
Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

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Vol. 7, No. 1

January, 1999

1999!

Well now, 1998 was a year that was! And to top it off, see what a splendid Christmas present we got from the US House of Representatives! Senator Schumer, whom Tom Fleming has characterized as the nation's most vicious enemy of the Bill of Rights, was perfectly furious, as was Barney Frank, our token weirdo. Couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of guys!

We on the "Liberty Team" will continue to struggle throughout the forthcoming year. We members of the National Rifle Association of America will put our money where our mouths are and make sure that the government establishment will never be allowed to assume that the wimp establishment represents the "mainstream." Cases keep coming up, and we keep fighting them. Right now we are in a head-on with the US Forest Service regarding the continued operation of a long established shooting range which is located on BLM land in southern Arizona. The government has told the operating club that they should build an indoor range. Now wouldn't that really increase the attractiveness of the national forest! I think we may win this one. It is to hope.

Family member Cas Gadomski reports that a lady friend of his in Alaska was stalked and attacked by a black bear. This woman happened to be packing her rifle and successfully stopped an unprovoked charge with one shot. Gunsite Bear Rules were properly observed in this case, and everything turned out well.

The *Waffenpösselhaft* award for 1998 has been preempted by a sportsman whom family member Mark Terry observed on a public rifle range. The character concerned had recently acquired a brand new Weatherby 300 with which he commenced practice for deer season. He began work from the off-hand position at a range of 100 yards. Mark said that he felt that this was rather a good attitude until he noticed upon closer examination that there were no sights on the rifle. Our shooter shot slow-fire and observed the target through binoculars after every shot. He fired 20 rounds of (very expensive) Weatherby ammunition, and then secured his practice. There was not a mark on the paper.

The more I observe the human race, the more I do not understand.

Incidentally, how do you feel about a quick-detachable telescope mount? The idea has never appealed to me, but I find people of serious stature who do fancy it. I prefer to put a glass on a rifle and leave it in place until it breaks, but there are those who like to take it off and put it on to anticipate specific action types.

We are at work on the project of a new sighting system for the scout involving a fixed glass with no moving parts and using a transparent pyramid for a reticle. We intend to talk to the Kahles people at the SHOT Show, and J.P. Denis, past president of IPSC, has already done some experimenting with the reticle. Considering the time it took to get the scout concept into production, I am not expecting quick results here, but the idea is interesting and I intend to pursue it.

You will remember that Tim LeGendre of Michigan showed us an approximation of the thumper concept some years ago. He is now well onto a new project, which is essentially a giant 45 adapted to the M16 rifle.

He uses the 280 Remington case with its rebated rim and clips the cartridge to the length of the 30 caliber US Carbine. He claims he is getting 3000f/s with the standard 230-grain RNJ pistol bullet! Pretty wild, hey? Tim calls his project the "45 Professional." And when asked, why?, he said that professional hunters in Cameroon (of all places) have tested this out as a protection gun for client hunters with great success. Apparently these Cameroonian PHs have decided that "spray and pray" has its place in the dangerous game business. This notion does not thrill me, but Tim claims that it works – or that it has worked on a couple of occasions already. Of course one may not own or operate a self-loading rifle down below the Mason-Dixon Line in Africa, but the idea is certainly interesting. Zounds!

We grieve for the African farmers who have lived in *Condition White* for generations, but now find that following the revolution they do not have this choice. As much as one might wish it, he cannot simply bow out of a race war. You do not have to choose up sides to be a combatant. The other people will do it for you.

In a curious commentary on the modern age, we recently had a long bull session with a family member who was a naval aviator by profession and now flies combat aircraft as a civilian consultant. He has had a long time in the air and a certain amount of combat experience, but the only time he ever had occasion to shoot for blood was on a rural highway in the United States. He repelled boarders with his 1911 and scored two for three. That 45 pistol is a step down from a Sidewinder missile, but it worked exactly as intended – to nobody's surprise.

Guru say: Don't put a glass on that "Co-pilot."

Did you notice that these goofy animal crackers are buying up prime time on television sports channels? During pro-football broadcasts we were treated several times to a commercial which tried to make us feel bad about eating chicken. (Actually it could not have been a commercial, since nobody was trying to sell anything.) These people just insist that I should eat broccoli instead of steak. Now, I certainly do not care how much broccoli they eat, but I find it obnoxious for them to tell me what I should eat. The busybodies – the *polypragmatoi*, as we may call them – are proceeding from the silly to the offensive. The ad we saw was sponsored by PETA, which calls itself "People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals," but which more precisely might be termed *Philosophically Egregious Theorizers of Asininity*.

Note that the new offerings from Mercedes Benz feature pistol boxes beneath the two front seats. That is not a new idea, but up till now it was a call for custom work.

We learn from a correspondent in France that wild pigs have become a serious agricultural problem there, as they have been in Germany for some time, and now increasingly so in Australia. Hunting the "wild boar" is a fine pastime and should be encouraged widely. French farmers do not seem to like this idea, however, and now maintain that the wild hog should be exterminated. The people who condemn hunting frequently have to face this. They would rather there were no wild animals than that anyone should enjoy hunting them.

In studying the matter of a rigid glass with all adjustments in the mount, we come up into the rarified study of "spherical sections." We were introduced to spherical sections in our college math studies, but the subject did not take. Fortunately I have access to technicians who understand such things. (A spherical section is a solemn thing.)

We note with annoyance that neither the factory nor Gun South is prepared to offer a "Jeff Cooper trigger" on a production SS. That trigger, which I hoped was to be offered as a standard feature, is one of the outstanding things about the SS rifle. Family member Mark Yuen suggests that what is now being offered suggests a Ferrari with a speed governor installed.

In our year–end sea stories we heard a remark from an old line infantryman from Vietnam who, when he was introduced to the M16 rifle, opined "I ain't got time for 'em to bleed to death."

I direct the attention of the ladies again to the little Smith & Wesson revolver, which probably should be called The Contessa. It is a 9–shot revolver, which appears to be made of plastic, but actually is light metal. If you do not hang onto it, it seems to want to fly on out the window. It is offered with a bad trigger, but that can be fixed. Now certainly we do not recommend the 22 long rifle cartridge as a man–stopper, but in the first place, the presence of the pistol, rather than its shooting, is what terminates most confrontations; and in the second, a 22 in the tear duct is just as conclusive as a 44.

In England the animal crackers grow more disgusting with each passing day. Now some loony has decided to starve himself to death if the government does not do something about animal experimentation in laboratories. His supporters have announced that, if he dies, they will kill ten laboratory experimenters. We may doubt that they mean this, but the fact that they will make such a threat indicates a social sickness of distressing virulence.

Television commentator Tom Brokaw has recently offered a curious analysis of what may be called "generation diversity." In one instance, an elderly gentleman was complaining to a social scientist about the mindless vandalism of young people who take it upon themselves to smash property just for laughs. The latter was inclined to minimize the perniciousness involved as simply the normal exuberance of youth. The plaintiff was asked, "Well, what were you doing when you were 17?" The answer, "I was fighting on Guadalcanal."

Yes, Virginia, there is a generation gap.

Current jargon holds that a "hot burglary" is one committed when the resident of the dwelling is at home – a "cold burglary" when he is not. Since the disarmament of the British public, hot burglary is up 50 percent – as opposed to a steady 13 percent in the United States.

Family member Danie van Graan reports from the Zambezi Delta that the country up there is true jungle – thick and green with the sun shut out overhead. In that country what you get is the snap shot – no more than 1 – seconds from spot to hit. I have taught the snap shot for many years, and I have been asked by many people if it is not a very unusual experience. I guess we can say that it is. I have only used it four times myself, but there are circumstances – the Pennsylvania woods and the Zambezi Delta – where it is the rule rather than the exception.

We see that the Canadian Foreign Minister, one Axworthy, feels that the priority for the United Nations should be the adoption of a global convention prohibiting the international transport of smallarms – to anybody except government. Here we have a senior and important official of a significant nation unashamedly flaunting the face of tyranny. In his view, nobody but governments should have access to arms. We all should trust governments – right?

Our good buddy Bethany Robinson reports difficulty with the bolt stop on a number of Remington 600s. The Remington 600 was a notable concept – a conceptual ancestor of the scout – but its execution was flawed in many ways. Among other things, that bolt stop tends to gum up and stick with use. When it does so, the bolt comes neatly out in your hand when you attempt to re–charge the weapon. Immediate action is to rinse off the part and its pivoting arrangement with some sort of solvent. Usually this is enough.

It appears that the organizers of the 1999 Munich police championships are going to introduce an air pistol event to enable the British police to participate. A British cop cannot own a pistol, and he can only practice with one in prescribed official practice. Perhaps we should forget the whole matter.

In that connection we note that a recent survey in Britain discovered that the great majority of Englishmen would rather watch soccer on television than make love to the girl of their dreams. These people are the successors of the Lion Hearted Richard, the Hammer of the Scots, of Wellington and Clive! Philip of Spain could not do it. Napoleon could not do it. Hitler could not do it. But the native-born British squalids have finally succeeded in bringing the Lion low. Today we stand alone.

We expect to hold interesting conversations at the SHOT Show in Atlanta. If the 376 Dragoon from Steyr is ready to show, that will indeed be something new, but I do not know what else to expect apart from a rather svelte-looking poodle-shooter from Heckler & Koch. I will, of course, be holding forth on the Steyr Scout, and I must hope that the factory has not decided to gussy it up with hot and cold muzzle-brakes and such. The 376 Dragoon may indeed call for a muzzle brake – not for the shooter but for the protection of the telescope, which is the generic weak point of all contemporary sporting rifles.

Back when I was running Gunsite, we would expect one or two telescope failures in each class of 16, this for the expenditure of perhaps 360 rounds per rifle. Most consumers do not expend 360 rounds in a hunting rifle, so they rarely encounter this problem of fragility. Naturally the glass can be made stronger, but it will then cost more, and anything that raises cost terrifies the marketer.

It is curious to note that the complaint about the cost of the Steyr Scout continues. I note in passing that the retail price of the Steyr Scout does not come up to that of a really good cigar. Fortunately I do not smoke.

Daughter Lindy's jewelry establishment in Phoenix was set upon recently by armed bandits, but Lindy was unable to obtain a clear sight picture. No one was hurt, and the creeps were picked up quickly by the police, only to be passed through the revolving door out to the street again. They will doubtless try the same thing again, but let us hope that this time they will not get clear.

We have been treated to a couple of excellent after-action reports from Africa. It appears that Africa today after the revolution continues to be a pretty nifty place, as long as you stay out of town. The big cities continue to degenerate, but who needs a big city?

I do wish, however, that the faithful would remember their school work. Three hundred meters remains the outside limit for a respectable marksman – and that is when conditions are perfect. Your target beast deserves full consideration. One of the family attempted a moving target at 300 – and missed. At least he did not wound, but he set a bad example.

Another weakness I note in the gringo adventurer is a failure to read into the problem. There is much Africana available in bookstores and libraries, and one who does not avail himself of this before going to Africa is wasting about half the expense of the trip. Of course, clear cut communication is not everyone's gift. I recently had a correspondent refer to a wildebeeste as "a beautiful animal." Anyone who thinks a wildebeeste is beautiful is not using the same language I am. The first thing you notice about a wildebeeste is that he is ugly.

At this time I am setting up for moose in Maine and bison out west. This, of course, is for testing the new 376 Steyr cartridge. I assume we will have the cartridge ready for demonstration by next year's hunt, and I further assume that the Steyr "Dragoon" rifle taking this cartridge will be ready for me to test at that time. I do not see any real reason for a "muscle scout" (as Erwin puts it), but when it appears I will make every effort to take it afield. I do not anticipate proving anything by this stunt, but it will give me a good reason to go shooting, and it may attract attention – to the delight of the advertiser.

I note that Petersen Publications has been sold again. I hope this is for the best, but I am by now convinced that anyone who buys an enterprise which has been designed and built by another is not someone you want to

have to dinner.

Department of Silly Statements

Not long ago I saw a bumper sticker, the sense of which was repeated later on the flyleaf of the whodunit "*Dance Hall of the Dead*" by Tony Hillerman. It reads: "Custer had it coming."

This is my candidate for the silliest remark of the season. We all have it coming, buster, but very few of us can expect that Wagnerian ride to Valhalla! Perhaps Tecumseh – at an earlier date – but certainly not Sitting Bull nor Crazy Horse. From the beginning of history it has been the soldier's ambition to die in action, sword-in-hand and face to the enemy. In scanning the list of heroes' deaths, we may note that while vast numbers of men have died in battle, only a few have arranged to go out with truly heroic flourish: Leonidas, El Cid, Valens, Beornoth, General George Pomeroy Colley at Majuba Hill, George Armstrong Custer, and, perhaps preeminently, Horatio Nelson. There are others, but not many, and George Custer is certainly inscribed on the gold role of honor.

So he had it coming – and so have you, and so have I, but we can hardly expect the premium gold card which is our ticket into the halls of splendor. If various sorts of "activists" wish to make fools of themselves, let them refrain from preaching to others.

This passing decade has been notable for its centennial designs in smallarms. There was the 92 Krag, the 94 Winchester, and the landmark 98 Mauser. Nineteen ninety-nine brings us round to the full century of the Model 99 Savage, an outstanding and unusual artifact that deserves more renown than the public has seen fit to give it. The Model 99 Savage was and is a great rifle, filling a tactical niche which has not been duplicated by any other piece. It was a lever-action to beat the bolt-action, and in many ways it did.

When I was at university I held a sort of unofficial position as "fraternity gun counsellor" for the Zeta house at Stanford. One of the brothers sought my advice on the purchase of a deer gun, since he had decided to follow in the footsteps of his father as a big game hunter. His problem was that he was left-handed. In those days the bolt-action 30-06 in its several forms – Springfield, Winchester and Remington – ruled the roost. The 30-06 was the perfect cartridge and the military-type bolt-action was the only way to go. My left-handed friend was unhappy with his father's Springfield, so he came to me for advice.

After checking all sources, we got him a Savage 99 in caliber 300 Savage. We had Bob Chow's shop in San Francisco do a trigger job for us, and fitted the piece with a four-power Weaver scope plus a military-type loop sling. The resulting combination was quite sensational. The lever-action permitted easy use from either right or left shoulder. The 300 Savage cartridge was not quite up to a 30-06, but it was close – very much like a 308. The 5-shot rotary magazine, plus cartridge counter, was a delight to use, and the little gun shot into postage stamps as far away as you can see a postage stamp.

The 99 was offered in all sorts of varieties and modifications, from its year Model of 1899 up to the present. It was available in a take-down version, and later with a detachable box magazine (which was a distinct step backwards). It was easy to fit with good sights, either aperture or telescope, since it was not open on top like competing lever-actions. Its magazine would accept pointed military-style bullets, avoiding the possibility of inadvertent ignition in a tube magazine. Its trigger, as it came out of the box, was not its best point, but it was amenable to fine tuning. It was altogether a nifty little gun, and it beats me why it did not sweep the board with the public. The manufacturer made a point of issuing it in caliber 250-3000, maintaining that you could reach the magical 3000 fps figure with an 87-grain 25-caliber bullet. The 250-3000 (or 250 Savage) was a good enough deer gun, if your deer were not too big, and it was gentle as a lamb to shoot. The 300 Savage was a practically perfect deer cartridge, as the 308 is now, and the 99 was eventually offered in 308, as well as 358 Winchester.

The manufacturer went through a series of vicissitudes during the wars, and unfortunately its quality control slipped badly. Today, if you want a premium 99, best look for one built before War II.

Here, of course, is the answer for the southpaw. Several domestic manufacturers have offered left-handed bolt guns to the public over the past couple of decades, but somehow they do not seem as popular with lefties as the 99.

