big bears and the great cats. It is also practically ideal for moose. Furthermore, you can get it in some extremely handy weapons, probably the best of which is the Marlin 95 in compact trim as made up by Jim West of Anchorage, Alaska.

While we have all shot our share of trophies, I have long been opposed to trophy hunting as an end in itself. I am even mildly opposed to the presence of a tape measure in the hunting party. An outstanding specimen of a princely quarry is a wonderful thing to have, but inches are to me of slight interest. The grand thing about big game hunting is the experience itself, rather than an artifact to hang on the wall. Certainly the trophy will serve to remind you of a deed well done for as long as you live, but this has nothing to do with where he stands in the record book.

It is essential to remember that big game hunting should not be regarded as a competitive sport. It is an activity of a very personal nature, being conducted by an individual – without concern for what some other individual may have done or may do. Among other things, the measurements of the trophy have almost never anything to do with the ability of the hunter, who carries out his sacrament to the best of his ability, and is thankful for whatever the spirits of the wild may grant him.

(Note that a triumphant achievement in the bull ring is never measured by the length of the bull's horn.)

Because of some sloppy communicating on my part, there are a good many who still are unsure of the dates of the Steyr party at Whittington. Officially now the press party is scheduled for Thursday, 25 September, and the conference proper for Friday, 26 September, both commencing at 0900. The press party is directed exactly

at the new Steyr Scout itself as a production weapon for 1998. The conference may cover a somewhat wider field of theory, touching on the history, current status, and future of the scout concept in whatever form it may take. There is much to talk about here, and I look forward eagerly to talking about it.

This discussion of POT (post operational trauma) continues apace. I suppose it exists. I have heard a lot of people talk about it and write about it, but I have never experienced it myself nor have I seen it in another. One commentator recently observed that the wartime experience is so different from a peacetime gunfight that the respective emotional responses may not be intelligently compared. There is no doubt that the killing of an enemy soldier is a different matter psychologically from the killing of a sociopathic felon. It seems to me, however, that emotional shock after action should be far less in peacetime than in war. The enemy soldier one kills may be a particularly good man, doing his best for God and country. He may be a man you would like to go fishing with, or possibly to marry your sister. If you are going to get shook up about killing a man, it would appear that you would be more shook after killing an enemy soldier than after killing a repulsive criminal.

I cannot tell you how you will feel after action. I can only tell you how I felt, and how those around me felt. Never have I run into this POT thing, and I think it is a pretty good subject to drop.

No matter how unpleasant the idea may be, racism has a good deal to do with one's feelings in war. Certainly the interminable war going on between Jew and Arab is racial. These people hate each other with a passion, not so much because of what they do, but because of who they are. The same may be said to be true of the Irish feeling about the British, and certainly race was a paramount motivation in the Pacific War.

Racism, however, is not a necessary attribute of war. If it exists, the combatants will certainly use it to raise morale, but it is not necessary. One of the lesser known works of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel is entitled "*Krieg ohne Hass*" (War without Hatred).

It would appear today that Farrakhan's followers are doing their utmost to promote race hatred as an element in the furtherance of their political goals. We can do without that, but possibly they cannot.

Noting the increased attention to the lifting of small weights as a means of exercise conditioning by ordinary people (as opposed to weight lifters), I have broken out the rifle as summer declines and spend sometime before breakfast each day on what we used to refer to as "butts manual" in high school ROTC. The idea is to reach the point where that rifle feels like a feather in your hands. This not only helps your marksmanship, but it does good things for the appropriate muscles.

So the Horiuchi case is now officially closed! He is now free from legal retribution, but one wonders about the spiritual side of the case. The Greeks had a word for this, as they had for so many things. The word was nemesis. You may escape the law, but not nemesis. It will come, either in this world or the next.

"Since first the world began,
Two things have altered not:
The beauty of the wild green earth,
and the bravery of man."

Allen Clark

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 11

October, 1997

Harvest Home

Autumn is upon us, that season of the year we most enjoy. My schedule for the next several weeks is such that I may not be able to get around to my desk much, either to answer my correspondence or to churn out the Commentary. Please forgive me if there is a hiatus between this issue and the next.

The Steyr party at Whittington is now here. As I write this, ten production models are on station and available for inspection, examination and shooting as of the 25th and 26th of this month. The weapon itself is a jewel, and I can only fear that it may be too advanced for its time. On the other hand, its very novelty will have a definite appeal to a good many people. The essential attribute of the Scout rifle is a "friendliness," and those who get a chance to handle it will understand what we mean by that. It has been suggested to me that the rifle is "too expensive," but that is a hard element to quantify. If one wants a cheap gun, there are plenty of those available over the counter in the local friendly hardware store. If one wants a good gun, he may find some outstanding bargains, but if he wants a really superior instrument, he must expect to pay for it. This is a dreary aspect of the commercial age, and applicable not just to firearms, but to automobiles, airplanes, boats, wines, boots, and tires – among all other items of interest.

Be that as it may, we anticipate a nifty time at Whittington, and since Steyr Mannlicher has launched an expensive gamble based on my ideas, I wish them a huge financial success.

"If no one is shooting at you, you have nothing to complain about. If someone is, shoot back."

Curt Rich

At the recent directors meeting of the NRA, we were treated to a splendid presentation by "Spokesveep" Charlton Heston in his address to the National Press Club. His eloquence, polish and obvious sincerity constitute the most powerful weapon for our side since the war to disarm us began.

As to the meeting itself, nothing much was accomplished, which is not unusual. Our enemies remain unconvinced about the nature of political liberty, and as entrenched as they are, they are very difficult to get at – but we keep trying.

We get this curious incident from a protected residential community in Orange County: In the wee hours, a 26-year-old woman pulled up at the guard booth. She was confronted with a pistol in the hands of the guard who got her out of the car and tried to handcuff her. The proposed victim briskly snatched the gun away from the guard and beat him savagely over the head and face with it while simultaneously acquiring his handcuffs. This guard was a curious product of *The Age of the Wimp*, among other things. Unhappy with the way things were going, he meekly asked the girl to give him his handcuffs back. She complied, and then drove home and called the police, who showed up shortly and found the guard to be "a bloody mess."