Today you can go abroad for the Blaser 93, the symmetrical action of which is instantly convertible by the acquisition of a left-handed bolt. This, of course, is an excellent solution, for the 93 has many additional advantages, but the combination is expensive. (The specter of the left-handed Steyr Scout sits there glowering in the corner, but apparently without glowering hard enough – so far.)

The memory of that rifle sticks in my mind. When the war caught us everything came apart, and I have no idea whether my friend survived it to become the ardent deer hunter that he hoped. I am sorry to say that I have not seen him since Pearl Harbor, and that is a long time ago. I would like to think that that M99 300 is still today giving good service in the California mountains, unless it got run over by a truck or something. There is no reason why it should not.

Well here we go into the last year of the millennium. Things do not look good for the human race. Honesty, decency and liberty are in decline, while street crime, academic perversion and bad taste are on the rise. Still, the guns, the cars and the wines may be expected to remain on the unprecedented high level they now enjoy, so be of good cheer for the New Year!

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Mid-Winter

Very little winter so far here at Gunsite, though the rest of the country seems to be getting its full share. We could, of course, use some precipitation here, but one does not complain about the weather when each day seems nicer than the one before. We will doubtless get our share of sloppy weather before the winter is out, but meanwhile nobody is complaining. As the man said, "It never does any good."

We are informed of an elaborate new private training facility just south of the Virginia border in North Carolina. It is called "Blackwater," and appears to be a very expensive layout. From its brochure it seems that it is primarily intended for the public sector, which is fine, because the public sector can use all the training it can get. But I recall from my teaching days at Gunsite that the problem with military, naval and police types in weaponry training is a basic lack of motivation. If the government or your employer is paying your way, you do not have nearly the desire to learn that you would if the tuition were coming out of your own pocket. This problem is not insurmountable, of course, for a good many people on the public payroll are indeed interested in weaponcraft, and would be even if they were not wearing a uniform. Still, one must not expect results as quickly or as high when teaching public servants as when teaching private citizens.

We have noted with gratification that our great patron, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., has finally been awarded the *Congressional Medal of Honor* for his conduct under fire in Cuba. While we have had some notable soldiers as presidents – Washington, Grant, and Eisenhower – I do not believe that any one of them other than TR ever personally led a charge against a defended enemy position. And that is only one of the ways in which TR was unique.

"To address or refer to a woman by her last name only is to reduce her to the status of a man."

The Guru

It has been called to my attention that when I referred to the "45 Professional" cartridge dreamed up by Tim LeGendre, I should have said that it was based on the 284 case, rather than the 280 case. The 284, with its rebated rim, permits a slightly larger powder capacity than the 280.

A Middle Eastern terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, did not pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "Return to Sender" stamped on it. Being of the usual intellectual development of a terrorist, he proceeded to open the letter. Maybe he learned from that experience, but considering what he started out with, I doubt if he learned much.

(The foregoing information appeared in *"Firearm News"* from Stellenbosch, South Africa.)

Also from the previous publication we learn of two animal crackers who were protesting the sending of pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn, Germany. Two thousand pigs burst through a barbed fence and fatally overran the two "activists."

It turns out that the caliber 308 is prohibited for private use in France, thus the Steyr Scout must be sold there in caliber 7–08. This would not seem to be a serious problem, since the ballistics of the 7–08 and the 308 are practically identical, but our French correspondent maintains that it is difficult to obtain commercially loaded, factory ammunition in caliber 7–08 in Europe. Europeans in general are highly respectful of the "wild boar" (*Sus scrofa*), and I daresay with cause. This suggests a niche for the Steyr Dragoon rifle – shortly to be available. To my mind, shooting a wild pig with the 376 Steyr cartridge is pretty much a case of overkill, but it is better to be overgunned than undergunned, I am told.

Our hero Charles Schumer, the new Senator from New York, is on record as inflamed with a "passion to legislate." Legislation, by definition, is coercion. Here is the bare face of tyranny! Perhaps the first item on the senator's legislative agenda should be a new federal law making "a passion to legislate" a federal crime.

Charlie Putman, distinguished member of the *Gunsite African Rifles*, is now back from his third African hunt with many interesting things to tell. He hunted in Tanzania, which is a locale I would not recommend, but once he got out into the bush he had a fine time.

"As in much of Africa, the city life is crowded, poor and filthy, and the people unanimously appear frightened or suspicious. In contrast, the bush country is seemingly endless open space. Our tent camp was staffed by friendly, colorful native people who made us feel much more comfortable than in town."

Further on in his tale he mentioned that his tracker told Dianne that the leopard she had shot was dead, as he could tell from the sound of the shot. Now this is pretty far out! To be able to be sure that your target is dead from the sound of the Kugelschlag is interesting evidence of witchcraft. Another example of one of the mysteries of the Dark Continent.

To aspiring authors we suggest the title, "How I Killed Vince Foster." You would not have to write the book, the title alone would sell it.

Family member Celia Milius is doing great things with her beautiful Perazzi shotgun. She now has gone far enough up the line to be entering international competition, and we wish her great success. She did very well with the rifle when she was a student here at Gunsite, but she learned the shotgun on her own.

A prominent family member – who shall remain nameless because of certain financial concerns involved – came up with one of the most flahoolich Christmas gifts of all time. He presented each one of his numerous brood of children with his own personal Steyr Scout. Now there is a man with a truly royal gift for gift giving!

In '97 we visited the Czech Republic and cruised down to the Moravian town of Uhersky Brod, where the Cesko Zbrojovka facility (previously "BRNO") is now located. On that occasion we discussed the prospects for a new service pistol and a new heavy rifle, both to capitalize on the excellent reputation of BRNO firearms. They have now brought out their new service pistol, and apart from the fact that it is in caliber 45 ACP, it shows no evidence of my input whatever. Well, it is a 45, but it does not seem likely to replace the 1911. Among other things, it is both bigger and heavier than the 1911, one of the few faults of which is that it is too big and heavy. I wish these people well. They showed us a nice trip, but the heir of the 1911 is yet to be.

We learn from Thomas Sowell that Brooke Shields, the notable flashbird, was graduated from Princeton without ever taking a course of any consequence in any subject. Thus it is that academic perversion has now diminished the value of a college degree to nothing more than a meal ticket. It will not be long before it will not have any value as even that.

In the last issue of this paper I referred to 1999 as "the last year of the millennium." Wrong! 2000 is such. If I am not more careful I may well lose my Guru's turban.

In view of this modern passion for minor caliber sidearms, it would seem a good idea to produce a target which represents only the eye sockets of a human adversary, and which is capable of quick movement both lateral and vertical. To use a small caliber pistol efficiently for defensive purposes, the shooter should be able to hit a pingpong ball reliably at ranges of up to 7 yards, even when that target is in motion.

Which brings us to the proposed *Gunsite Conquistadora Award*. We hear by round-about ways of a copchick in Latin America who responded to a call of a bank robbery in progress. She was by herself and armed with a P35 Browning. By fortuitous chance she confronted the three bad guys directly. One was armed with an FN assault rifle (caliber 308), one with some sort of 9mm squirt gun, and the other with a 12 gage shotgun. With admirable aplomb our heroine selected the most dangerous target, the one with the 308, and terminated him cleanly with one round to the center of the forehead. She then shifted to the man with the squirt gun and knocked him down with two rounds to the center of the chest. At this point the boy with the shotgun dropped his gun and gave up. Olé!

The report we have insists that this girl is quite pretty, which makes a story all ready too good even better. We are going to look further into this matter and see if the details are forthcoming. If we can run these down accurately, we will come up with a second ring of valor for this distinguished conquistadora. If this all works out we might even buzz down that way to make the presentation in person.

The Steyr Scout marches on! It was designed to be just the right piece for everything except pachyderms, buffalo, and formal target shooting. And so it is! For deer, antelope, pigs, mountain sheep, mountain goats, guerilla warfare, or urban law enforcement, it is just about perfect. I say "just about" because there are a few ways in which it could be improved. I want that rigid telescope sight, and, of course, I want a left-hand version. The Leupold sight I have on Old Number Six works just fine as of now, and I am right-handed. Nonetheless, I will continue to work on this project. Since there is no money in it for me, I can feel free to enjoy it.

In perusing the popular press, one is driven to the conclusion that the English language is too subtle an instrument for the "workers and peasants." The gender problem, for instance, appears to be beyond the reach of the journalist, and pronouns remain obscure. Though I am not deeply instructed in the matter, I am given to understand that other Indo-European languages slide around these matters, and thereby lose a certain amount of elegance. Furthermore, the correct use of pronouns seems to be a mystery to a good many writers, and an annoying mystery at that. Does this matter? Only if it bothers you. I revere the English language personally, and it does bother me to see it misused. I cannot guarantee my own usage, but I do make an effort, and I find that a great many people who presume to put finger to word processor do not.

In our emasculate age, it is considered uncouth to confess to anything resembling a killer instinct. Yet such a thing does exist, and it is worth study. It is fashionable to protest that one does not hunt in order to kill, as with Ortega y Gasset, yet if one does not kill, hunting is emotionally unsatisfying. This is why some people hunt and others do not. I think it is ingenuous to protest that the killer instinct is evil. Man is a carnivorous predator – you have but to look to his teeth – and though very few men now need to hunt for their food, a good many men do need to hunt for emotional fulfillment. This is not evil. It is as natural as the enjoyment of good food, great art, and fine music. To deny this is simply to look foolish. I know many shooters who are not hunters, and I do not think less of them for this. I know a surprising number of hunters who are not shooters, and while I think this is peculiar, I do not think it is wicked. I must admit that today in my declining years my bloodlust has slackened, but this has no moral significance for me. Even today I hunt whenever I can, and I often play catch-and-release by snapping in on an empty chamber. The fact remains, however, that there is such a thing as a killer instinct, and it is neither to be extolled nor condemned. In my own family there are

those who are true killers and those who are not, and I love them equally. Judging from my own experience (which is a thing one never ought to do) I feel that those without the killer instinct lead somewhat diminished lives, as do people who are tone deaf or color blind, but I think we should drop psychological pretense in this matter, and face facts as they are. I happen to relish chile very much, but I do not demand that you do. It is not a moral issue.

Our friend and colleague Gregor Woods has just released an interesting piece about chasing rhinos up in Rhodesia. This has to be done with cameras rather than with rifles, for the Zimbabwe government prizes its rhinos highly and pounds heavily on anyone found pounding on its rhinos. The outfitter in this case made a strong point in enjoining any member of the party from carrying a rifle. Admitting that the black rhino is an irascible, powerful, and dangerous beast, he insisted that there would be absolutely no shooting on the expedition, especially not even in "self-defense." He made it clear that it is better to be caught and tossed by a rhino than to do a tour in a Zimbabwe jail. Prison guards are a mean lot in any language, and given the current state of racial tension throughout the world, anyone, guilty or otherwise, is well advised to stay out of their way.

I have long regarded the buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*, not *Bison bison*) as a very marvelous game animal. Not for his rarity, nor for his horns, but for his attitude. Thus,

"You wound a buffalo and he turns into 1500lbs of hate. He can run faster than you, smell what you had for supper two nights ago, turn on a coin, hide behind a bunch of leaves, and when this big black brute boils out of the bush his little eyes are focused only on you. Nothing will turn him. As he charges, he chews up bullets and spits them out. Only death will stop him – his, or yours, or both"
(by Jep Jonas in *Magnum*).

I have taken seven buffalo but I have never stood a charge, though there was one case which might have been one if the beast had not already been tagged twice with a 460. It is said that you must gather up ten buffalo before you can be sure of any real drama. Well, I have not got there yet. I hope there is time.

I have been shooting for a very long time, in training, competition, and recreation, and I have come to the conclusion that trigger control is the heart of the matter. It may be that I am too particular about good trigger action, but I do think it is the most important single aspect of hitting what you shoot at. To my surprise I find a number of people who do not feel this way at all, and are quite content with triggers that, in Hemingway's memorable expression, "Let go like the last turn of a key opening a sardine can."

It is possible that good trigger action is not important in weapons intended for combat or the hunting of dangerous game, but I do not believe so. Certainly you do not need perfect trigger action to flatten a tiger in full charge at fifteen paces, nor to hammer a goblin across the counter. Still I find that even in coarse shooting I am not just more precise, but distinctly faster when using a good trigger.

By a "good trigger" I mean one that breaks cleanly without apparent motion of any kind. Take-up is okay (if it is smooth), but after the second stage is reached, there must be no detectable motion of that trigger, either by touch or by sight. Visual observation is, oddly enough, more useful than touch. You do not have to aim-in. Simply point the piece in a safe direction, place your finger on the trigger, take up the slack, and press gently. If you can see your finger move before the striker is released you do not have a good trigger. Weight is not vital, but it must be considered. In my opinion, a service pistol should break at four lbs or a little under. Three-and-a-half is better. On a heavy rifle (45-caliber and up), three lbs is about right. With a light rifle you can go quite a bit lighter, though this tends to shake up the liability lilies. The trigger on my factory-tuned SS breaks at 26 ounces, and it is the same on my Blaser 93. Both these rifles are supremely "shootable" – no more accurate perhaps than others, but easier to hit with, especially in a hurry. In slow fire or

off a bench, trigger action is less critical.

I am admittedly a nitpicker about this, but I have a long background in the matter, and additionally I have the advantage of the experiences of a great many other people besides myself. One's personal experience is of some value, but people do not ever "average out" and the experiences of ten men are always more instructive than those of just one. Trigger control is essentially a psychological issue, and we are never likely to get a valid statistical sample of high numbers, but each rifle class teaches the riflemaster something new. I know a great deal about the management of the trigger, but I have still a lot to learn.

"Vice is a monster of such fearful mien,
to be hated, needs but to be seen.
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Alexander Pope

He wrote that back at the turn of the 18th century, but it took almost two hundred years for it to become a social truism.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 3

March, 1999

Down Time

The SHOT Show this year was a big deal, as usual, though it was too late to change the venue from Atlanta, which should have been done in view of the bad attitude of the city government.

I did not see as much of the show as I would have wished, as I was pretty well pinned down to the Steyr Mannlicher display – also in autographing daughter Lindy's books. The Atlanta convention hall is so huge that making the rounds is at least a two-day exercise, and if you have any other business to attend to you certainly will not see every display. The Steyr offering I did see was the hopped-up Scout, which I would like to call the *Dragoon* – implying "heavy cavalry" as opposed to "light cavalry." The weapon itself was there, but the ammunition has yet to settle down. The cartridge uses the 9.3x62 case blown out and forward, and experimental bullet selections come in 250-, 260-, and 270-grains, showing safe velocities up to 2600f/s. The Dragoon, if I may call it that, is only a couple of ounces heavier than the Scout, and with power like that it will certainly recoil strongly. I am discussing this matter with Kahles of Vienna in order to produce a telescope sight which is stout enough to stand up to continuous service.

I have been told that I may expect a copy of the new rifle, together with ammunition, by mid-summer. I have asked for it in a dapple-brown "forest floor" finish in an attempt to differentiate the rifle instantly from the 308 Scout. With this piece in mind I have booked a bison in Texas, and hope to have publicity pictures in time for the Reunion at Whittington.

I continue to receive whimpers from the gallery about the price of the SS. People tell me that \$2,600 is too much for the "average shooter." I suppose it is, but the Steyr Scout was not designed with the average shooter in mind, whoever he may be. Neither is a Porsche designed for the "average driver." You do not always get what you pay for, but in this case you do.

The rifle itself continues to impress its users, and I truly expect it to be considerably more than "The Rifle of the Year," which was an award presented at the SHOT Show. One obstacle to success in this regard is the fact that you have to shoot the Scout on a field range in order to appreciate the full blast. You cannot get the right picture from specifications, photographs, or bench testing, and too few critics take the time to understand the issues clearly.

In pistols, the item that took my eye at Atlanta was the Titanium Taurus. This is a 5-shot, double-action revolver weighing just under 20 ounces, which can be had in caliber 45 Colt. There I think is a step forward in a field where such steps are not common. I have not shot it, but I have a feeling it will kick pretty hard. Its trigger needs considerable work, but it features a six-port muzzle brake, and, of course, it is totally corrosion-proof. We should look further into this.

As I have frequently mentioned, I do not take test groups on paper as the particular measure of a rifle's worth, but one has just come to my attention that should go into some sort of record book. Sue Hildebrand, of Davis, California, was so impressed with her husband's Steyr Scout that he finally decided to get her an individual example for a Christmas present. They took the piece out on Boxing Day, without any tuning, zeroing, or priming. They wiped the barrel clean, and then Sue fired three shots using the bipod – not a bench rest – at

100 yards, using 168-grain Match ammunition. Sue brought me that paper without further tinkering, and I have copied it for distribution. The group measures .27 inches center-to-center for the three shots, and it is printed exactly on centerline and 2½ inches above point of aim. This was achieved from a standard SS rifle using the integral bipod which accompanies the piece to the field.

This is the rifle of the future, and you can tell them I said so!

Smith & Wesson continues to refuse to do anything about the miserable trigger on their nifty little 22, but such work can be done. Trigger smiths would appear to have a bright future.

Speaking of triggers, our colleague and hunting buddy, Rich Wyatt, can absolutely do the job on your SS, if it needs it (and some do). Address him at:

"Gunsmoke," Custom Gunsmithing, Inc.,
3650 Wadsworth Blvd.,
#A, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033,
(303) 456-4545.

Much in evidence at Atlanta was a profusion of cutdown, double-column, 45 automatics. Reducing the bulk of the 1911 pistol is a good idea, but you do not get there by fitting it with a double-column magazine, the utility of which is somewhat obscure. The main problem with the configuration of the 1911 is one it shares with a good many customers in supermarkets – it is too big in the butt. We were moderately successful back in Orange Gunsite days in slimming down the butt of the 1911, eventually reducing the firing circumference (the distance around the butt from the center of the trigger to the center of the grip safety) by 7/8 of an inch, which does make a difference. About a quarter of the men and half the women who have taken our instruction have trouble getting hold of the 1911 in a satisfactory manner. Evidently the manufacturers do not understand this, or they choose to ignore it, because they insist upon giving us pistols of this type which are not only no smaller in firing circumference, but, on the contrary, are too large for most hands.

I have yet to run across a case study which called for a double-column magazine in a 45 pistol. The highest score I know of in a gunfight was five, and that was achieved by a shooter using a single-column magazine of seven-rounds capacity. It would seem obvious that the "spray-and-pray" method we see in gunfights is both ineffective and ridiculous. According to doctrine we shoot twice (except for head shots), and this is just to take care of unforeseen errors. There is nothing wrong with having a whole lot of rounds available in one loading, unless it actually reduces the efficiency of the weapon, in which case the idea should be dropped. The double-column magazine, in major caliber pistol, does indeed reduce efficiency, and affords nothing particular in return.

In case you did not already know it, note that the cinema actor Michael Douglas is our virulent enemy. I suggest you treat his productions accordingly.

A correspondent recently asked us how and where he could obtain a butt-magazine such as featured on Sweetheart and the Lion Scout. These items were made by John Mahan of Chino Valley, Arizona, and I cannot promise that he is set up to repeat them, but they work well for me in the field, and I can recommend them highly for certain situations. Basically the butt-magazine, or the butt-cuff, is a proper accessory for a single-shot rifle such as the Ruger No. 1 or the Blaser Kiplaufbüchse. On a repeating rifle its utility is not so apparent. Ordinarily you can top-off from your belt as easily as from your butt. (Should I watch my language?) Of course a time might occur when you find yourself in the bush in the buff. Such an eventuality is pretty unlikely, but I know of two cases. (Not mine, I should add.)

The spare magazine on the Steyr Scout is another matter entirely, and offers certain additional administrative,

as opposed to tactical, advantages.

We should have a complete set of steel reactive targets ready to install on the field reaction course at Whittington by this summer. About half of these are out-of-pocket, but we hope to get them all paid for by the faithful in due course. They run \$300.00 apiece, and you get your name on the target that you buy.

Note that Musgrave of South Africa is now furnishing replica Mauser 98 actions, including a long version for big cartridges. These actions are of the highest quality, and serve as a perfect heart for a custom heavy rifle.

Best stay out of Mexico unless you have special connections down that way. In general our neighbors to the south dislike *Gringos*, and are quite happy to point out our transgressions, legal or otherwise. Mexico was a fine country fifty years ago, but times have changed. When I went down the Rio Balsas via kayak the country afforded a fine sense of freedom as soon as you got your feet off the pavement. It was understood that a man could and should take care of himself, and a fine time was had by all. Today the jefetura is all too quick with jails, and regards firearms about the way Chuck Schumer does. Mexico at one time was a great gun country. No longer.

We mention again that the annual award granted to the Marlin Guide Gun as "Gun of the Year," should properly have gone to Jim West's "Co-pilot." That abbreviated 45-70 lever gun is a grand idea for certain special uses, but the Marlin people evidently lifted the idea directly from Jim West of Anchorage without acknowledging it or paying him a cent. Interestingly enough, the Marlin people claim to be back-ordered on the Guide Gun. You have to wait. Jim West commences work on yours right now, or at least he could when I committed this to paper. The "Co-pilot" offers several features which are absent from the Guide Gun. It is a better deal all around.

We take gunhandling seriously, and we are horrified at what we see on public ranges, especially public shotgun ranges. People observing Rules 2 and 3 are the exception rather than the rule, and it is astonishing that the accident rate is so low. "Oh, that rule doesn't apply to me!" seems to be the general attitude, and that does not bother range nor club officials very much. Of course, these people may only be taking the example of high officials in our government in this matter.

"There are men in all ages who mean to govern well, but they mean to govern. They promise to be good masters, but they mean to be masters."

Noah Webster

It was a pleasure for all Orange Gunsite grads to learn that their fellow scholar Prince Abdullah has now become King of Jordan. So far as we know, he is the only reigning monarch to have a ticket from Orange Gunsite. Clearly his country is now in good hands.

From the best of our available knowledge it appears that the crime situation in South Africa continues to degenerate. Alan Paton, the author of the well-known "*Cry the Beloved Country*" was a long crusader for absolute majority rule in South Africa. Well, something approximating that has eventually arrived, but his widow has now decided that she can no longer live there and has immigrated to England. It seems to us that the UK is not a place an honorable man would now wish to live. At least in South Africa, if you shoot back and win, you come out ahead. If you do that in England you are in deep trouble.

In regard to placing the label "Scout" on a rifle, a trick which is quite popular these days, one correspondent has suggested to us that painting a prancing horse on a red car does not make it a Ferrari.

One wonders if you can train people to shoot on simulators. Our Defense Department is holding that view for consideration. Those of us of the old school are turned off by the idea, but in this age of technology it is probably going to be attempted. I have observed that people do not learn to shoot firearms very well by means of air guns. They can learn to shoot air guns pretty well, but there is a definite difference. Modern simulators can be very good, but I believe you have to get out on the ground, using something that cracks and kicks, before you get the message.

"Never do your foe a *minor* injury."

Machiavelli

We do not know whether to believe these wild bear stories or not, but they do make great reading. In a recent one, it seems that these surveyors, on the way to a work point, spotted a big bear on the tundra below and thought it would be fun to buzz him in their chopper. Bear resented this and took some powerful swings at the bird when he thought it got too close. The survey crew thought this was amusing, and continued on their mission, but it happens that they sat down quite near to where the buzzing had occurred. It was observed by the bear, who came storming along to register his displeasure. The crew did not notice this and got out to set up their equipment, but the site they chose was on the opposite side of the chopper. As they went to work they heard a considerable clamor from their vehicle, and turned to find that the bear was in the process of smashing it very thoroughly. It did not matter very much whether the crew was armed or not because the bear had done a very thorough job in a very short time. He apparently thought that was enough because he did not seek to run down any of the survey crew, assuming that he saw them. He ambled off in another direction growling to himself. That may or may not have happened, but, as with some other great adventures, if it did not happen, it should have.

Family member Tom Graziano, who has been buzzing around the Pacific running down flocks of tuna from aloft, had occasion recently to land on Tarawa. It turns out that not much has changed there. It no longer smells bad, but remnants of wreckage, both mechanical and human, are pretty much in evidence. That was a mean fight. What remains today are gun barrels and bones. There was much heroism in evidence on that island. What remains is an appropriate memorial to a difficult job well done. Semper Fi!

Membership in the National Rifle Association of America hangs in there at a bit under 3 million, but it is interesting to know that 9 to 10 million Americans claim they are members of the NRA. There are interesting conclusions to be drawn from this.

Despite the best effort of the UN Organization to the contrary, the United States still stands alone in defense of human dignity. We have our faults, and they become more conspicuous as time goes on, but we remain the one nation left in the world where a man can conduct himself like a man, and defend himself, his house, his wife, and his children to the best of his ability. His rights may be circumscribed, as they are in South Africa, but they still exist, at least for now. This is why we keep up the battle.

The British have now chosen to withdraw from international shooting competition. Evidently it is not politically correct.

The philosopher seeks what is good. The businessman seeks what sells. Sometimes these two qualities are the same. Usually they are not.

The Guru

Those citizens, both salesmen and customers, who quibble about the cost of guns seem to have lost sight of an

important element in the discussion. It is this: a firearm is a permanent possession. Unlike almost anything else you can name, a good gun which you acquired in your youth will last you throughout your lifetime and that of your child. Seen in that light, your personal firearm can hardly ever be "too expensive." A steak dinner is too expensive. A bottle of champagne is too expensive. An automobile is too expensive. A vacation cruise is too expensive. A pair of boots is too expensive. But not your gun. In a short time those other things will exist only in your memory, but if you take care of it your gun will be as good as it was the first day you touched it. That is the reason why the feeling we shooters have for our weapons approaches the mystic. Those other people do not understand this. We would explain it to them if they would listen.

So now our choice lies between the party of no principle and the party of no guts. We have come a long way in two hundred years, but not perhaps in the right direction.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

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March, 1999

Rustles of Spring

Ordinarily, we title this issue "Winterset," but this year we experienced such a paltry winter that there is nothing to set. With almost no precipitation between solstice and equinox, the country hereabouts is ready to blow away in the wind. There are people who complain about rainy days. We wish they could send us a few.

It is possible to say that the revolution in pistolcraft in the 20th century began with Fairbairn in China, though his pioneering did not achieve wide acceptance. In the 30s the FBI created the so-called Practical Pistol Course, which was a step forward in that it departed from conventional bullseye shooting and sought to impart tactical skills. The effort was primitive and did not get very far, but at least it was a start. Then in 1948, Cooper and Taft began experimenting with courses of marksmanship related to the realistic use of the sidearm. This resulted in the "Advanced Military Combat Pistol Course," which was printed up in an Army field manual. This was another step, but it was by no means the answer. In 1959 the Bear Valley Gunslingers were established in California with the avowed purpose of introducing realism and variety into sporting pistol competition. In due course the Gunslingers evolved into the Southwest ("Combat") Pistol League, spreading the game out over the Southwest and conducting matches in all sorts of different venues.

The purpose of all this was to "get real" and to evaluate the systems by which fighting skills with the handgun could be properly evaluated and rewarded. The next step was IPSC (the International Practical Shooting Confederation) founded in 1976 in Columbia, Missouri, in an attempt to spread the new doctrine worldwide.

There were serious problems here.

- A. Any international competition must submit itself to the jurisdiction of the nation in which it is held. Certain useful techniques are viewed askance, or in some cases forbidden, in countries where the nature of the art is not fully understood – and that includes most of them.
- B. Pistolcraft is by nature a fighting art, and in our increasingly emasculate century fighting is held to be politically incorrect. (We had to extract the word "Combat" from the title of the Southwest Combat Pistol League because it offended the California Secretary of State. The poor fellow!)
- C. The gamesmen appeared. These are the people who are more interested in competition than they are in excellence. As long as the nature of competition is kept as realistic as possible this is not a serious matter, but it became apparent that while perhaps 40 percent of competitors were interested in practical pistolcraft, about 60 percent were interested only in trophies and free trips. In theory, IPSC was a good idea, but it came to pass that despite even the extraordinary talents and efforts of President Jean-Pierre Denis, the gamesmen won.

This whole business was not a total failure, however. We did, over a period of some 30 years, discover the best techniques and systems for the use of the combat handgun. This knowledge is now universally available, although a great many people, especially in law enforcement, do not seem to realize this. The doctrine, however, is there. It has saved countless lives. It is a good thing. As the millennium bows out, we can take satisfaction in that.

Thomas Sowell, who is one of our favorite pundits, opines that *the Great Acquittal* was the greatest national disaster since Pearl Harbor. I would go one step further and say that the Great Acquittal was the greatest disaster in the history of the Republic. It established that the moral and ethical principles on which the Republic is founded do not necessarily work. Pearl Harbor was a nasty blow, but it was not a disaster. We lost some thousand people and millions of dollars worth of obsolescent equipment, but we found our soul, and we closed ranks to victory. The Great Acquittal suggests that we have lost our soul. The facts were all there, but the facts were unimportant in view of perceived need to be re-elected. According to this doctrine, principle does not matter. Facts do not matter. Morality does not matter – as long as the Party prevails.

Well, Alcibiades told us that democracy would not work some four centuries before Christ, but he was only a dead, white male.

Shooting Master John Gannaway ran the new "high energy" ammunition from Federal through the Scout. The 180-grain bullet left the 19-inch barrel at an average speed of 2651fps. Pre-war 30-06/180s left a 24-inch barrel at right on 2700. Thus it appears that your Scout rifle performs like a full-house 30-06. Who could ask for anything more!

John continues his swath-cutting amongst the shotgunners, and he not only shoots like a champion, but he knows why. Following his advice we recommend the book *"More Shotguns and Shooting"* by Michael MacIntosh (Country Sport Press, Selma, Alabama 36701). This work is not only completely authoritative, but most attractively written.

Our neighbor Dr. Joel Eisenberg was recently mugged by an obstreperous javelina while taking his after-dark constitutional. There he was, wandering around in the dark (without his pistol), when this mean little pig tried to run him off the place. If a man chooses to wander around unarmed that is his affair, but he should not be surprised if things do not always turn out as he expected. Fortunately no blood was shed on either side, though there was a good deal of shouting and gnashing of teeth.

We all note and mourn the passing of Carlos Hathcock, the renowned Marine Corp sniper from Vietnam. Here is a man who truly got out of his rifle everything that it was intended to do.

I have recently noticed certain writings and comments on the subject of sniping which suggest that the sniper is some kind of a social outcast who does things for which he should be ashamed. I do not understand this, and I wonder how much basis there is in it. I asked a couple of experienced combat Marines about this, and all I got was unbelieving laughter. To quote the redoubtable Nathan Bedford Forrest, "War means fighting and fighting means killing." I thought everybody knew that. Of course I have always thought about sniping in connection with war. When it comes to shooting housewives in the face at 200 yards, we have something else to think about. One wonders how Horiuchi sleeps at night.

The following from Paul Harvey:

- 1950. Salt causes hypertension.
- 1960. Salt does not cause hypertension.
- 1970. Salt causes hypertension.
- 1980. Salt relieves hypertension.
- 1998. The AMA Journal concludes that salt does not affect hypertension in any way.

We are at the mercy of the age of communication. Anybody can say anything and everybody is encouraged to believe it. Ain't fads wonderful!

Since recreational shooting is as subject as any other activity to fadism, the shooting industry goes right in there producing fad guns. This taste for nostalgia in shooting sports suggests various new ways of going backwards with our playthings. As an example, it was recently suggested to me that we ought to produce a series of good, sound double rifles with exposed hammers – in suggested calibers 30–30, 30–40, and 45–70. As we know, double rifles are expensive to produce, but I think that modern manufacturing techniques are available to meet that challenge. I think a double 30–30 would be just the ticket for the Pennsylvania woods, and a double 45–70 for Alaska. (This idea was suggested to me by a correspondent, Bob Thompson of Virginia.)