(As we continue to emphasize, it is neither the weapon nor marksmanship which wins the gunfight. It is mindset.)

"In one of the 'Commentaries' which you so kindly send me, you wrote that I hunt only with a .458 Win mag. This is not absolutely correct. So, just for the record, let me set things straight. When I am hunting in the Eastern Transvaal (now M'pumalanga) lowveld where Lion, Elephant, Buffalo and Hippopotamus are likely to be unexpectedly encountered, I hunt with a .458. This is for greater peace of mind. Impala, Warthog, Blue Wildebeest and Kudu are usually dropped as cleanly as with a 30–06 220 grain which is what I like to use if the dangerous game is not present. Usually. But I must confess (mainly because one of the witnesses is still living) that it once took me three solid hits with the .458 to collect a warthog. The second shot, at about five meters, put him down when he attempted to gnaw me! But it took a third shot to finalise matters. Perhaps this serves to illustrate the point that in Africa, if you expect the unexpected you will seldom be disappointed."

Lieutenant General Denis Earp, SAAF (R)

As our society decays, our principal objective must be the minds of the young people who, without properly indoctrinated parents, are at the mercy of an educational establishment that is out to get us. As a youth I was taught rifle marksmanship by the US government. Such goings on are unthinkable today, so it is up to us to make sure that adolescents get the message from their parents. If you are not a parent yourself, find a kid who needs the message and show him the way.

I now have over two dozen correspondents explaining to me that the trigger–action on the *Bitsy Smith* can really and truly be made shootable. It appears the word I got from the counterman at the SHOT Show was simply basura. This being the case, the idea of this cute little item being put to defensive use comes to the fore. It is obvious that a 22 long rifle bullet in the tear duct will stop a fight as efficiently as a 44 Magnum. The problem is hitting that very small target under difficult conditions and in a great hurry. If you plan to use a 22 to save your life, you must practice, and practice a great deal. You use targets the size of bottle caps or pingpong balls and work until you can always hit them at short range and at great speed. You should not do this on paper targets, but rather on a field range where you submit yourself to conditions of maximum stress. Do your aerobics on that range and when you are totally out of breath start hitting those bottle caps with your 22 – in a great hurry.

I have been informed that the two Czech prototypes – the idealized service pistol and the heavy sporting rifle – have been projected and are underway. We may expect the pistol prototype for examination by June of next year, and the rifle by September. For information on either of these two items contact,

CZ–USA, 40356 Oak Park Way, Suite W, Oakhurst, CA 93644.

I have been approached by a publisher with the idea of writing a book about African hunting experiences with particular emphasis on weapon types and riflecraft. Suggested title: "*Some Golden Joys*." I tend to like the idea, but if I launched upon it seriously I would have to give up answering my mail and writing this journal. There are simply not enough hours in the day nor days in the week. The more I consider men like Winston Churchill and Theodore Roosevelt, the more I marvel!

A good example of this global dumbing is the concern about "global warming." Dr. Art Robinson, who may be the wisest man I know, suggests that we need a new national program to teach thermometer reading to the American people, as well as to convince them that it is unacceptable to argue that an effect has arrived before the cause has occurred.

Note that Dr. David Kahn is holding his famous *Keneyathlon* this year on 10, 11, 12 October at the Blue Steel Ranch at San Jon in New Mexico. (No, that is not a misprint.)

This is a hunter's test of varying and unstandardized format examining practical hunting fieldcraft and marksmanship as it occurs in the real world.

For information contact Dave Manning at (805) 521-1808.

We recently enjoyed a delightful semantic discussion among the wise at which we were challenged to differentiate between "liberty" and "freedom." Dictionaries consulted came up with nothing very much, maintaining that the two words were synonyms. I do not think they are. To me, freedom is a personal thing, involving absence of restraint. You are free when you break out of jail. On the other hand, liberty is a political condition, and is defined most correctly as the right to do anything which does not prevent or inhibit the free actions of your neighbor. These are just opinions, of course, but they are worth discussion, as I think precision in communication is one of our worthiest social goals.

As we have observed before, the Rocky Mountain goat (*Oreamnos americana*) is proliferating in the Middle Rockies to the extent that some hiker infused with bambiism is going to get killed by one. We have friends who are concerned about the introduction of the Mexican grey wolf into southeastern Arizona, but I will place a small wager to the effect that we are going to have a goat incident before we have a wolf incident.

The feminization of the armed forces continues, and now it is hunting back into history. When the US Constitution (Old Ironsides) was recently set seaworthy again, one of the officers commented "This frigate is a tribute to all the men and women who fought aboard her over the years." Italics ours. This statement evidently came from a commissioned officer of the US Navy, perhaps even a graduate of the Naval Academy. I get this information from *family member* Barrett Tillman, and I take it to be accurate, unbelievable though it may be.

A while back Jan Libourel, editor of Petersen's *Handguns* called to inform me that he had been sitting in on a bull session in which the participants discussed which of history's famous campaigns they would most prefer to relive via time machine, and he asked me for my choice. Well, now, this is a very difficult matter, and I hesitated before offering a quick answer, but since the telephone line was still open, I chose the conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortez. With an exclamation of delight, Jan informed me that that was exactly his choice. We have both been teachers of history, and I find it fascinating that our views coincided so neatly. I know a certain amount about the Mexican conquest, having executed a major research paper on the subject in graduate school. No one can know all he would like about the great human adventure we call history that stretches into the past. Sadly enough, as the dumbing down of America proceeds, the splendors of our adventures seems to be totally lost upon the young.

We see that Remington has now introduced what they call a "Coach Gun," which is simply a short, breach-loading, double-12 shotgun. Unfortunately they have made it in hammerless configuration. A weapon of this type (know by the Sicilians as a lupara) should definitely have exposed hammers, since it is its destiny to be racked for instant readiness over the kitchen door – indefinitely. With exposed hammers the piece may be decocked when so placed, but a hammerless weapon of this type may be called upon to sit with fully compressed springs for a lifetime.