I have been pushing hard for border signs on the Mexican line informing motorists that they are now entering a land where they are no longer protected by the US Constitution – most specifically the second amendment thereto – and giving full credit to the National Rifle Association. I would like to emphasize to the motoring public what they owe the National Rifle Association.

When Sue Hildebrand, of Davis, California, was exercising her brand new Steyr Scout on a public range, she was approached by a bench–rester in an adjoining bay who expressed strong interest in her unusual weapon. When Sue explained about the rifle, this sportsman recoiled in horror, saying, "But that's just designed to kill people." She responded, "Possibly, under certain circumstances." And he bounced back with, "But that's Jeff Cooper's idea, and he is a bad guy."

I find this pretty exciting. I did not know that anybody knew about me in California, or knew further that the scout rifle was my idea. I am flattered by all of this, but it is still depressing to find that there are shooters who do not understand that all shooters are on the same team.

It appears that the pigs are about to inherit the earth. As we have mentioned, there are too many pigs in France, and too many pigs in Australia. Here at Gunsite, we have too many pigs for our neighbors up the road, and now we learn that there are too many pigs in, of all places, San Francisco! I guess they wander in from the parks and roll drunks, or something. But you cannot shoot them, even though the meat would be most welcome. The bambiists are very strong in the Bay region.

Note that Lyman is now producing tang sights for most of the Winchester lever guns. The tang sight works out as a nifty ghost–ring, and I have always been puzzled that it is not more widely appreciated.

The forest service people tell us that here in Arizona, due to the drought, we may expect a considerable increase in bear contacts as the beasts take further advantage of campers and garbage cans. Bears seem to be on the increase everywhere, as do moose. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all wild quadrupeds are increasing, with the exception of the grizzly, the bighorn, and the mule deer in some of its ranges. This must cause much wringing of hands amongst the bambiists, who hate the thought of anyone enjoying the proliferation of wild game.

If any of the faithful are planning to sign up for Zimbabwe this year, be advised that Comrade Mugabe is in a snit. When he set about expropriating white farmers throughout the land, several nations threatened to hold up on his blood money. This fills him with rage, and while he needs your money, he does not like you on that account.

Bumper sticker:

"Clean up your filthy lucre. Launder your money!"

Can it be that it is time for a revolver revolution? When we pioneered the semi–auto revolution back in the

50s, we did so with the notion that the self-loader is easier to hit with than the revolver, and in addition provides more stopping power for equivalent weight and bulk. Back at Big Bear we discovered that in order of efficiency the number one sidearm was the major-caliber self-loader. The number two was a major-caliber revolver. The number three was a minor-caliber self-loader, and number four was a minor-caliber revolver. We did not realize that with the course of time the law enforcement establishment would latch onto number three as the best choice. Furthermore we did not realize that while we at Big Bear were intensely interested in improving our skills, the great mass of law enforcement personnel was not. The recreational shooter seeks excellence, but few people in uniform are recreational shooters. On the contrary, the mechanical problems involved in using the self-loader seem to be excessive for the public servant, who often regards his profession as nothing more than a job. It would be nice if most cops were truly dedicated, but while some are, a great many are not. (Do not take my word for this, just ask around.) For a person who is not interested in shooting, a revolver is probably a better weapon than an automatic pistol. This is because it is essentially simpler and does not call for any mechanical aptitude on the part of its user. There is certainly no difficulty in mastering the intricacies of the self-loader, provided one is interested in its operation. However for the public official who simply does not care about shooting, it is probable that the wheel-gun is a better choice.

We are much annoyed to learn of customers who are ordering Scout rifles without scoutscopes. The scoutscope, with its long eye relief, is one of the many outstanding attributes of the weapon combination. To hang a target scope on a Scout is a sort of technological perversion, but while it is unpleasant to contemplate, there is no law against it. In that connection, however, we note that very few people seem to be using the leopard-light as an after-market accessory on the SS. There are not many leopards hereabouts, but on the other hand that light is immensely useful for doing night sweeps of your backyard. Wherever you put your illumination there is the reticle sharp and clear right in the middle. I suppose there are not too many people who do backyard sweeps as a general thing, but for those of us who do that leopard light is ours to choose.

One of the most attractive pieces to appear recently at a gun show was a beautifully reconstituted Model 95 Winchester in caliber 35 Whelen. We had forgotten how huge that Model 95 is, since we have been playing with those same ballistics in the 350 Short Magnum. We have better guns than the Model 95 today, but the nostalgia effect grows all the time, and this piece really should show up in one of the "Let's Pretend" matches hereabouts.

When colleague Mark Terry was recently reproached by a bunny hugger for his enthusiasm for hunting, he announced that he would mend his ways. "All right, since you think that hunting is cruel, I'll turn over a new leaf. I won't shoot to kill anymore, I'll just shoot to wound."

The wilderness is still wild. It is not kind and gentle. The challenge of the wilderness is its very wildness, and people who do not understand the spice of danger should learn about that before they leave the pavement. The recent episode in Uganda was very bad indeed, and it is good to learn that the culprits were evidently swiftly brought to justice. The fact remains that these people took off into the bush without being ready to do so. I have always liked boondocking, and I have run into situations several times in which my readiness to face the hazards of the wild were of great importance. I have never had to defend myself against a wild beast which I had not provoked, but I have six times found myself in confrontation with wild men, and I know of a dozen other people who have had the same experience. Let us preach: Do not place yourself in harm's way unless you are prepared to face hazard. And do not do so unless you are armed. If you cannot be armed, do not go.

We were informed by family member Curt Rich of a friend who has faced up to this problem of "Y2K" by adjusting Y 2 K. He has now re-labeled his calendars Januark, Februark, March, April and Mak.

Evidently the establishment is now rediscovering General Julian Hatcher.

As you know, the socialist Australian government has recently collected 640 thousand personal firearms to be destroyed (at a cost of about 500 million dollars). As a result of that after 12 months in all Australia homicides are up 3.2 percent, assaults are up 8.6 percent, and armed robberies are up 44 percent.

In the State of Victoria, however, things are somewhat different, because during this 12-month period homicides with firearms are up 300 percent!

This sort of thing is only to be expected, but do not try to be reasonable with a hoplophobe. By definition hoplophobia is a mental affliction and not subject to reasoned argument.

What do you hear about SPC New?

We received the cheerful news that a cougar was recently sighted just down the road in Chino Valley. Cougars are nice people. We will see if we cannot set up a supply of joggers for them.

We expect to run a short "Safari-Prep" tutorial up at Denver in April. We will let you know how it turns out.

Preconceptions are hard to alter. People who insist that intrinsic rifle accuracy is impossible with a short, light barrel are confused by the Steyr Scout. It is by now apparent that if the SS were only half as accurate as it is, it would still be twice as accurate as it need be.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

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April, 1999

Springset

I suppose I should begin this issue by wringing my hands over the disaster at Littleton, Colorado. Certainly that was a dreadful episode, but I can see no relevant connection between the murderous rampage of a couple of psychopathic adolescents and the activities of the National Rifle Association. If anyone on campus had had the presence of mind and the ability, he might have stopped that atrocity before it got started: at the very least, he could have limited it to one or two casualties. But as we know, no weapons are allowed on campus, so the place is ostentatiously defenseless. I once saw a door-poster which announced, "There are no guns in this house. Feel free." Thus it is with schools. We do not announce these things, but the creeps know that a school is easy pickens. That is probably an important factor in the recent epidemic of school shootings.

We note with some alarm that a certain number of lots of Lake City 1962 7.62 Match ammunition are showing signs of primer decay. If you have a good supply of that material, I suggest you shoot it up now on the range, but do not count on it for serious work.

Herewith our nomination for the headline of the year, which appeared recently in the *Arizona Republic*:

"CLINTON CITES MORAL IMPERATIVE."

We continue to wonder about the appearance of the Steyr Scout in the hands of the KLA. It is said that a lot of KLA support is coming from Muslim drug trading in Albania, but even if this is so, I would think that it would be more business-like to buy six or seven Kalashnikovs in place of one SS. Of course, the SS is probably a better weapon for mountain guerrillas than the Kalashnikov, but one wonders who was in a position to make that decision.

The second shot is a great help, perhaps even a necessity, in pistolcraft, but I wonder how much we need it in a hunting arm. On dangerous game I guess it can be useful, but rapid fire is a military exercise. If you are attempting to repel hoards of screaming Zulus, an M1 or an M14 might be very comforting. But we have not needed to do much of that since flintlock time. (And flintlocks did the job beautifully at Blood River.)

The second shot is certainly available more quickly with a self-loader, and also with a straight-pull like the Blaser 93, but in my experience, for what it is worth, there is always time to work the bolt on a turn-bolt rifle in the time it takes to recover from recoil. My partners reported that when I had occasion to take a second shot on a buffalo I thought I had killed up in the Tamafuta country, the two shots from Baby sounded like they came from a self-loader.

I have seen Gerhardt Blenk (the "High Blenk of Blaser") reload his break-top single-shot so quickly that greater action speed would seem superfluous. The lever-gun is a tad quicker than a bolt, too, but the question that raises itself is how much of a speed increment is significant. In Formula I pit stops, speed is absolutely critical, but in a hunting rifle the speed of that second shot is almost never significant.

A correspondent recently informed us that an ideal target for pistol plinkers is the stale cookie. There are

plenty of them, they positively reward hits, and they feed the beasties. In all these years of plinking I somehow never thought of that before.

On the recent anniversary of the epic battle of Midway, the television people gave the memorial a certain amount of attention. These people seem to be more occupied with tragedy than with heroism, evidently not realizing that the two usually go hand-in-hand. The legendary attack of Torpedo Squadron 8 against the Japanese carrier force sacrificed the entire squadron, but it was not futile. When the Nip combat air patrol came down from aloft to destroy the torpedo planes, Wade McClusky's dive bombers acquired a free hand and hit the carrier force while the latter was recovering and rearming aircraft. In a space of about five minutes the Japanese lost the war in the Pacific – or the US Navy won it, depending on your viewpoint. When we memorialize Midway, we should honor Torpedo 8 as more gallant perhaps than the Light Brigade at Balaclava, and certainly more effective than the 300 Spartans at Thermopylae. In the words of George Patton, "We should not be sad that such men died. We should be glad that such men lived."

I was recently interviewed on a Wisconsin radio talk show regarding the uproar caused by the shooting of domestic dogs by police. This came from my Commentary about the unwisdom of a policeman's using his firearm on a dog. No matter how justified his act may be in a legal sense, it always gives him and his department a very bad press. A properly qualified policeman should be able to take on any one dog without recourse to gunfire. If a dog is wearing a collar when he attacks, he is good as dead, and even if he is not wearing a collar, almost any sort of blunt or edged instrument will serve to stop him – in the hands of a qualified police officer.

"He ricochets from one scandal to another, endlessly self-absorbed and generally despised."

(No, no! We mean George IV, about whom this line was written quite some time ago.)

I note with some puzzlement that the 376 Steyr cartridge is now announced for sale, even though I do not know any place where there are samples of it. Also the "Dragoon" rifle, which is a scout configuration in the larger cartridge, is listed in the brochure for about two hundred dollars more – why I cannot say. The two weapons are structurally identical, and while there may be a few ounces more steel in the Dragoon than in the Scout, I cannot see that makes up to two hundred dollars difference. Marketing is an extremely esoteric activity.

"For the man who has everything" we now suggest a titanium gold-coated Desert Eagle from IMI. Clearly there is a lot of money out there somewhere.

On the subject of money, we note that the whimpers we hear about the price of the Scout do not seem to discourage multiple purchases. We now have several correspondents who proudly operate "his-and-hers" Scouts, apparently for married couples who do not shoot together.

About the only place we know of where a large magazine capacity is useful to a hunter is in Australia, where the pigs are a dreadful nuisance and legitimately taken in large numbers. We recently read a magazine account of a hunt which gathered up no less than 43 pigs in one day.

If you don't understand weapons you don't understand fighting. If you don't understand fighting you don't understand war. If you don't understand war you don't understand history. And if you don't understand history you might as well live with your head in a sack.

We recently read of a sportsman who dismissed the 375 Holland cartridge because the first time he tried it the telescope delivered a painful case of Kaibab eye. He did not like the cartridge because the telescope was

mounted too far aft. Almost the first thing we used to do to a customer's rifle back in Orange Gunsite days was to slide that telescope forward as far as it would go. With a scoutscope, of course, this problem is avoided entirely. I find it hard to believe the amount of technical misinformation floating around among shooters. Even without instruction, a little thought would help this problem. But thinking is a difficult thing to encourage in a society occupied with television.

And now we learn of a customer who is attempting to sue the fabricator of his kukri on the grounds that he cut himself on it. Poor baby! I suggest we pay him off with a packet of band aids and a can of chicken soup.

Colleague Ed Head, who works the border patrol down between California and Mexico, comments on how convenient his SS is for border patrol work, especially including the leopard–light attachment. There is not much need for that leopard–light in hunting, but for night searching in hazardous areas it has great merit. We were going to demonstrate that at the NRA meeting at Denver, but under the circumstances you will now have to find one of your own.

We learn that the Smithsonian Institution has now rejected the donation of a prized argali trophy by a renowned American hunter on the grounds that some varieties of argali are considered to be endangered, by some people. The Smithsonian wildlife exhibition stands in dire need of improvement, and under these circumstances we can understand why.

Do not go to Africa until you are ready! We have a correspondent who is now heading for the Golden Joys and who has never hunted so much as a squirrel. Even if he does everything right, he still will not have worked himself up to the proper frame of mind for the Great Experience. If you are contemplating Africa, I strongly suggest you check out Texas first. Go down there and get some experience on "exotics" so that when the time comes you will not be overcome with the blind staggers, as so many novices are.

The marines are reported to observe modern small–arm technique, but according to the cover of the June 1999 issue of *Soldier of Fortune*, the army has not got the word. Nobody ever taught that soldier about Rule III.

Just now back from Whittington, we can report that the place is pretty thick with game. The residential area was aslosh with mule deer. We were told that the hills are full of elk, and the management has acquired no less than seven cougars between Christmas and Easter.

It is customary for republican governments to be bound by constitutions, and this is grand idea. The question does arise, however, about what recourse the citizen has when the government disregards its own constitution, as is the case with our own Tenth Amendment. What do you do if your government does not obey its own laws? Our Declaration declaims that when governments do not observe the God–given rights of man, it is not only the right but the duty of the people to alter or abolish them. The Declaration of Independence may not be the supreme law of the land – which is the Constitution – but it frames our philosophy of government and serves as a guide for those who respect our traditions. More people should.

Sheriff Gary Enders from Bighorn County, Wyoming, comments: "Actually we consider attempted carjacking as an attempted suicide here, since so many drivers are packing legally."

The New American

You have read about this bird up in New England somewhere who is terribly afraid of rattlesnakes and has fenced off his property. Now the authorities have required him to remove his fence on the grounds that it may cause psychological distress to the rattlesnakes. The silliness index continues to rise like the tide.

On October 1, 2 and 3, Dave Wheeler is putting on his hunting rifle competition at San Jon, New Mexico. If you are a free on that date, you might check it out. (Contact Dave Wheeler at Blue Steel Ranch, 505-576-9629.)

As Cousin Bongo continues to wander around the vast Pacific, he runs across more evidence of the general aspect of the war in the Pacific. For example, recently on the Gilbert Islands, the remains were discovered of 22 whites – probably British – who were simply shot out-of-hand when the Nips took the place. There was no fighting, this was just murder, but that is the way that war was. The "post modern" generation does not seem to understand that.

From what we read, our European friends are dismayed at Captain Ashby's acquittal, but not at Clinton's. (Ashby, you may recall, was the A-6 pilot who cut down the cable car.)