There seems to be much news over the issue of several M16s to the LAPD as some sort of solution to that *Keystone Cops* affair that occurred earlier this year in North Hollywood. I find it odd that this is regarded as new, since I know personally an officer who settled a hostage situation a good many years ago in Hollywood with just such a weapon.

The situation here seems to be that some people – principally the press – were concerned that the service pistols of the LAPD would not penetrate body armor. Almost any rifle cartridge will penetrate body armor,

but if you are confronted with an armed felon who is wearing it, it is a simple matter to shoot for his head. At gunfighting ranges, the head is an easy target to hit. We teach it all the time.

Actually it has long been my opinion that cops should be allowed to choose their own weapons, from a rather broadly specified assortment. If this idea strikes you as old fashioned, I can point out that Colonel Wegener, the head of the renowned GSG9 counter terrorist force, employed exactly that policy. Any man will shoot better with a weapon in which he has confidence, and he should be allowed to choose the one that gives him the most confidence.

The word we get from one of our main sources in South Africa is that the political situation there would be hilarious if it were not so tragic. The post revolutionary government is now neatly described as "incompetent, incapable, and in power."

It appears to me that pistolcraft has now split along three separate and dissimilar paths: police shooting, rooney shooting, and cowboy shooting.

The police establishment is now properly devoted to the Glock, and this seems to be a good choice. The Glock is a difficult piece to shoot well, and its safety problem has been solved by issuing it with a trigger that only a gorilla would love, but it has been generally admitted that the police today cannot be trained to shoot well – not so much because of time and ammunition expenditures, but because of motivation. A man will do well only at things he enjoys doing, and today's police departments are reluctant to hire a recruit who enjoys shooting. Thus the Glock's "shootability" is irrelevant. The piece is relatively cheap, it is usually reliable, and the company's service policies are outstanding.

The rooney shooters, exemplified principally by IPSC, have now gone out over the edge with unrealistic challenges and "space age" instruments designed at great expense to meet unrealistic challenges.

The cowboy shooters are into the game entirely for fun, and there is nothing wrong with that, but it has little to do with what we have learned about practical pistolcraft over the past three decades.

Thus it is that the practical use of the defensive pistol is left stranded on the beach, to be practiced only by those individuals who wish to make a serious study of it. Back when we started the Southwest Pistol League, we had the objective of discovering which arms and which techniques were best suited for the saving of life in short-range, interpersonal confrontations. To the extent that we did achieve this objective, it has now been put upon the shelf and forgotten. The International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA) is making an effort to get back on track, but competition being what it is, I predict that the gamesmen will win this round too.

All this excitement about the proposed trigger locks for firearms is another evidence of the dumbing down of the American people. If you wish to render your piece inoperable, you need only to take it apart. With the self-loading pistol and the Peacemaker, this is the work of seconds. With the solid-frame, double-action revolver it is a bit more complex, but one does not need it to buy a trigger lock for the purpose. A simple padlock snapped around the top strap when the cylinder is swung out will do the job without any politicking. Is it possible that there are people who do not know this? And is it possible that people who own guns do not know this! And yet the subject is discussed in Congress (for Pete's sake) at our expense! One need not be "computer literate" in order to think.

And since the whole purpose of the defensive pistol is instantaneous self-defense, deliberately rendering it inoperable is ridiculous. Rendering your pistol inoperable is rather like tying an anchor onto your life jacket.

Well, they seem to have got to Horiuchi. I asked Senator Larry Craig of Idaho whether Horiuchi could get a fair trial in that state, and his answer was an unqualified, yes. The trial, when it occurs, should finally reveal

whether Horiuchi was incompetent (in which case FBI looks bad) or he was a murderer (in which case he looks bad). Those are the only two options.

My only contribution to affairs in Washington was a suggestion that we make a strong effort to abandon this term "extremism." Along with such words as racism, sexism, and terrorism, it is used as a crutch by people who are apparently deliberate in their desire to be unclear. In the current journalistic mood, to be an extremist is to be bad, in total ignorance of the fact that the men who gave us this nation were extremists in a very clear sense of the word. "Give me liberty or give me death!" is certainly not a moderate opinion, nor is "Government, like fire, is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." These opinions we revere, and they are certainly the opinions of extremists. I suggest that we in the NRA, both the general membership and the directors, should give up the use of terms which mean whatever the user wants them to mean and have no precise meaning of their own. Let us by all means strive to say exactly what we mean. Who knows, we might even come to understand one another!

It is long been a principal of ours that one is no more armed because he has possession of a firearm than he is a musician because he owns a piano. There is no point in having a gun if you are not capable of using it skillfully.

The bad guys up in the state of Washington have now proposed an initiative (SI676) directed at *Unilateral Personal Disarmament (UPD)*, which is extremely dangerous. They could not get its provisions through the statehouse so they are putting it on the public ballot. We must do all we can to publicize this operation and make sure that it is defeated when it comes to a vote. We must make sure to keep this foot out of this door.

This from George Orwell – of all people:

"People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf."

via Colonel Clint Ancker

If you have a copy of the *Gargantuan Gunsite Gossip*, I strongly suggest that you get it bound up in durable style. That volume is irreplaceable at this time, and you want it to last. The second volume will be forthcoming at such time as we get the copyright situation straightened out.

Considering the fact that, according to our Founding Fathers, all able bodied adult males are members of the militia, all able bodied adult males should be technically qualified with the personal arms selected by our Department of Defense. By this I mean that everyone who is physically capable of it should be checked out on the M16 as to its mechanism, operation, and use. I am no admirer of the M16, but there it is and we are stuck with it. The fact that it has the fully automatic option might serve to terrify those people who do not understand weaponry, but if that is the US rifle, the US citizen should certainly know how to operate it.

Also, in my view, everyone should know how to operate the slovenly AK47, not because it is good, but because there are so many examples floating around the world. If, God forbid!, the sewage actually does hit the impeller, you better know how to work an AK47, because that may be all you can get hold of. When a citizen applies for a concealed carry permit, these things might well be considered.

While in Washington I ran into a rather presentable woman of young middle age wearing the Marine Corps casual uniform. On her collar appeared three stars. As with Scarlet O'Hara, I do not want to think about that today. I will think about that tomorrow.

A couple of people in reviewing my works in the past have come up with a contradiction which I should correct. In one article I stated that the 308 cartridge was quite adequate for targets of up to 200 kilograms in weight. I meant that to read 400 kilograms, and I so stated in subsequent publications. Four hundred was a proper statement then, in my opinion, and it is even more so now that the 308 is being loaded to 30–06 potential by Federal, as well as others.

Having seen a great deal of field shooting over the years since I first started writing, I am now quite convinced that the 30–06 180 will do anything that needs doing, though I would not suggest it as first choice for buffalo and pachyderms. This is the reason, incidentally, that the 308 was chosen as a primary caliber offering in the Steyr Scout. If plans go as I expect, the secondary offering in that weapon will be the 7mm 08, expressly intended for those jurisdictions where the 308 cartridge is forbidden as a military round. You might be surprised at how many of those there are.

We recently heard of a wonderful challenge issued by our old buddy Fritz Huls, who was operations officer here for a time. When confronted by what was evidently a threatening wanabe stick–up man in his gun store, Fritz produced his pistol and sounded off with "Son, you're making me very nervous."

We hear of a new and very simple course of fire which may be set up and used with a minimum of equipment and range facility. It is called "Lollypop Shooting." It involves the placement of 4–inch steel disks at varying ranges from very short to moderately long. The object is simply to knock them down in any order in the shortest possible time. Obviously six disks constitute the maximum practical number. This makes up into a very neat contest with no trouble at all for the operators. Let's try it!

We repeat our counsel about your African trip. You need not take two rifles, but you should take two telescopes. Rifle failures are very rare. Telescope failures are all too common. (And remember the axiom, "Don't go to Africa unless you understand that once is not enough.")

And we now hear of a police officer back in Ohio who has been suspended for not being shook–up enough as a result of a successful shooting. The man did all the right things, and won – and now his department is seeking to dispose of him, apparently for being "insensitive." My good friends who read my stuff keep sending me information of this sort. I do appreciate their thoughtfulness, but sometimes I would like to get some good news for a change.

Another deep question for the wise: "What is the purpose of education?" You will not find agreement on this, but it is certainly important to try. The current consensus seems to be that the purpose of education is qualification for some specific trade. It is as if we were attempting to turn out generations of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." The idea of the production of cultivated ladies and gentlemen is not even understood, much less commended. It is quite astonishing to see the way in which journalists insist upon talking down to their readers as if there were no such thing as what used to be regarded as, "common knowledge." Recently a reporter felt it necessary to tell his readers what an aileron was, such as fell off that spook fighter last week. When I was in the 7th grade, I do not think there was a boy, and probably not a girl, who did not know what an aileron was. There are those who would opine that there is just too much information available to the student today for him to absorb any real amount of it. They insist that machines will always be there to provide the answers to any question. Of course, these machines cannot tell us the difference between liberty and freedom, nor the difference between envy and jealousy, even if they can provide us with the specific gravity of helium, or the average temperature at Riyadh. As some comic strip character once opined, "I would trade a ton of information for an ounce of wisdom." In my opinion, information is for the mechanic; wisdom is for the wise. So what then is the purpose of education? Let's kick it around.

Let us all remember that though the Bill of Rights contains ten articles, it is one of those articles which makes the others possible. Thus, as Charlton Heston said in his great speech, the Second Amendment is first among

equals. Let us all bear that permanently in mind.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 12

November, 1997

Hunting Season

Well, that was a month that was! We expected October to be a barn burner, and that is the way it turned out. October is normally the finest month of the year (in the north temperate zone) and some way should be found to extend it so as to provide more of the *Golden Days of Autumn*.

To present a full account of all of our adventures in the wonderful month just past would require a very thick log book. Let us just say that we had a nifty time touring the great mountain states in the lovely S4 and seeing them at the peak of their spectacular fall colors. Not only is the "mountain redoubt" (Wyoming, Montana and Idaho) beautiful to see, but in addition it constitutes what may be the last refuge of dignity, decency and common sense in the United States (e.g. a bumper sticker we saw in Cody, Wyoming, announced, "Stop honking, I'm reloading.").

The place names up in that country are a delight in themselves: Spotted Horse, Wounded Wolf, Recluse, Medicine Bow, and Dead Swede – among others.

This is indeed a grand region, but it is lonely. "People who need people" should look elsewhere.

The press party for the Steyr Scout was most entertaining. The little gun is truly a jewel, and a great tribute to the ingenuity of the engineers at Steyr. I take satisfaction in the knowledge that this modern version of the scout rifle concept is largely my idea. The little gun is a great pleasure to shoot and, in my opinion, it is indeed a great leap forward. A couple of minor modifications were agreed upon at Whittington and will be incorporated in the production model to be displayed at the SHOT Show in January. These include a somewhat lighter bolt–lift, a black rather than nickel bolt, and a seamless stock juncture. I am doing my best to actuate the left–hand version to be offered ASAP. One out of six shooters is left–handed, and four personal friends of mine have stated vigorously that their money will be forthcoming just as soon as a left–handed version is on the market.

There is already talk of variations in caliber. The basic piece will be offered in 308, and plans are already afoot for a 7–08 version for jurisdictions where 30 is forbidden. Also there is talk of presenting a medium–bore version of the piece, taking a proprietary cartridge to be used in those parts of Africa where the hunting of dangerous game is restricted to cartridges of 375 bore size (9.3mm). It is fun to speculate about future possibilities, but I would like to see the conceptually pure 7.62 NATO item prove itself on the market before we start messing around. In my opinion, the left–hand version of the piece should take first priority.

Invariably the subject will come up: "How does the Steyr Scout shoot?" Well, it shoots very well indeed. Why wouldn't it? The Steyr Mannlicher organization has been producing superbly accurate rifles since before I was born, and I do not see why they should change now. There are those who feel that no weapon as short (37 inches) and light (7lbs flat including the sight) can possibly shoot alongside a bull gun. Well, it does! You may prove that to yourself the first chance you get, which, incidentally, should be along about March of next year.