The following case study was given to us by a senior rangemaster of wide experience and complete theoretical background. It is delightful to contemplate a circumstance in which the right man was there at the right time. We do not read of such situations often because they are simply not newsworthy. There is nothing to wring our hands about.

The episode perfectly exemplifies the Principles of Personal Defense, as set forth in our professional publications.

"On Halloween eve, two years ago, I was walking my dog on the street where I live. At the time, there were only five families on this street. At the west end of the street was the rear of a condo, with a driveway going through to the avenue.

"At about 8pm, while near this driveway, I heard a vehicle accelerating west onto my street. It was a Japanese compact, lowered, and though a cold night, the windows were lowered. ORANGE. As the vehicle approached me, I observed that the four occupants, all male blacks (there is nothing pejorative here, just a statement of fact), were all wearing ski masks. The occupant in the right rear seat (facing me) had his mask raised above his eyes. He looked at me and stated, "Him, him, right here." RED. At the same time he reached down into the vehicle for something with his right hand, and the vehicle stopped, approximately ten feet from me. I sidestepped to put a parked car between us, and drew my GSP. I placed the front sight just above the nose of this bozo, and removed the slack from the trigger. He responded by stopping the movement of his hand, something that surely saved his life, ducking, and screaming "gogogogo." The driver did exactly that, moving rapidly up the driveway, and entering the avenue without stopping. He hit the opposite curb, blowing the two front tires. The vehicle drove off, the occupants relatively intact.

"My experience as a police officer in Anti Crime units, where we were tasked with interrupting violent crimes in progress, and as an Investigator in Central Robbery Division, where we did stakeouts, led me to believe that at least one of the occupants had a gun. I also believed that their purpose was robbery. I saw no weapon, and therefore did not shoot.

"The media would have had a field day with this if I had fired. After all, this was Halloween, and were not these poor children merely in costume as trick or treaters? Was I a racist? After all, I was white and they were black. Did I overreact by 'taking the law into my own hands?'

"I believe I acted correctly. I was alert, decisive, aggressive, acted with speed and surprise. Perhaps more importantly, I acted with coolness. If they decided to continue, there is no doubt that I would have been precise.

"This would not have been my first gunfight. I was certainly alarmed, but not frightened. I felt in control, and confident in my ability to defeat the threat.

"After the incident, I considered calling 911, but did not. What could I offer? A license plate number? I saw only the front sight, THIS BIG. A description of the occupants? Eyes, very wide. What had they actually done? Probably more importantly, at least to me, was what they had not done. Perhaps they did nothing else criminal that night, or perhaps they did. I will never know. But I'm sure that before they decide to approach another old, broken-down, potential victim, they may remember what the muzzle of my 45 looked like as it was pointed at their heads."

The French have now commissioned their brand new aircraft carrier. Its flight deck is some 15 feet too short, and its cruising speed is some 5 knots below specification, but it has the most comfortable crew quarters in the world. (The wine list, I understand, is outstanding.)

I do not suppose any of the faithful missed the news, but a Texas district court has just now ruled that the Second Amendment protects an individual right, not a collective right. Hooray for the judge! This matter has always seemed perfectly clear, but there are those who will keep on arguing about it, apparently forever.

The African National Congress (ANC) has become increasingly annoyed with parliamentary opposition and is now moving for a one-party state. Figures! This is definitely Third World chic.

A correspondent writes to tell us that he has been down in Antarctica recently and has discovered there is no need for personal weapons at that place. We answered that there is no need for personal weapons on the moon either. Other places, yes.

"Even before the 'trial,' 34 Senate Democrats declared that they would not find Clinton guilty. In doing so, they firmly (and proudly) joined the moral ranks of the O.J. Simpson jury."

from *Chronicles* magazine, May 1999

Daughter Lindy has just acquired a Baby Glock in caliber 40 in anticipation of the forthcoming hot season in Phoenix. I am not impressed with it, but it may indeed serve the purpose of being armed. As we all know, the first rule of a gunfight is "have a gun." The Baby Glock is indeed handy, and it is indeed a gun.

"In general, tradition is a better guide to conduct than improvisation."

The Guru

In the dismal aftermath of the Littleton bloodshed the irrelevance factor in public outcry expands beyond our comprehension. "Something must be done!" is the wail of the media. Yes indeed, but like what? We have plenty of laws. The murderous trolls at Columbine High School broke a whole catalog of laws, starting with the one against murder. Nonetheless, the wimps demand still more legislation – without even suggesting what such legislation might accomplish. ("We know it won't do anything, but it will make us feel better. We don't think. We feel.")

Juvenile depravity is the new thing. We didn't have it (in any quantity) in our youth. Depravity comes from the undisciplined home. It does not come from a proper home – one with two responsible parents, family meals, moral leadership, and very limited television. I can't say that I know how to reestablish this, but I do

know that a mass of new rules attacking instruments rather than acts is not the answer.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

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May, 1999

Storm and Stress

Indeed we live in interesting times. I cannot recall a greater outpouring of hysterical emotionalism since the Children's Crusade – and I was much younger then. We add to that a conspicuous example of the wrath of God, as displayed by the Oklahoma and Kansas twisters. And then we have these goings-on in the Balkans, which seem to avoid any possible solution. Milosevic is not about to quit pounding on the Kosovars just because we strafe him from the air, until he has eliminated every last Kosovar. And then what? Whoever is advising the man in the White House, they are advising him incorrectly. He is supposed to be in charge. If so, God help us all!

Note how important semantics are at this time of troubles. Freedom and liberty are not the same. A Republic is not the same as a Democracy, just as a clip is not a magazine. It would certainly be better for all concerned if all of us made an attempt to be careful about what we are talking about.

The NRA meeting up in Denver left us with mixed emotions. The consensus of membership, insofar as I could determine it, was that we should have done nothing about reducing the size of the operations there, but on the spot we discovered that the general ambience of the place was such as to depress any sort of social activity. The NRA demonstration inside was overwhelming. We had many more people than the hall would hold, and the vocal approval of our activities was deafening. Outside, some people marched up and down displaying one conspicuous banner which proclaimed, "Public Schools Kill Children." The newspaper claimed there were several thousand protestors. I was there, and I saw a couple of hundred. The distressing thing is that no one seems to want to establish any connection with anything. President Charlton Heston was inspiring, as usual. His presence on the podium is quite magnificent, and if his politics are not completely pure, he stands as a great force for good at this time, when bad seems to be in the ascendancy.

Let's hear it from the faithful about the utility of the Code Duelo. How many vote for the sword, and how many vote for the pistol? I would like to prepare a small study on that point.

Reports keep coming in about the success of the Steyr Scout in the hunting field. Certainly it does well, but no better than any other piece of the same caliber. What is important about the Scout is not its power, but its ergonomics. It is easier and handier to use and to pack and carry than anything else. In this it is a great leap forward. The 308 cartridge is okay, but you can get it in 7–08 for use in restricted jurisdictions, and in 376, if you think you need more muscle. What remains best about it, however, is its "shootability," and this is something you really cannot assess until you have taken it afield.

We are informed by cousin Steve Lunceford that the world-famed Blue Train between Pretoria and Cape Town has become a casualty of the revolution in South Africa. It is still running, but you will not recognize the service, which used to be its particular pride.

In reflecting back over the memorials to the Battle of Midway, I ran across the following interesting statistics. In that battle we lost the Yorktown, and additionally, we lost 26 out of 88 F4F fighters, 48 out of 128 SBD dive bombers, and 40 out of 44 TBD torpedo planes. On that same day, the Nips lost 94 out of 106 Zero

fighters, 81 out of 93 Kate torpedo planes, and 72 out of 72 Val dive bombers, plus the fleet carriers Kaga, Akagi, Hiryu, and Soryu. A definite turning point in history, that was a real barn burner.

As I suppose you all noticed, it is against the law for a teacher to post the Ten Commandments in a Colorado high school.

In looking over the general state of the nation at this time, I am happy to designate myself and the Countess as "pre-modern." That may be a quaint position to occupy, but I think it makes us a lot better than "with it." Better quaint than cool.

We note with amazement that a prominent and successful female television commentator was shot dead on the street in front of her home in London. We thought that sort of thing was against the law in Britain, and particularly difficult of execution now that there are no personal firearms available in England. Whatever the laws or regulations, murder is always a black mark against the human race, but as to that, the human race is looking pretty bad just now. One of these days God in Heaven may lose patience with us entirely.

Guru say: "Anybody can get scared, but you must absolutely not let that affect your behavior. Cowardice kills."

Many years ago it was considered funny to suggest that if one broke open a fortune cookie at the end of a Chinese meal he might read: "Help, I am being held prisoner in a Chinese cookie factory." We wonder if our ambassador to China sent that line to Washington when he found his embassy surrounded by a noisy mob following our hit on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. I rather doubt it. Diplomats do not tend toward the flippant.

Let us never forget that according to the Father of Our Country personal weapons are liberty's teeth. Liberty and equality are irreconcilable opposites. The only place you can have both at once is on a desert island.

The following letter was recently addressed to the *London Standard* in Britain.

"The US constitution springs from a Lockean distrust of government – hence its stress upon assorted checks and balances. That distrust springs from an indifference towards social and economic inequality which, in the US, has been seen as a tolerable side effect of 'liberty' and laissez-faire. The British left, by contrast, has always seen the battle against inequality as paramount, and has consequently taken a more approving view of state intervention.

"Freeland should also be wary of Thomas Paine, whose radicalism had a libertarian, rather than egalitarian, bias. He once wrote that 'government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state it is an intolerable one'."

Richard Kelly, The Manchester Grammar School

As you know, the war cry of the French Revolution was Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. As it turned out, the Jacobins were not interested at all in liberty. They were furiously enthusiastic about equality. As to fraternity, this is now generally banned on campus.

A new law in South Africa forbids the once popular practice of giving your rifle to your professional hunter – or anyone else. We can see no reason for such legislation except pure spite. "There is no political reason for it. We just want to be nasty."

Accurate assessments of the Littleton disaster have yet to be properly evaluated, but one point stands out clearly. The only thing that could have saved the day was a qualified, armed teacher. Moral decay has brought us to this pass, and we cannot look to the state for relief. Relief must come from the populace at large, and not in the form of legislation.

How often have we heard the victim say, "He came out of nowhere!" No, he didn't. He was there all along, but you did not see him. You were in Condition White, and in that condition you are a victim. The first principle of personal defense is alertness.

This issue of the *Commentaries* is on the short side, since we must rush off now to Austria to attempt a bit of pioneering in the design of hunting rifle sights. We have long nursed the idea of a fixed telescope with no moving parts, riding in adjustable mounts. This was tried many years ago by Bausch & Lomb, but it did not sell. (Though I know of several examples which gave, and still give, perfect satisfaction.) It may be time to re-introduce this idea as part of the Scout Concept. The success of the radical Scout may encourage the manufacture of a radical telescope to go with it. We hope so.

The Countess and I will not be back on station until the month of June, so there will be a gap in the delivery of this paper for some weeks. I hope to resume putting out the word as soon as possible after our return.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 7

June 1999

Interesting Times

Double, double, toil and trouble. Fire burn and cauldron bubble! We returned from our recent escapade in Europe to discover that the foes of liberty have been hard at work in our own country during our absence. (I wish I could discover a connection here, but I cannot seem to put it together.) The foes of liberty may reside in Peking or Belgrade or Baghdad, but they are not nearly as dangerous to us as those unhappy hypocrites who are too frequently found in the halls of American government. It appears that the self-styled "ambulance chasers" who made successful war on the tobacco industry have now decided that there is big money to be made in harassing the American "gun culture." This movement has nothing to do with either crime or safety, but only with oppression. The Prime Minister of Great Britain has stated for the record recently that his hoplophobic proposals have nothing to do with crime. "I just want to destroy the gun culture." This puts us in mind of the recent statement by a female member of Parliament when she took action against fox hunting in England. "I don't care about the bloody foxes, I just want to fight the *#!* class war." Such attitudes typify politics in *the Age of the Common Man*.

To no one's amazement, we dined very well in Europe. We remember with delight splendid luncheons at the Schwarzenberg Palace in Vienna (now a hotel), the Gasthof Gmachi in Salzburg, the Hotel de Ville in Gruyères, Switzerland, and the Auberge de Noves in Provence. Our cup ranneth over.

In our three weeks in Europe we learned many interesting things, as we always do when we travel. The hospitality, the food, the wine, the scenery, and the manifest friendship were perfectly splendid. It was asparagus season, and we took full advantage of that. Personally I do not care much for the continental breakfast, and the 3/10th beer portions in Switzerland were skimpy. Highway driving was just fine, relatively unhampered by highway patrols. The freedom to take risks free from the fear of meaningless litigation was a pleasure. (The fact that motor fuel costs about four times as much on the Continent as it does in the US may be one reason we noticed fewer idiots at the wheel over there than at home.)

Obviously we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, and we extend our thanks to our many good friends abroad.

In our travels we note a depressing tendency for people to wear insignia they do not rate, on all sorts of things from t-shirts to cap ornaments. It must take a peculiar sort of fellow to take any sort of pleasure in pretending he is something he is not. I guess that is another spin out from *the Age of Illusion*.

From Africa we hear of a peasant who claims that he was attacked by a python while he slept in the bush. It seems unlikely that anyone would go to sleep in the bush unless he was "under the influence" of something, but this sportsman must have been pretty well passed out, if indeed the python tried to engulf him head first, as he claims. The report we get claims that "the incident is not in dispute," but if that is the case, it is a first instance on record of a python trying to scarf up a human being. *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*.

Liberty is so rare in the history of the human race as to be regarded as an aberration more than an achievement. The Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Persians never gave it a thought. John Locke and his followers became its delineators as recently as the 18th century. The idea that a free man could

do what he pleased as long as he did not injure or deprive other free men was a cornerstone of American political thought, and it inspires our Constitution. For the first time in the long, grim story of mankind, today only Americans venerate liberty, and by no means all Americans at that. That is why we must not submit our sovereignty to any such thing as a League of Nations or the United Nations Organization. The other members of such groupings have no real interest in the things that we hold most dear. This is not a matter for majority rule.

At this time, we may be able to defend our liberty – our unique historical achievement. This may no longer be taken for granted, however. There are too many American citizens who will not fight for their liberties – or for anything else for that matter. There is a mood afoot in our education establishment, as well as in the media, which holds that fighting, for any reason, is bad, and that "violence never settles anything." It is interesting to speculate upon whether these people are wicked or just catastrophically ignorant. Fighting in a just cause is not only permissible, it is admirable, and our examples can take us back to Moses and beyond.

But we have to understand just where we do stand, and this congressional battle with the Schumers and the Feinsteins and the Lautenbergs, and the Clintons, must establish that they are the declared foes of that lady who stands there holding the lamp above the golden door. Change one letter and we have her proper title – "The Statute of Liberty" – The Second Amendment of the US Constitution.

Is the America of George Washington, John Adams, Ben Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and George Patton truly worth fighting for? Are you prepared to fight for it? Patrick Henry was.

One of the first things one notices about the European scene is the tidal wave of Japanese. Every time you turn around, there are 317 Japanese that you had not seen before. (I counted.) They are not offensive, since they are well-mannered and travel in buses, but they certainly use up tourist space. I cannot imagine what they do with all the pictures they take. There cannot be enough wall space in Japan to accommodate the art work. This means that if you intend going any place in particular, better make your reservations a year in advance.

Our principle professional object was to see about a new and radical sighting system for the Scout Rifle. I do not mean to criticize the excellent Leupold glass that is now fitted to the Scout. Mine has served me very well for a couple of years, and one might well advance the classic quote, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." This approach does not satisfy me, however, for while contemporary telescope sights of high quality do indeed give good service, their designers have been tireless in improving characteristics which do not need much improvement, such as field of view.