We shot *Pepper Poppers* at 100 (off-hand), 200 (sitting), and 300 (bipod), and those Poppers took a terrible beating. That lovely trigger, with its clean, 30-oz break, actually seems to make it hard to miss.

Listen to me purr!

Incidentally, we set up the Billy Dixon shot at Whittington (plus or minus 1340 yards), and I was amazed at the modest amount of holdover necessary with the little gun using boat-tailed target ammunition. We had difficulty observing the strike of the 30 caliber bullets at that extravagant distance, but what we could see was astonishing – to me, at any rate. The drop at that range is, of course, considerable, but somehow when actually shooting it seems less than it should be.

After the press party we cruised up to Gillette, Wyoming, where we were the guests of Dave Lauck, the renowned custom gunsmith. We had deer tags, but we were only moderately successful, since these Gillette mule deer seem to favor a sagebrush environment, and a Wyoming mule deer at this time of year is exactly the color of sage. Nonetheless, I was able to bounce a modest little "double 4" with the new gun. The range seemed very long to me, but the laser logged it at 215, a humbling experience! That was first blood for SS#6, and now we intend to take it to Africa next April and to fill up a fairly elaborate shopping list in the Okavango Delta.

From Gillette we cruised over across the Big Horn Mountains to Cody, where Dave Lauck presented a custom 1911 pistol in my name to the Colt Collection at the Buffalo Bill Museum. Heading back down towards Whittington for the reunion, we encountered a startling piece of serendipity at the Holiday Inn at Thermopolis, Wyoming, which houses one of the finest collections of big game trophies I have ever seen. I am astonished not to have heard of that display before this, and I encourage all the faithful to make a stopover at Thermopolis whenever you may find yourselves up in God's country.

At Whittington we all got a chance to shoot Dennis Lunt's 50 caliber (50 BMG) at the Billy Dixon target. "It shoots good, like a 50 cal should." However, someone talked Dennis into setting a 25 power telescope on it, which is almost entirely useless as a sighting device. All of us who tried it found that the light pencil is much too thin for convenient positioning of the head. The maximum practical magnification for a telescope sight is about 10 power, such as that on the Abrams tank. At 10 diameters you can see all that you need to see, unless you are looking for the moons of Jupiter. Be that as it may, we all enjoyed shooting the big gun, and most people when shooting the 50 discover that it does not kick as much as we expect it to.

We now have set up five of the new steel reaction targets on the *J&J Game Walk*, and they seem to work very well. These targets cost \$280 apiece, and as of now we have sold five more targets, each of which can be inscribed with any name the donor feels appropriate. In prospect, the completed range will have 12 steel reactive targets in position and two more in reserve at the range house. Of course, we have to build the range house first, and I have seen no firm plans for that. This game walk, when ready, will be about the only thing of its kind, and its only administrative drawback is that it will take quite a bit of time to run. If things work out properly, we will have two courses side-by-side and in defilade with each other so that two shooters can be in action at the same time. Time will tell.

We note with considerable interest the appearance of a modern automatic revolver now in production in Germany. It comes in caliber 357, and as with the old Webley-Fosberry, the barrel and cylinder recoil together, rotating the cylinder one notch and cocking the hammer. Just what this piece is good for I cannot say, but I look forward to shooting it as soon as possible.

Up in Wyoming we were treated to a spectacle of a Blaser R93 packing a Harris bipod. Daughter Lindy suggested that this reminded her of mounting a bicycle rack on your Ferrari.

Danie van Graan from Engonyameni reports continued success with his 45–70 "Co–pilot." In his capacity as a professional hunter he is most unlikely to ever need a long shot, but the authoritative wallop of a 45 caliber, 500–grain lead bullet could be decisive up close, and the weapon is so compact and handy that Danie reports that he has had it at the ready on two occasions when he just would not have had predictable reason for packing a full–sized rifle.

If any one of the faithful has handled one of the new Tanfoglio 45s, I would appreciate a report. On paper the piece looks good, but I will have to have it in hand before I can come up with a valid opinion.

Have you noticed that we old geezers seem to be too tough for the street punks. In Jacksonville recently a 17–year–old goblin attempted to stick up a diner, only to have one 70–year–old and one 80–year–old (actually 69 and 81) saddle up and blow him away. It is hard to figure out what motivates these adolescent punks, but it is not hard to figure out the motivation of us feisty old dudes. We would just rather win than lose.

The proliferation of state concealed carry laws has evidently reduced the rate of violent street crime to a considerable extent. When the goblins do not know who is armed and who is not, their professional enthusiasm declines. Now that Britain has made sure (insofar as any law can so insure) that everybody is disarmed, the streets are given back to the bad kid with the baseball bat. We hope they are satisfied.

The newest gadgetry for the metallic silhouette people are color–coded, preset sights. They look pretty, but whether or not they work remains to be seen.

Every year I am amazed at the amount of histrionic talent displayed by the brothers at the annual Theodore Roosevelt reunion. Among other notable performances, we were delighted with Colonel Clint Ancker's rendition of the St. Crispin's Day speech from Henry V. I do not believe Sir Laurence Olivier ever did that as well, but then, Sir Laurence was not a warrior, whereas Clint Ancker is.

During our recent motor touring, we noticed on several occasions the road sign "Gusty winds may exist." Now I find that pretty fascinating. The notice that gusty winds may exist suggests some thought be given to the relationship of reality to existence. Whether such winds may or may not exist opens the door to questions about what constitutes existence. Descartes declaimed, Cogito ergo sum (I think: therefore I am). Whether winds may or may not really and truly exist calls for serious thought. I almost ran off the road considering this matter.

In going into the matter of Theodore Roosevelt's Roughriders, we discover that those lads had never fired a shot out of their Krag carbines until they fired at a live enemy. The notion of sending a man into combat armed with a weapon he did not even know how to load is strange, indeed. As it turned out, things went pretty well (from our standpoint), but the circumstance is no less remarkable for that.

Note that after the emasculation of both VMI and the Citadel, there is now a move afoot to establish a "Southern Military Institute" in the hill country of northern Alabama. This academy is projected as male, Christian, private and white, about as "politically incorrect" as one can get. It will be interesting to see whether it actually gets underway. If this is truly a free country, as we keep telling ourselves, there is no reason why it should not.

We hear continuous complaint about the quality of the illustrations in "*The Art of the Rifle*." Let me point out that all those pictures were shot in both black–and–white and color, doubling the amount of effort involved. It did not occur to me that the finished book, using only the black–and–white pictures, would look more like a proof sheet than a finished product. The publisher, however, rejected the color on grounds of expense. Here

we have the classic viewpoint of the "businessman" – "Better cheap than right." Somewhere down the line I may be able to persuade another publisher to do the job up as it should have been done. This will not be true, however, of the first ten thousand copies.

We hear that the Brits have now re-activated some horse units for use in the hills of the Balkans. Interesting, if true.

We are now given to understand by a police firearms instructor of wide background and experience that lesbians make lousy shots. Normal girls, on the other hand, tend to do rather well on the range. Is there a point to be learned here?

We plan to take Federal "Plus P" 308 ammunition with us to Africa in April. This hot loading effectively turns a 308 into a 30-06. In conjunction with the "Trophy Bonded Bear Claw" bullet featured by Federal, this should turn our delightful little scout into a truly all-around African rifle. We will check this out and report back.

So much good stuff was declaimed at the *GR and TRM* that I cannot include it all in one issue. We will just go one at a time in forthcoming issues. In this one we will lead off with the following original poem by Joe Sledge (edited very slightly by the Guru).

"The Tree of Liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

Thomas Jefferson

The Walking Rifleman

By Joe Sledge

When a man takes his rifle a walkin'
it adds not a bit to his load.
It makes him in fact somewhat lighter,
for he walks as a free man, unbowed.

When a man takes his rifle a walkin',
he's master of all he can see.
A good man won't abuse the position,
for a master's a fine thing to be.

When a man takes his rifle a walkin',
he'll keep his eye sharp, his wits keen.
That's not just a tart he's escortin'.
No, that lady beside him's a queen.

When a man takes his rifle a walkin',
its condition doesn't matter to me.
He can load it however he chooses
so long as he lives by Rule Three.

When a man takes his rifle a walkin'
and he needs a second shot quick,
he'll be glad of the time spent on homework,
that he mastered reflexive bolt-flick.

When a man takes his rifle a walkin'
and he's hunting, to feed him and his,
well, he's living the way God intended,
and that's just the way that it is.

When a man takes his rifle a walkin',
as some say he should not be allowed,
well, they'd better be saying it softly,
for a man with a rifle is proud.

So if you take your rifle a walkin',
realize what you're saying, my friend.
You're saying that you are a free man
and woe be to him who butts in.

So let's take our rifles a walkin',
with pride – defiance if need.
If we don't want to be the last riflemen
we've got to re-sow freedom's seed.

Yes, let's take our rifles a walkin',
and we'll walk in the light, so they'll see.
And if they come to tell us we cannot,
then we'll water the Liberty Tree.

We get the following interesting commentary from *family member* Barrett Tillman:

It seems that during the first part of the European War Hermann Goering, who was the chief of the German air force, ordered a prominent group commander to outline all of the group insignia on his aircraft in red; the reason being that the previous group commander had been married to a woman of dubious ancestry – read Jewish. The new group commander was a German soldier, and he obeyed orders, but he went one step further. He dutifully outlined the group insignia in red – and then had all of the swastikas on the aircraft fins painted out. You see he was "politically incorrect," but he appears to have been less afraid to express himself under the Nazis than his opposite number would be today in the US Navy. German fliers of that era seem to have been less intimidated by Hitler and Goering than our present aviators are by Pat Schroeder. Freedom may be interpreted in different ways.

Up until our recent trip up into God's country, I had not given adequate thought to this matter of shooting the boy's dog at Ruby Ridge. To us it seems impossible to imagine a case in which a man would shoot a boy's dog. A boy's dog may be his closest companion in life, dearer to him than his own family. For the Fed to shoot and kill the dog right in front of the boy is pretty unthinkable. Do you suppose he was motivated by some sort of death wish? Considering the fact that the famed Pleasant Valley War in Arizona was initiated by the shooting of a pet dog, we are given further reason to ask of the Feds the question, "Just what goes on here?" This is not to suggest that a dog's life is of more basic worth than the life of a man, but it does suggest that this sort of provocation may well have been just what touched off the string of homicides at Ruby Ridge. And without sufficient cause.

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

Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 5, No. 13

December, 1997

Pearl Harbor

December 7 goes down in history as *the Day of Awakening*. Upon this date in 1941 the United States of America opened its eyes and got its act together. We set forth on a quest that could have changed world history permanently for the better. The fact that we did not know what to do at the end of the fight, when we held the world in our hands, does not render our quest meaningless. A *Pax Americana* was within our grasp, but that grasp proved to be limp.

But 7 December, nonetheless, was the date to remember.

The fight for liberty goes on. We win some and we lose some. England, Australia and Canada seem to have gone down the tube, but our victory in the remote northwestern state of Washington serves notice that the American people have not yet lost their viscera. The interesting thing about that case up there in Washington was that it was a referendum – an exercise in direct democracy. Political representatives may not be much concerned with freedom – they have more important things to worry about, such as getting re-elected – but in a referendum nobody is up for re-election, and the decisive victory for our side should give notice to our enemies that the great majority of the American people really do understand about the rights of man.

I was much amused at the fury that arose when some hired hand in the Pentagon scornfully referred to the Marines as "extremists." Since our friend Brute Krulak is the father of the current commandant of the Marine Corps, who appears to have got all frosted by this exchange, we fired off the following letter:

Dear Brute:

I must have got it wrong. It was impressed upon me in my youth that a Marine is supposed to be an extremist. (Along with such citizens as G. Washington, P. Henry, and T. Roosevelt.)
"Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice!"

Semper Fi!

I have as yet no response from the general.