Where currently available telescope sights fall short are in the areas of honesty and durability. An "honest" telescope does what you tell it every time you move its adjusting knobs, either in plane or in direction. Too few examples now available do that. Secondly, the sight reticle must not come adrift in the middle of a hunt, it has happened with me three times, and to my friends many more than that. I believe there should be no moving parts inside a telescope sight. There is no need at all for variable magnification, and changes in reticle position inside the glass are so minute as to be almost beyond the reach of currently practical technical competence.

Hence we went to Kahles and Swarovski with the suggestion of building a completely simple scope tube, and leaving the sighting adjustments up to the mount. This system has been tried before, notably by Bausch & Lomb in the US some thirty years ago. The difficulty of bringing an optical and a mechanical solution to bear upon the same instrument by the same company seems to have been very serious. Neither Kahles nor Swarovski accepted any notion of building a scope mount which included both lateral and vertical adjustments, but the people at Steyr Mannlicher have put one of their best engineers on this problem, and I think we may see progress here. The result should be an extremely strong, compact sight riding in a low, compact mount. The increased cost of the mount ought to be compensated for by the simplicity of the glass

itself.

The foregoing ideas were brought into harmony in this last month. All hands involved agreed that the ideas were distinct improvements. The only question to arise was the general marketability of radical ideas. The obvious success of the Steyr Scout rifle is evidence that radical ideas do not necessarily repel the customer. (Whoever thought that one could sell a small automobile with a horizontally opposed air-cooled engine in the back. Ridiculous!)

I am optimistic, but then I am optimistic by nature. We must now wait and see.

D-Day came and went without any particular fanfare, which is yet another commentary upon the state of our society. World War II may be considered as a watershed in American history. We were a different people before it, and we certainly have become a different people since. At Midway the war in the Pacific was decided, though this was not apparent to us who were fighting it at the time. When we secured a viable beachhead on the continent of Europe, the European war was decided. This again would probably not be appreciated by the people who were fighting it. These were turning points, and nothing much of importance has happened since, apart from the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It is said that those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it. It is also said that those who do not read are no better off than those who cannot read. The overall situation does not promise much, but that does not mean that we should not enjoy the good things we have while we have them. So let's get at it!

Guru say: You are "outgunned" only if you miss.

Pistolcraft is an amalgamation of weapon, cartridge, shooter, skill, and attitude. It is nice to have a good weapon, but unless you can shoot it and are mentally equipped to do so, its mechanics are irrelevant. Back in the 50s we attempted to study this matter by means of practical experiment, but a large measure of the experiment failed. It was discovered that only hobbyists are really interested in this, and hobbyists do not constitute a viable commercial market. Thus we can now observe very little progress in the mechanical side of pistolcraft, and almost none on the human side. Competition has gone far astray, becoming almost meaningless. It is dangerous to assert that we have nothing left to learn on this subject, so I will not assert it, but I remain unconvinced that we are any better in charge of the subject of personal self-defense as we approach the 21st century, than we were back before Vietnam. Of course, personal self-defense, is illegal in Britain now, and there are many who would like to make it so in the United States. That does not affect people of wisdom.

We hear a curious story from what used to be German Southwest Africa of a park attendant who was scarfed up by a lion while his tourist group watched in dismay. They reportedly agonized that they could not do anything about it. To us old folks it would seem that the simple answer would be for one of them to have shot the lion. Objections to that notion are not going to be entertained by this court.

We fired the 376 Steyr cartridge at Hirtenberg. Very satisfying! The factory insists upon calling this the "376 Scout," contrary to my advice, but that is no great disaster. People seldom pay much attention to what they are saying. The 376 as we fired it is of Scout configuration, and a very fine piece it is, but it is unnecessarily powerful for general use, and I do not believe that its ammunition will ever become easily available worldwide. Its recoil is the same as that of the 350 Remington Short Magnum, as fired in the Remington 600 and 660. This may dismay the novice or the recoil-shy, but it will not bother any experienced rifleman. At 260-grains at 2600f/s it is about one click short of the 375 Holland (270 at 2700). I doubt if the target will be able to tell the difference. In Scout configuration it is so light, handy and comfortable that it is truly a delectable item. It should not, however, be considered a deer gun, as it is more suitable for animals in the thousand-pound range. As established by its precursor, the Remington Fireplug, it should be just about perfect for moose, the big bears, eland, lion, and bison. It is a bit much for the anti personnel role of the true

Scout. I was a bit dubious about its market appeal when the issue was first raised, but it is so much fun to shoot, now that we have it, that our doubts are well dispelled.

We invite edification on the subject of the difference between "iron" and "steel." On two occasions when we were being given conducted tours of steel plants, we raised this question with the tour guide – to no avail. Basically it appears that if you do anything with iron to improve its utility, you have made it into steel. However there is such a thing as "malleable cast iron," which may refute this notion. We need help from the audience.

In discussing telescope sights with both Kahles and Swarovski, we note that the proper technique of the telescope sight is not widely understood. The binocular use of the instrument ("track with the left, shoot with the right") is not any great advantage in slow–fire, and practically all rifle shooting is slow–fire. Those who have been to school, however, understand that the quick shot with the rifle is a skill readily acquired, and tremendously satisfying to the shooter, regardless how seldom he may use it in the field. In that regard, note that if you are conspicuously left–eye–dominant you can overcome this by placing a 10mm spot of masking tape in the center of the lens of your left shooting glass for training and practice. Daughter Lindy discovered this on her own, but I had not known about it during Gunsite Orange days, and it is not in the book.

In Austria we were informed that there are between 35 and 50 Steyr Scouts in Kosovo.

It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. So in the Scout concept we are appropriately flattered. We now note people selling all sorts of things which approximate the Scout, for less money. It must be obvious, nonetheless, that putting a supercharger on a Volkswagen does not make it a Porsche. The philosopher John Ruskin once pointed out that there is hardly anything in the world that some manufacturer cannot make worse and sell for less. The result is, of course, sucker bait.

We were greeted in the Alps by our long–time good friends, the Marc Heims, who showed up with a bottle of champagne, a bottle of Jack Daniels, and a wheel chair. Now that is a marvelous manifestation of hospitality! I do not know that I can call it typically Swiss, but it is conspicuously genteel. Not much of that sort of thing around anymore. On top of that I was offered a pistol to carry, if I so chose. That is a touch that few would understand, and fewer could grant. It is great to know the right people.

In Provence we were whisked about by Jean–Pierre Denis in his Mercedes CLK. Now there is a gentleman of taste!

With all this journalistic handwringing about the dreadful state of violence in the world, both public and private, we come back to the recurring question of why men fight. At a previous Gunsite Reunion our colleague Finn Aagaard stated flatly his answer. "Men fight because they like to fight." That really should settle the question, but I doubt that it will.

We have now heard people complain about the fact that the bipod on the Scout clicks when it is deployed, this noise evidently alerting the target. From where I sit it seems that if you are close enough to your target so that he can hear the click, you do not need a bipod. However, the factory says it is going to improve the device with a softer click. They also plan to rubberize the bipod tips.

Has anyone noticed how few men of consequence today are men of consequence? It is very hard to point out an example of someone who would have any stature if he were not a politician or an entertainer. In American history I can think of Washington, Jefferson, Ben Franklin, and Theodore Roosevelt. About there the line stops, unless I make an exception of Joe Foss. In Provence I saw a sketch of the Emperor Charles V, who was in the process of killing a fighting bull from horseback with his lance, this in celebration of the birth of his son

and heir. He was the Holy Roman Emperor, and he felt that it was necessary for him to demonstrate that he was also a man. Imagine what dismay would result if any one of our important people of today were to risk his tender body by driving at Indy or Le Mans, climbing the Eiger, running Hell's Canyon, or even flying his own airplane. We may be able to get Jesse Ventura to do something heroic during his term of office. It is worth a try.

It occurs to me that the people at Steyr Mannlicher, as well as those at Gun South, do not really understand what they have in the Scout rifle. It is not just another item on the shelf, but rather a "great leap forward." The trouble is that only shooters can appreciate this, and almost no industrialists are shooters. Well, it is there, and that fact alone gives me great pleasure. I cannot say that I designed it, but I did conceive it, and that is a *Great Good Feeling*.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 8

July, 1999

Summer Time

Hot, ain't it! I am so old that I can remember the days before air conditioning, and those are days I would not care to reoccupy. Summer was never my favorite season, despite the fact that school was out, and it still isn't. Spring, of course, is a joyful time of rebirth. Winter is exciting and cold. Autumn is hunting season. But summer is just hot and sweaty. At this season, the best we can do is to remember how uncomfortable it is to be cold, if we can. If you can arrange it, that is something of a comfort.

In considering this literary garbage about the lethal nature of some types of weapons, we give you this opinion from *Family Member* Celia Milius: "It's not the arrow, it's the Indian."

From our reading it seems to us that too little of the doctrine and technique of weaponcraft is being broadcast. I see pictures of people doing it all wrong in the magazines, and correspondents continue to ask me questions to which any competent shooter should have the answer. An example is the number of people who endeavor to shoot isosceles and then complain because they do not have enough power in their wrists. So then they ask if they should go to a minor caliber or a muzzle brake.

"Why didn't somebody tell me that?" they ask. Either they have never been to school or they have been to the wrong school. Excellence in any activity is something that is not usually sought unless there is a direct financial reward for excellence. Except for big-time athletics there is no financial reward for excellence in technique.

There is also the matter of ignorance. A great many shooters simply do not know that there is a better way to do things, and many of these people presume to teach. Well at least there are a lot of Orange Gunsite people out there who do know the right way, and I hope they live long enough to spread the word.

Note that the "Hunting and Fishing" Party in France just picked up six seats in the French parliament. That may not sound like much, but in any country using a multi-party system a few votes can sometimes make a critical difference. So now the voice of the French hunters and fishermen will be heard, and so designated, in the halls of legislation. I guess the bambiists will shriek at that, but then the bambiists are going to shriek anyway.

In a previous issue we asked for help in the matter of the definition of iron as opposed to steel. We got a large response, but, in general, it asked more questions than it answered. A consensus was that iron is almost useless as it comes out of the ground, but that it can be made into a serviceable material by the addition of carbon. Now this is interesting in view of the fact that when iron comes out of the ground it contains a number of impurities, the most common of which is carbon. Others, such as sulphur, zinc, potassium, etc., are present in lesser quantities. So, in effect, we have "carbonated iron," which apparently must be de-carbonated and then re-carbonated. Heat can be used to blow out most of the impurities, but that leaves us with relatively pure iron, to which carbon must be introduced. This evidently is done by reheating the material in the presence of coal or coke, which forms a useful combination, depending, of course, upon percentages.

How this came to pass is the next question. The Hittites knew about iron, but did not use it for weaponry, preferring bronze, which, while not up to carbon steel, is superior to cast iron. The Dorians may have introduced something resembling steel into the Greek peninsula, but how good this was is debatable, there being no original source material from that period.

If you are making a cutting sword of either bronze or cast iron it will break the first time it meets heavy resistance. You can stab with it, but you cannot chop. The Roman gladius was always presumed to be a stabbing weapon until some original versions were uncovered which were not formed for that purpose, according to their hilt design. The gladius was apparently made of some sort of wrought iron, but it properly could not be called steel except by those historians who use the two words interchangeably.

We first hear of good swords originating in Khorassan in Persia in Alexandrian times. They probably were made of steel, because of the reputation they achieved, and their craftsmanship was moved to Damascus in Syria.

When the Moors exploded out of the Near East across North Africa into Europe they brought with them Damascus blades and founded the steel industry in Toledo, where it still exists. There was secrecy involving the methods for producing high quality steel, and much myth entered the scene.

During the 800 Year War of the Reconquista, Toledo swords diffused up into Europe where, because of their extraordinary excellence, they were often given magical titles. The Romans never venerated their swords, but the Europeans did and gave them special names, such as Excalibur, Durandal, and Tizona. Since only the clergy could read and write at this period, we find practically nothing in the way of technical manuals, but good swords did exist in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Today I own two Toledo swords of surpassing quality. They were made to my order in Toledo. Though I am sure that a modern metallurgist could make swords as good, I do not see that he could make them any better. At the smithy in Toledo, they take the blade that you select and force it into a 45 degree bend, leaving it overnight. If it takes any set by the next day, they discard that one and you start over again. Then, after putting a very sharp point on that blade, they swing it through a 90-degree arc to slam into a mild steel plate point-first. If you can detect any deformation of that point, that blade is discarded. Whether it is pure carbon steel or alloyed with other metal such as chromium, I do not know, but it is awfully good steel.

I assume that some similar development was taking place on the other side of the world, most likely in Japan. I have heard good reports about high-art Japanese swords, but I do not know about their metallurgical composition.

So, put very simply, steel is raw iron which has been purified and then refined by the re-addition of carbon to a matter of about 0.4 percent.

(But then there is still the matter of "malleable cast iron," which nobody will tell me about.)

You have heard, perhaps, of the new Remington 300 "Ultra Magnum." This uses the unbelted 404 Jeffrey case necked down to 30 caliber, to start the good old 180-grain Spitzer bullet at 3300f/s. (Wow!) Here we have an ideal example of an answer in search of a question. It has long been obvious that if you want more power than available in the 30-06 you do not want more velocity, you want more bullet mass. This should be obvious to anyone who really uses rifles on live targets, but apparently it is not. When you ask, "What is it for?" the answer is "It's to sell, stupid! Why else do we make anything?"

One correspondent suggested that the integral bipod could be improved if it were spring-loaded. Apparently he feels that deploying it manually is an imposition. Poor baby!

As you rather feared, people have been buying Steyr Scouts without the scoutscope, and then fitting a complex instrument of their own choice to the top rail of that versatile receiver. A "moonscope," as it is often called, cancels two of the advantages of the scout system and offers nothing in return. And so it came to pass that a friend of *Family Member* George Olmsted took a Steyr Scout, fitted with a moonscope, to Africa, and proceeded to get "lost in the scope" as his impala chuckled and trotted away. It is not absolutely necessary to get lost in a high-powered telescope, but it takes a bit of practice to learn how to avoid it.

Back when we were working frequently in Central America, we found it necessary to point out to our employers that a bodyguard is not much use if he is working for the other side. No matter how much you pay your own bodyguard, other people can offer him more. They do not have to pay him, because they will make sure that when they get you, they get him too. Thus it amuses me when I see ads in the magazines for bodyguard schools. The principle use of a bodyguard is to start the car while the principal is standing well away from it, and even this technique is not significant anymore now that the bombers tend to use time-delay fuses on their infernal machines.

My publisher feels that I should not call a Zulu a Zulu. The reasoning, if any, is obscure. The Zulus are a proud people, and they are proud to be called Zulus. This must be some sort of a triple backlash beyond the grasp of us non-racists.

Literary sorts keep on knocking on old Ernest Hemingway. Papa may not have been a really nice guy, but in the literary sense his best work was unmatched in modern times. Papa was an outdoorsman. He loved and appreciated nature. He venerated strength and courage. He studied and explained violence. That he was something of a lush and that he never understood women are points against him, to be sure, but his "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is arguably the best adventure story ever written. No man of consequence can do without it.

We see on the tube some agitation to make car trunks releasable from the inside, so that if you are locked in your car trunk you can get out without help. They have a point there, but consider the other side. Recently a little old lady, who was beset in a parking lot by a goblin, proceeded to lock the goblin in the trunk and drive him to the police station. How did she do that? Well, she pointed her pistol at him, how else?

"Hypersensitivity and political correctness are signs of a society in which too many people have nothing serious to do. It makes a bland and sour society, full of rancor, but devoid of spirit."

Charley Reese

I see in the magazine that I am to conduct a "tactical rifle" course at Whittington. I have no idea what a "tactical" rifle may be, and I do not know how to teach it. When I was young, "tactics" was considered the art of winning battles. "Strategy" was the making use of battles in the pursuit of victory in war. As our revered Colonel Allen told us at Stanford, "Dating a girl, sending her flowers, buying a good dinner, going to the theater, and then driving out and parking by the lake constitutes strategy. From there on it's tactics." Thus "tactical rifle" is either a meaningless expression or a redundancy. If you know how to use a rifle well, you use it in exactly the same fashion in a fight as in the hunting field. I have agreed to teach a rifle class at Whittington. Tactical rifle I do not understand.