Several commentators have complained about the cost of the new Steyr Scout. Our standard response has been to the effect that Porsche could indeed build an economy car, but it would not be a Porsche.

After considerable testing and discussion, we have concluded that the proper answer for a pistolero whose eyes have begun to go is not a pistol ghost-ring, but rather a pistol express sight. The express sight, as you know, was pretty standard on the British heavy rifles of the Great Days. It consisted of a shallow "V" rear sight, mounted well forward on the barrels, in combination with an ample round bead on the front. This sight was intended for very quick use on very dangerous animals at very close range, and it served its purpose well. It was by no means a target sight, but it was a superior defensive sight.

Consider then that a pistol is intended for very quick use at very close range against very dangerous targets. The similarity is inescapable. I am not content with the pistol ghost-ring, for a number of reasons, but the pistol express sight just may be the only important development in pistol sightings in modern times.

We have just been shown, by Ashley Emerson of Fort Worth, a sleeve system for mounting a scoutscope on standard-type rifles without recourse to a pedestal barrel. It looks fine, though I have not yet used it on a rifle. I suggest you look for it at the SHOT Show forthcoming.

Now that we are well through the '97 football season, we have concluded once again that this prancing and capering displayed by the heroes after any successful effort on the field strongly suggests the behavior of baboons in the African bush. From what we can learn, stone age man was much given to self-congratulation, whereas a civilized gentleman enjoys his proven battle heroism with quiet satisfaction. Those who have observed baboons in the wild note that they manifest most of the bad habits of the human race, with almost none of its good qualities. Of course, gentlemen (and ladies) have almost gone out of fashion in *the Age of the Common Man*, so this sort of thing is only to be expected.

About when we had thought that we had heard everything, we now get a note from Africa about a gent whose careful aim at a prized nyala was upset by a phone call on his cell phone. Honest to God! Along with people who venture into the wilderness without a map, and go on extended hikes without a canteen, we now have hunters who hunt with cell phones at the ready. No puede ser!

We have a letter from Monty Sagi, who is superintendent of police in Israel, correcting us on the matter of the use of the "flat stance" by the Israeli security establishment. We all have seen this bizarre technique illustrated on the screen, and I took it to suggest that the Israelis were actually shooting that way – and that is with the pistol rotated 90 degrees to the left. The truth of the matter is that Israeli security forces are trained to carry their sidearms in *Condition 3*, which demands that the action be racked as the pistol is presented. They are taught to rack the slide with the pistol so rotated, but to come back to vertical when firing.

I see the point here, but I recall that when I had something of the same problem in training honor guards who stood outside the doors of important people with their pistols in *Condition 3*, we wiped the slide on the way between "Clear" and "Point." It worked pretty well, and surprising speed could be achieved even from a full flap military holster.

The idea, of course, is to carry the pistol in the holster in *Condition 1*, but that seems to be "against regulations." So change the regulations!

Our good friend and Orange Gunsite student, Ulrich Zedrosser, who is mainly responsible for the new Steyr Mannlicher SBS rifle action, is now at work on a totally new and different action of his own. I have pointed out to him that it is important to produce a bolt-action rifle system which is easily convertible from right to left-hand operation. As of now, the Blaser R93 is convertible by simply exchanging bolts, but the Steyr Scout, unfortunately, is not. Time marches on!

The following comes from Orange Gunsite graduate Curt Rich and pretty well puts the case regarding this publicity activity surrounding land mines:

"Now I probably know a little more about land mines than the President, and I do despise them. I put too many young boys on helicopters with limbs missing. I spent a year dreading stepping on a land mine, and I was injured by an antitank mine. Come to think of it, the SKS rifle I brought home was booby trapped by antitank mines, and if the string hadn't gone slack I wouldn't be writing this. But they're a necessary evil. I would far rather see North Korean soldiers dying from American mines than American soldiers dying from North Korean

bullets."

"Remember there are no rules in war. The side which imposes the most rules on itself loses."

"We lost in Vietnam because of self-imposed rules."

The so called "Holoscope" is getting good reviews, but I have yet to check it out. It would seem perfect for the combat shotgun, if not quite so desirable for rifle or pistol.

News from Ceska Zbrojovka tells us that the excellent reserve rear-sight, which was standard on the Czech 600 series, now discontinued, will be revived in all calibers on their new rifles. They also suggest that the proposed heavy rifle they have in mind ("Jeff Cooper's Baby") should be available in medium as well as heavy calibers. They push for 416 on the proven renewed popularity of this round. For my part I am against it. As I see it, the 416s are halfway measures. If you want real power, you had best go for at least 500-grains of bullet. My own recommendation for this rifle is that it be offered in 458 Lott, 460 G&A, 470 Capstick, and 505 Gibbs. There is a problem in making any wood to stand up to the recoil of a heavy caliber without splitting, but it is certainly not a problem which cannot be solved.

A friend of ours recently had a fantastic experience right up in the hills not very far from the *Sconce*. He had staked himself out overlooking a cattle tank, which is a popular source of water for our wildlife. His position was 55 paces from the water's edge. In due course, who should come down to drink but a very nice 7 point bull elk! (Naturally our friend had only a deer tag.) While the bull was drinking his fill, over the lip of the berm came padding a prime tom cougar. The elk saw the cougar. The cougar saw the elk. Neither saw the hunter. The cougar finished his drink before the elk did and quietly strolled off a little way to lie down peacefully in the sun. Presently the bull, having drunk his fill, nodded politely to all concerned and wandered off.

Our friend sat there, rifle in hand and deer tag in his pocket, but he was no way dismayed. That experience alone was worth more than a trophy on the wall.

In the German magazine *Visier*, we see the new H&K SOCOM as "Zu viel des Gutes," which means "Too much of a good thing." Are any of you old enough to recall what Mae West had to say about that? According to the legend, she said "Too much of good thing is ... marvelous!"

Watching the behavior of many friends and acquaintances on shooting ranges recently, I get the impression that if an emergency arises all we have to do is shout "Ears!" if we want to lose the fight. It is true that I no longer hear well, and that my ears have been abused by decades of shooting, but I do not think that anyone is going to hear well at my age regardless of how he wore his ear protection. Certainly it would appear that this racket which is called "rock music" in some circles should do more to deafen the aged than mere battle noise.