Why is it that "civilians" are presumed to be innocent? This is a misleading term. Very few civilians (or soldiers, for that matter) are innocent beyond about the age of 12. A better term for those not involved in the battle is "non-combatant."

When the elite Japanese Sendai Division was ruined in its night attack upon the Marine Corp perimeter at Lunga Point, the instruments which brought about its demise were two brain-children of John M. Browning, a true genius. Our defensive positions were principally manned by the battalions of Chesty Puller and Herman Hanneken, and they had laid them out with double-apron wire covered by interlocking bands of 30-06 fire delivered by the great 1917 water-cooled Browning machinegun. The attack was delivered in the pitch-dark of a post midnight rainstorm, the idea being that the bushido of the Japanese army would simply overwhelm the Marine defenses. Bushido is all very well in its way, but it is no match for a 30-06. Such rifles as the Marines used were 1903 Springfields, but they were not very much use in full dark. On the other hand, in the flashes of intermittent light, the 1911 45-caliber pistol, also the design of John M. Browning, backed up the defense. The final protective lines were covered by the water-cooled machinegun, firing along the wire. And any gaps that were formed were met by the 45 auto, fired at arms' length. The Nip division, 27 battalions strong, was destroyed (not "decimated"), and was never reconstituted throughout the war.

I have never heard that battle described as a victory for John Moses Browning, but such it was, in its way.

Note that there is a 40-acre homesite hilltop parcel now available for sale in Ravengard. I do not think it will be there for long. Better get it while it is hot! (Contact Col. Bob Young at (520) 636-1210.)

I am somewhat amused at Milosevic's insistence that we "disarm the KLA." It appears that we have a good many people in positions of influence who have no theoretical background in war, revolution, geography, or history. People have been trying to disarm the Irish for longer than I can remember, with absolutely nothing in the way of results. The idea that the KLA might be cozened into laying down its arms is pure fancy. Taking a long view of history, we may say that anyone who lays down his arms deserves whatever he gets.

Now it appears that the Nips want to erase the Sack of Nanking from the history books. In the age of illusion a good many people feel that to deny something is to cause it to cease to exist. It seems to me that if the Nips want to erase any history, they can start by erasing Pearl Harbor. That would put them in a better position.

The US postal service has now decided that the Grand Canyon is in Colorado, as printed on one of their new stamps. We have been told that our school system is pretty bad, so I suppose that we should not be surprised. Perhaps we will next hear that the Alamo is in Mexico.

Turns out that assault has gone up 55 percent since the Brits disarmed their subjects. So who's surprised?

The litigation sharpies have discovered that much money can be made by knocking a big business such as tobacco. I have a suggestion for these people. Why do they not go for the steel companies? Almost anything that can hurt you has some steel in it somewhere along the line, and the steel companies are very big and very rich.

We are pleased to report that Pachmayr has resumed production of its excellent flush "hammerhead" sling swivels. We have long wondered why this system is not universal.

We were recently asked what might be considered the most powerful element of a human personality. We thought about that for quite a while and decided the answer was "an adventurous mind." That will have to do until one of the *Family* shows us something better.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 9

August, 1999

The Summer Rains

Yes indeed, the rains came, and they came right on time. We are sorry about the drought up in the Northeast, but down here in the Southwest the land is greener than we can remember. Note that we do not have a monsoon in North America. The monsoon is a meteorological phenomenon native to Southeast Asia, the South China Sea, and the Gulf of Thailand. Naturally anyone is free to use any term he wants for anything he chooses, but those who call magazines "clips" and cartridges "bullets" ought not to be taken seriously.

"Under capitalism the rich become powerful. Under socialism the powerful become rich. That is the main difference between the two systems." Interesting idea, no?

The rifle school at Whittington was a considerable success. Of the 16 who signed up (16 is all we can take in a class), 12 brought Steyr Scouts. The outstanding advantages of this piece were immediately apparent to everybody on station, and those who did not bring Scouts now intend to acquire them as soon as possible.

It continues to amaze me that the manufacturer and importer of this weapon evidently do not understand what they have. The SS is not simply another item on the menu, but rather a great leap forward. This cannot be appreciated, however, without using the piece in the field. Just looking at it and reading its specifications will not suffice. I may sound like a broken record on this matter, but it is frustrating to discover that there are a lot of people who simply do not know what we have here. Shooters who do not know about the production scout may be compared to drivers who do not know about the Porsche. Well, I got mine. I suggest you get yours.

The new Heckler & Koch 45 auto has various good points, but it remains entirely too bulky. If you have one of Orange Gunsite's "slimline" 1911s, hang on to it! There is no replacement for it as yet.

Did you catch that piece in *Time* by one Rosenblatt in which he recommended the total abolition of firearms? One is not upset so much at the position of the author as by the fact that the publishers of *Time* would print his drivel. Firearms, most particularly personal firearms, are Liberty's teeth, as pointed out by the Father of Our Country. The leftist media have no concern for liberty. Unlike liberal politicians who would have us trade part of our liberty for a bit of ephemeral security, this Rosenblatt exhorts us to give up both liberty and security at the same time, and he gets published!

Our pen friend Olivier Detrois from France tells us that he has been having only modest success hunting the *myocastor* with his bow and arrow. The term *myocastor* stopped me cold. It turns out a *myocastor* is a *nutria*, or coypu, an aquatic rodent something on the order of a giant muskrat. That gap in our vocabulary was most embarrassing, but I have a plan to fight back. Does anyone know what sort of beast a "fossa" might be? The first reader to tell me about this will be mentioned in dispatches.

We were recently sent a questionnaire termed, "The National Gun Control Poll." It was very obscure in its attribution of origins, but a little research discovered that it was sent out from a hostile group in England, of all places. The question was as follows: "Would you like to see more effective gun control laws?" An interesting question, certainly. Now then, just what is a "more effective gun control law"? What is an effective

gun control law? We have always held that gun control was hitting with your first shot, but we do not know of any laws about that. Apparently the pollster in this case assumed that his addressees were incapable of thinking about the question. He may be right, but I hope not. There are those who would like to think that the polls, rather than the people, determine the law. It seems probable at this time that it would be a good idea to do away with the polls and let the voters rule at the ballot box.

Curious how "liberal" journalists cannot recount history without apologizing for it. I have never been able to understand the motive behind apologizing for something somebody else did. Now we see some church group or other attempting to apologize to the Arabs for the Crusades. Maybe we should ask the Arabs to apologize for the Conquest of Spain. Obviously a good many people have too little to do.

Do you know what a "DGT" is? That is a general officer, or an admiral, who has never heard a shot fired in anger. It stands for Didn't Go There. This courtesy of Orange Gunsite graduate and naval historian Barrett Tillman.

At Whittington we were treated to a presentation by Colonel Bob Brown of SOF on the subject of his recent visit to the Balkans. He observed that hatred is the permanent social mood of the Balkans, as it always has been. To ask for those people to live together in peace is to bay at the moon. As to the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army), it appears to be a mixed group composed partially of idealistic nationalists and old fashioned Balkan brigands. Bob did not venture to estimate the proportion, but he suggested that 50-50 might be about right.

We continue to learn how much we do not know about this iron and steel business. The readers of this paper continue to instruct me, and I am grateful for that. Consider the following input:

"Iron is like the nearly useless boy who can grow into a productive man of steel only if he first returns to the furnace and rids himself of harmful contaminants, acquires the properly proportioned elements of strength, and is refined by disciplined application of pressure, heat and work." (This from Brian Bennett.)

It appears that first one must get the carbon out of raw iron, and then put it back in, in proper amounts.

The interesting thing about this is how it was discovered. Steel making was understood, at least partially, by the end of the Bronze Age, some three thousand years ago, but that was before anybody knew anything about chemistry. The history of metallurgy must be pretty fascinating, and I intend to go into it in some detail as soon as I get the chance.

As the Steyr Scout proliferates in our shooting schools, we are obliged to come up with some new teaching techniques. For example, the command "Ground arms!" now directs the firing line to open bolts, deploy bipods, and place the rifles on the firing line muzzle downrange, thus facilitating the scoring and pasting of targets.

I find it amusing that some people feel that firearms should not be called "weapons." There is this organization called the "Violence Policy Center." Its spokesman is one Josh Sugarman. He seems to feel that weapons, per se, are bad. We wish we could introduce Mr. Sugarman to President George Washington, who told us long ago that weapons are "Liberty's teeth." An armed society is a polite society, to quote Robert Heinlein. An armed populace cannot be tyrannized. This is no news to us, but apparently it is not known to the "Violence Policy Center." In what is apparently an official statement, the VPC states, "There is a very serious political purpose behind this, and that is to legitimize the civilian ownership of lethal firearms, which are normally kept only for battlefields and SWAT teams." Hmmm! Battlefields and SWAT teams. These people, the VPC, further state that "...practical shooting is an effort by the gun industry and the gun lobby to

entice kids and help create a youth gun culture." A youth gun culture is exactly what we need! If we do not create it, we stand to go the way of the British and the Australians into legally imposed impotence.

If I were an English teacher I would address this matter of the split infinitive. As far as I know there is no rule against it, but it is a form of bad manners, rather like picking one's nose. Go ahead and split your infinitive, if you must, but do not expect to be applauded.

We now have 24 steel reaction targets at the rifle walk at Whittington (at \$300 apiece). These targets are for purchase by the faithful and will be labeled with the name of the donor. However, since these targets are out and around in the countryside, not many people will see those names. We, therefore, are going to prepare a plaque for the interior of the house at the rifle walk and list the names of target donors thereon. That is a nifty little house they have constructed at the rifle walk, and it now needs floor coverings, furniture and wall decorations. It is a little stuffy in mid-summer, but one can always sit outside, and it should be cozy and comfortable in the wintertime. The range is called the "Jeff and Janelle Cooper Rifle Walk" on the road signs, and the house is called "Jeff's Place." This is all very friendly and comforting. If you wish to use the facility when it is not actually being used for training, simply call the front office at Whittington and arrange an appointment. (Bring your own rifle and ammunition.)

The political situation continues to deteriorate in South Africa as the country continues to spiral downward toward a Third World dictatorship. Do not put off that dream hunt. Go now if you can possibly arrange it.

When we first visited South Africa over 20 years ago, the brand new five-star Carlton Hotel was the showplace of Johannesburg. Its main lobby was covered with carpeting about 3-inches deep. All the girls working on the floor went barefoot, and each one was required to sport bright golden-blond hair. This was a truly luxurious atmosphere.

Now, to our dismay, we discover that the Carlton has been closed due to the street crime situation in downtown Jo'burg. Thus we welcome the millennium!

We find it hard to believe, but we recently got a telephone call from London asking us how to spell Beretta. I guess the Brits have gone so far down the line that they now feel they must consult a foreign expert even to discuss the name of a firearms manufacturer.

We note from perusing the gun magazines that a great many people do not understand the technique of the telescope sight. This applies mostly to the rapid use of the weapon, since even the ignorant can use a telescope from a bench rest. The correct system requires the mounting of the piece so that when the butt hits the shoulder and the cheek hits the comb, the eye is automatically in line with the optical axis of the instrument. You do not hunt around, you practice until when you mount the piece with both eyes shut, you open them to find yourself right on target. This calls for a little practice, but it is not mysterious nor difficult. When you understand it, you can hit that flying clay bird, or, more dramatically, the wishbone of that charging leopard. It is true that snaphooting is the exception rather than the rule in the field, but it is very comforting, as with a seat belt or a life jacket. You do not need it often, but when you need it, you really need it.

The new regime in Africa has now passed a law to the effect that you cannot leave your rifle with your professional hunter without elaborate red tape in both the US and Africa. There is no good reason for this, of course – it is pure spite. One of the nice things a satisfied client could do previously was to leave his piece with his PH as a gesture of appreciation. The life of a PH is hard. Apparently the new revolutionary government simply wants to make it harder.

In a recent news report some correspondent from the other side suggested that something should be done

about the sale of "high capacity ammunition." I guess he was referring to that new 300 Remington "Ultra Magnum".

I am not usually enthusiastic about Russian ideas, but the people at Baikal have now come up with something which actually fills a niche. They have produced a "bug shooter," which is a BB gun which looks exactly like a Makarov pocket pistol. It shoots BBs using a CO₂ cylinder as propellant. For people who are troubled with scorpions, centipedes, wooly worms, and such, this should be just the ticket. (I once resorted to my 1911 for wasp defense in a quonset hut on Saipan, but those were different times, and that was a different place.)

Family member Bill O'Connor reports that he was hassled recently at the Philadelphia Airport because his pocketknife had a serrated edge. Apparently carrying a knife with a serrated edge is politically incorrect in *the City of Brotherly Love*. The aparatchik at the gate promised to mail the knife to him at a later date, but as you might suppose it has not showed up yet. Somehow it appears quaint to attempt to hijack an airliner with a pocketknife, but then a lot of things appear quaint in *the Age of the Wimp*.

Just as a good many people illustrated in the magazines do not understand the proper use of the telescope, a good many more do not understand the use of the shooting sling. I trust that all the faithful understand fully that a rifle sling is more than simply a carrying strap. The loop sling, properly used, increases your hitability in slow-fire situations by about 33 percent – or such is my experience. I was taught it in high school ROTC and benefited from it on half-a-dozen big game hunts. I assume that all *family members* understand fully about the shooting sling. I guess that makes us a somewhat exclusive club.

I have needled the factory now a couple of times about the forthcoming 376 Steyr cartridge, so far without results. I have shot it, and I like it, but where is it? Stay tuned.

We learn that three Americans met with bush disaster just last month in Africa.

In the first instance, the sportsman thought to dangle his arm over the side of a moco-ro on Lake Kariba. Something grabbed it. The owner is missing and presumed dead.

In the second instance, a female hunter took the notion to take a pleasant evening walk outside the compound, despite being told vigorously that she was not to do this. She was taken by a hyena, but at last report, she was expected to live, though terribly disfigured. As you know, the hyena goes for the face. (Do we detect an element of feisty feminism here? Or the basic lack of discipline of the flower children?)

Third case was a wounded leopard followed into high grass in a column of three, tracker in front, PH in the middle, client in the rear. The leopard hit from astern. Here again, the sportsman is expected to live.

As our late good friend Peter Capstick said, "In Africa, everything bites."

Not long ago some citizen was busted for carrying a concealed weapon in Arizona because he was carrying it on the side away from the cop. I do not think they can make that stick, but it is interesting that they should try.

Back in *the Dark Ages* when I was a mere lad, the top African trophies were called "The Big Four." These were elephant, buffalo, rhino, and lion. In the past decade or so people have been adding the leopard to this list, and referring to it as "The Big Five." I think this is a mistake. The leopard is certainly scratchy, but he is not big. The rhino is big, but besides being essentially unavailable today, he is too dimwitted to be dangerous. Personally I would place elephant, lion and buffalo in "The Big Three" and rhino, hippo and leopard in the second tier. The hippo is underrated as a trophy, but if he is easy in the water, he is a serious problem on land. You would not want his head mounted on the wall of your living room, but neither would you want to be bitten in half if you failed to stop his charge.

Recent cheerful accounts from the bushveld tell of an American high school graduate who got a brand new Steyr Scout for her birthday. She had most of her graduation pictures taken featuring the rifle, and then she went to Africa and secured four one-shot stops in a row. Now there is a rifle chick of consequence!

As you may know, Randy Garrett of Chehalis, Washington, has been making up what may be called "Plus P" loads for the excellent 45-70 cartridge for over ten years. They are about ideal for the great bears, and for lions, and they complement Jim West's "Co-pilot" to perfection.

Now Randy has introduced a new 530-grain, super hardcast, "hammerhead" bullet, to be started at 1550f/s for a Taylor KO rating of 54. It is designed to shoot clear through a buffalo at "charging range."

Contact Randy Garrett, Garrett Cartridges, Inc., at Box 178, Chehalis, Washington, 98532.

"Good judgement comes from experience. Most experience comes from bad judgement."

via Bill O'Connor

If you are curious about the veracity of the profusion of rumors of organizational changes at Gunsite, we can only paraphrase Winston Churchill: "They are all true, or they ought to be, and more and better besides."

The more I work with rifles, the less I am concerned about the speed of the second shot. Certainly a self-loading rifle offers you that second shot faster than any mechanically operated repeater, but just how important is this? When a rifle of any considerable power fires, it recoils, moving rearward and upward, together with the shooter. On that rearward motion, a skilled rifleman opens the bolt, ejecting the empty. As the rifle is brought back onto target, he closes the bolt, placing a new cartridge in the chamber. If he does this properly, his second shot, if it is well aimed, is so little slower than that offered by a self-loader that it is hard to measure and probably does not matter. The straight-pull is quicker than the bolt-action, as is the lever, but I cannot hypothesize a scenario in which that might count. When I pulled off that double on buffalo some years ago in Tamafuta, both my companions opined that it sounded as if I were using a self-loader – and that with the long action of the ZKK 602. This is not to boast, but simply to point out that proper bolt work can be put to good advantage, assuming that a second shot is needed. On the lion I shot four times, but I need not have, as the beast was terminated with the first shot. All the experts, including our good friend Ross Seyfried, told me that with a lion you keep shooting, no matter what you think you did with your first round. So I did. But a self-loading rifle would have made no difference. This matter was called to my attention in connection with the slick action of the Blaser R93. The 93 is a superb weapon, but among its various excellent features speed of the second shot rates about number six in importance. The best thing about the Blaser is its revolutionary trigger-action, which has no sear. And the second most important thing is the fact that you can turn it into a left-hander by simply slipping in a left-handed bolt. Yes, you can fire two well-aimed shots from the Blaser 93 a bit more quickly than you can with any turn-bolt rifle, but let us not be bemused by PII (preoccupation with inconsequential increments).

Our good friend Hans Edelmaier of Salzburg has asked me to do a feature on the employment of the Spanish sword in the conquest of the New World. I look forward to this effort with pleasure. I know something about the sword, and something about the Spanish sword, and something about the conquest of the New World, having done a research paper on that subject in graduate school. So I will get to work and put this together just to see how it comes out in German.

We must avoid the error of thinking of people as members of groups rather than as individuals. This is a manifestation of mental laziness. It is called "groupthink" and it has been the curse of the twentieth century, and long before.

Meanwhile, keep your focus on that front sight, and surprise yourself when the hammer falls.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 10

September, 1999

Summerset

Corn and tomatoes! Corn only minutes off the stalk and tomatoes fresh out of the garden certainly rank high among God's blessings. It is sobering to realize that the human race got along without either of those until well up into the Renaissance, but then we got along without paper and electricity, and even Steyr Scouts as well. Boggles the mind!

As the argument about the meaning of the Second Amendment continues, one is at a loss to determine whether we are dealing here with simple stupidity or willful wickedness. Certainly "the right of the people to keep and bear arms" cannot be simply misunderstood. Our adversaries suggest that "the people" does not really mean the people, but rather the sovereign states. It is hard to take such ninnyhammers seriously, but they are there, and they are noisy, and they must be taken seriously. When they try to connect a nasty school shooting to constitutional law, they not only do not make sense, but they know they do not make sense. Gives me to ponder about the utility of the democratic process. As I recall, Socrates wondered about that too, but I was much younger then, and I might have misunderstood what he said.

I thank the readership most profoundly for the enormous amount of help I have been given in this matter of steel fabrication. I now have enough reference material on the subject to conduct an upper division college course upon it. Clearly, civilization depends upon steel. Without it we would still be in the Bronze Age. That proposition may have its points, but it is hardly an option at this late date.

For those who came in late, "steel" is a compound of iron and carbon. The carbon component is quite small, on the order of half of one percent, but without it, we do not have a useful substance. Pure iron is not found in metallic form in nature, and therein lies the problem. Whatever form it does assume must be "de-carbonized" and then "re-carbonized" in the proper proportions. This calls for huge effort, and additionally, enormous amounts of fuel – either firewood or coal. This accounts for the deforestation of the Mediterranean littoral over the past three thousand years.

Thus the metallurgy of iron is a subject that we should all know more about. So let's get at it!

It appears that these "photo safaris" are giving African boondocking a bad name. The people who go on African hunts with rifle rather than camera are much more apt to know how to conduct themselves in the woods. The camera types are too often totally innocent off the pavement, and their outfitters are often not truly qualified to handle babes in the bush. An outstanding number of these over-civilized tenderfeet are simply unwilling to accept the existence of danger and even when it is explained to them they do not believe it. The fact remains, however, that the woods are dangerous. The mountains are dangerous. The sea is dangerous. Fire is dangerous, and even love is dangerous. Danger is the spice of life, but you cannot enjoy it unless you use the proper recipe. Too much spice may well spoil the broth. We avoid this by studying the problem, but study is hard work, and while you can lead a fool to wisdom, you cannot make him think.

So we have mishaps, and when we have mishaps certain kinds of people wring their hands and call upon *Big Brother* to make everything safe.

Hunting (even the hunting of dangerous game) is no more dangerous than any other outdoor pastime, but firearms in the hands of fools can certainly make it so. We had a recent report back from Africa about a European group whose gunhandling was so dreadful that it forced the outfitter to remove all bolts of all rifles until the target for one hunter was clearly in view. It is simply that gunhandling is not a subject normally taught in academia, nor in the armed services. The wonder is not that we sometimes have deadly mishaps, but rather that we do not have more. Proper gunhandling is taught in the good private weaponry schools, but there are not many of those, and not all of them are good.

In recent rifle classes we have encountered some sighting problems, one of which resulted in the loss of the telescope involved. Care should be taken to assure that all screws on your rifle are tight before you take to the bushes or the range. This is a precaution which goes along with peering through the barrel and sharpening your knife. "Tighten your screws, young man!" should be a standard command before saddling up.

The family should all note the dates 15, 16, and 17 October for this year's *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial*, at Whittington Center in New Mexico.

At time of writing, Lon Horiuchi not only walks free, but continues on the public payroll. John Hinkley walks the streets on probation, and while we know absolutely that Vince Foster did not commit suicide, we still do not know who killed him or who ordered it. I do not suppose there is anything we can do about that, but I just thought I would call it to your attention.

"The crow sees.
The deer hears.
The bear smells."

This is one of those "old Indian sayings."
We acquired it from John Barsness.

In another step in the continued degeneration of the English language, we see that the Los Angeles Times, a widely read and presumably respectable public organ, has come up with a peculiar notion of the "compulsory volunteer." This is in connection with a proposal that some sort of "public service" effort be a requirement for a college degree. Each student would presumably be required to "volunteer" for some sort of punitive labor assignment. Certainly all sorts of things may be required of a college student in order to qualify him for a degree, but you cannot make him into a "compulsory volunteer" if you wish your speech to make sense.

Our favorite quotation of all comes from the General Motors Proving Ground in Michigan. To wit: "We've just got to get rid of this idea that people know what they're doing."

I guess it is a compliment to the Scout idea that various people are now producing imitation Scouts selling for a lower price. The problem here is that the fabricators of these devices do not seem to understand the principle of the Scout rifle. Certainly hanging a Harris bipod and a low-powered telescope on a Remington 7 does not make it a Scout. There are about 12 component features in the true Scout, and you are not going to get them at discounted rates.

This is not to say that you cannot make up an excellent "pseudo-scout" from components of your choice. You may create an excellent rifle this way, and I know of several examples personally, but you are skirting the issue, and you are probably spending more money than you should.

The African National Congress (ANC) commands a total majority in the South African parliament. It is

strongly, though not totally, Marxist in its political outlook. The only hope we may have for South Africa as a nation is the divisiveness of the ANC. It is composed of many factions, some of which are strongly opposed to one another. Thus it is unlikely for us to see a totally Stalinist regime in charge in the immediate future, but the situation is bleak indeed. Go while you still can!

You doubtless remember the Australian movie "Crocodile Dundee." It turns out that this film was based upon the personality and adventures of a real man, one Ron Ansell. He was fully as flamboyant a character as the protagonist in the film, living in the northern bush and never wearing shoes until adolescence – and rarely thereafter. Though he became a celebrity as a result of the movie, life did not go well for him, and now we hear of his death in a roadside shooting. It seems he took it upon himself to shoot a police officer and was thereupon shot and killed by the officer's companion. We have two newspaper accounts of the episode, but they tell us very little. I hope to hear more about this whole case from our friend Tim Lloyd, who is a constable up in Darwin and a member of the Gunsite family.

Since the introduction of the Steyr Scout we have heard considerable discussion about the relative merits of the fine reticle in the Leupold scope, as opposed to the coarse version. The difference is not great, but in our opinion the fine reticle is better for play on the range, and the coarse reticle is superior for serious work on living targets. As we have reported, we proposed a new and radical reticle system to both Kahles and Swarovski last spring. We have no information on progress as yet, but we have a couple of agents over there just at this time who may bring back news of some sort.

Note that Ashley Outdoors is now promoting an excellent ghost-ring sight system, as an after-market addition for those shooters who prefer iron sights to glass. In my opinion, there are many situations in which a telescope sight is not the answer, particularly including all hunting of dangerous game, and brush hunting in general. The regularly issued open iron sight now standard on most pieces is a pretty poor proposition, but a good ghost-ring, featuring a large aperture with a thin rim and a properly organized square front post, may well be superior to any glass sight under certain hunting conditions. It is fast. It is precise. Unlike telescope sights, it is not fragile. This is not a popular idea to sell to "the industry," the object of which is to sell stuff, but there is such a thing as an enlightened consumer, and it would be nice to provide for his needs too.

As everybody knows, horse racing is the sport of kings, and the Palio at Siena is beyond question the uttermost horse race. It apparently originated before the discovery of America, and has been run annually ever since, with certain pauses for wars, revolutions and natural disasters. It is run three times around the piazza of Siena, and this year our daughter Christy and our son-in-law Chick were present for the occasion. (As was Tony Blair, the current Prime Minister of Great Britain, to the fury of the British animal crackers.)

The entries are made by the craft guilds of the city, and competition is furious and sometimes uncouth. I had thought it run on cobblestones, but now I find that it is run on fill dirt packed in each year for the occasion. It is run bareback, and without protective armor. In order to insure parity of weaponcraft, the whips are issued to the riders just before the start. This year four horses finished out of ten entries, though one horse was without a rider. Three riders were hospitalized, but apparently without serious injury. One horse was slightly hurt.

As we previously reported, Brigitte Bardot wants the event banned on the grounds that occasionally the riders miss each other the hit the horses. I gather that she is unlikely to prevail in this proposal, since the Palio lies at the heart of the ancient traditions of Tuscany.

The foregoing material has nothing to do with guns or shooting, but we found it pretty fascinating and hope that you do too.

So now we see advertised a slimline Glock. Back in the good old days, we went to some trouble to slimline the 1911, producing the only significant improvement in that venerable arm. At Orange Gunsite we found that

25 percent of the men and 50 percent of the woman students were unable to get a really firm grip on the pistol, since the butt was just too big around for a small hand. Nobody in the industry noticed this until just now. It takes a long time for advanced thinking to catch on – witness the Steyr Scout.

Thomas Sowell is just about our favorite current political commentator. He is not exactly a paladin of the Second Amendment, but he understands the problem and is on the right side. In a recent episode he was stopped on the highway and the cop not only did not approach him for some 15 minutes, but waited until a backup car showed up with two extra policemen. It turns out that Dr. Sowell was listed in some central database as "registered gun owner," and this information, available by punching keys in the cop car, rendered him a dangerous proposition in the eyes of the arresting officer. Indeed, *Big Brother Is Watching You*, and the wonders of modern technology are at his instant disposal.

We note with amusement that this fellow who scared everybody to death with his movie "*Jaws*" has now been brainwashed by the bambiists into concluding that sharks do not eat people on purpose, but only by accident. Whoops, sorry about that!

Now the big news is that some sort of investigation may be conducted into the atrocity at Waco. Several people have made a point decrying the use of incendiary devices by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as the *BATmen*. Personally I am less concerned about incendiarism than I am about the matter of why the feds were there at all. The Koresh cult did not seem, at first glance, to be a federal matter. The great state of Texas could have handled that scene with far less hurrah, or so it seems from here.

Among the many traditions floating around amongst shooters is the one that maintains that accuracy can only be obtained with a long barrel. This idea originated when we used muzzle-loading rifles with open sights. To get a rear open sight far enough away from the eye to permit a crisp image, it is necessary to push it well out on the barrel. To match this, the barrel must go way out there in order to obtain optimum sight radius. Thus we saw the development of the enormously clumsy "Pennsylvania rifle," which generally stood taller than a man.

Today these conditions are no longer with us, and we find in the bench rest matches that 19 inches of barrel produces about as much accuracy as we can use. I remember in Okavango some time ago when my PH looked doubtfully at my Remington 660, and noting that the wildebeeste were quite some ways off, asked, "How accurate is that thing?" My answer was, "It's as accurate as I am."

Moral: "A long barrel may indeed give you greater sight radius, but that has nothing to do with intrinsic accuracy."

What ever happened to the "Titanium Taurus"? We saw it at the last SHOT Show and were much impressed. It looked good. It felt good, and as a glamour touch, it was made entirely of titanium, rather than partially so, as with the Smith & Wesson offerings. We put in for one in caliber 45 Colt, but as of now nothing has turned up. I think that there is still a place for the revolver in defensive pistolcraft. Our sporting activities with the Southwest Pistol League pretty well shot down the wheel-gun for serious competition, and then later for police work, but that may not have been an unmitigated blessing for a non-shooting household. A short, light, big bore wheel-gun has a definite place.

At our last rifle class, we logged our first ponytail on the range. I did not make an issue of that, but it certainly seems to me that wearing one's hair in a ponytail is an invitation to disaster. What better handhold can you offer your enemy?

I recently enjoyed a feature on hunting the leopard by colleague and family member Finn Aagaard. He struck a responsive cord when he said that he had never pressed trigger on a leopard and never intended to – because

the leopard is just too beautiful to shoot. I have felt exactly this way for a long time, but the notion apparently is rare amongst experienced hunters. Finn and I do not maintain that the leopard is a nice guy, being partial to domestic dogs and small children when he can get them, but this is an aesthetic issue rather than a moral one. Beauty resides in the eye of the beholder, and certainly many of the creatures we pursue in the wild may be considered beautiful, but the leopard is the standout. I do not object to friends and fellow shooters pursuing the leopard, if they so choose, but they will do it without me.

"When they needed a man to encourage the van
or to 'HARass' the foe from the rear,
or to storm a redoubt,
they would set up a shout
for Abdul Abulbul Amir."

If we wish to use this verb, let us pronounce it right, hey?

I have shot the rifle for a long time, having used it a bit even before I was introduced to it formally in high school ROTC, but there are plenty of things about rifle shooting that I still do not understand – one of which is "long shooting." I have talked to and read the works of a great many people who seem to be living in another world, because they do not live in the one that I see around me. The best shots that I know are pretty deadly at 200 yards, if they are not hurried too much. They can also do fairly well at three, under the right conditions, but these four-, five- and six-hundred yard boys never seem to show up when the matter can be tested. A good man, using excellent equipment under ideal conditions, can center the head of a man-sized target at 400 yards with his first shot – some of the time – but I have never known anyone who can do that at 500 on demand without preparation. I just do not meet the right people.

Daughters Parry and Lindy are at this point frolicking in the Alps in pursuit of the Gams (chamois). They had no need to bring any rifles through