It is commonly held in nature films and magazines that the cheetah is the world's fastest four-legged animal. Such a claim is pretty hard to establish, but I can say from first hand experience that an impala can outrun a cheetah in a short sprint – because I have seen that happen. The impala normally travels in graceful arching bounds, but when this particular impala discovered that the race cat was on his track, he stretched out full length horizontally and shifted into afterburner. The pursuit lasted about 70 yards, and the cat gave up. Perhaps he had not read the textbooks.

We set off quite an intellectual turmoil when we asked about "the purpose of education." This is indeed a fine subject for discussion, but before embarking upon it, all concerned must agree upon the terms employed. Surely we cannot discuss what the purpose of education may be until we agree upon what education itself is. Whatever it is, it would seem that we are not doing much with it now. We note a comment by one mother of a

ninth grade girl who did not know that 25 percent is the same as one-fourth. We hear of another student who proposed to his class that dihydrogen oxide should be banned worldwide. God only knows what is going on in the classrooms! Something must be happening there – but what?

I guess we are just going to drop the subject of Nicole Simpson and Vince Foster, and it begins to look as if the murder of Vicki Weaver is going to be dropped too. Is that the way justice works? Do we just forget about crimes because we would rather not hear about them? Apparently that is just what we do in *the Age of Sleaze*.

I am by no means sure that legalizing drugs would be a good policy, though there are some very good thinkers in the country who hold just that view. However, in view of the fact that the so-called drug war is used to justify the excesses of the federal ninja, it might be proposed that if we abolish the drug war, we could abolish the ninja too. The thing that keeps the drug trade going is the enormous amount of money involved. We must remember that both narcotics and stimulants were readily available over the counter during the Victorian period. We had very few junkies, and as far as I can tell, we had no ninja. One cannot turn the clock back, but we might give serious thought to some feasible means of turning it forward.

It is gratifying to know that the attempt in the Pentagon to de-activate the US Army Marksmanship Unit has been abandoned. I realize that the modern army has very little concern with marksmanship, but it does seem important that it at least be given lip service. One cannot but wonder how a president who "loathes the military" (exact words) feels about being its Commander-in-Chief. Well, we elected him.

We note with gratification that 1903 was a particularly good year. (Of course, we were somewhat younger then). That year saw the introduction of the great Springfield rifle, the classic Mannlicher-Schoenauer 6.5mm carbine, and the 600 Nitro Express from Holland & Holland. I cannot remember when three such noteworthy pieces of technology all appeared in the same year.

Among the "Darwin Awards" that we get from *family member* Cas Gadowski in Alaska, we note the following:

In Calcutta on 2 November, two sportsmen came up with the curious idea of placing a garland of flowers on the head of a 13-year-old male royal Bengal tiger in the zoo. This may even out-score the man who went hunting with his cellular phone on "go."

(Only one of these two clowns was killed. The other was just torn up a good deal.)

(Note: The "Darwin Award" is issued, after careful thought, to those who are doing their best to prove that evolution works backwards.)

We learn from NRA/ILA that those curious people in Handgun Control, Inc. took it upon themselves to assign a letter grade to each state based upon what laws it feels are essential to protect children from gun violence. (It is implicit in their philosophy that guns are out to get children.) The states were rated *A* through *F*, *A* meaning strongly controlled or prohibited, and *F* indicating relatively free from regulation. Not surprisingly, the eight states with the lowest violent crime rate in the nation were rated either *D* or *F*, while the state with the third highest crime rate received a *B*. HCI did not grade Washington, DC, since it is not a state (yet), but under the HCI grading system the district would have been given an *A* despite having a violent crime rate nearly four times higher than the nation as a whole.

These Sarah Brady people insist upon trying to make sense, so far without visible results.

The following note is from *National Review*, Bill Buckley's brainchild, and one of two or three periodicals in the nation directed at people who think:

"It is not ignorance, but an accurate perception of reality, that lies at the root of much of what is now called "white racism" – which is why race relations will not be improved by exhortations that the majority adopt more enlightened attitudes."

It is indeed fortunate that people have varying tastes, and shooters are no exception. We have run across several enthusiasts recently who love guns to the extent that they feel the more they have the merrier. These people would rather have twelve commonplace, pedestrian weapons than one or two really good ones. We may thank God that people's tastes vary so much, otherwise all the men in the world would aspire to one particular wife.

Sometimes it seems to me that people simply do not pay attention. Just last month, for example, I got an after-action report from a couple who have taken our advice and made the African hunt. It turns out that this gent was wandering about in the bush in company with his PH – neither of whom was armed. Well, they did not run onto a lion, but they did run onto a nice trophy buck who was evidently a good deal smarter than they were.

Sometimes it seems that a hunter will go to a lot of trouble to acquire a proper education, and then when he gets to the field put himself completely in the hands of his PH, who usually has all the answers, but sometimes does not. Witness the number of PHs you see running around in shorts. Gunhandling is the activity in which it seems to me the professional hunter too frequently falls short.

The continued denigration of this term *macho* (the adjective) or *machismo* (the noun) is continuing evidence of the attempted emasculation of society. "Machismo" is a definite plus, and it has a negative connotation only when, as with almost anything, it is carried to foolish extremes. The term does not translate very well from the Spanish, and this is the probable reason for its misapplication in English. The closest single equivalent we can find in English might be "manliness," and, of course, manliness is a no-no in the wimp society. It is useless to try to teach people to be careful about their terms, but this is one more people should think about more often.

Dave Lauck up there in Gillette now proposes we shoot at an egg at 500 yards. Of course, you cannot see an egg at 500 yards, but Dave has constructed a target which will show you where the egg is. Personally I prefer the venerable Boer contest in which the contestant shot from offhand at a chicken egg placed on the top of a termite mound at 100 paces. This, it seems to me, would not only be more fun, but it would certainly take up a lot less room.

Guru Say –

Let us remember that the one thing we can acquire which will not wear out is learning.

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

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master,
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling
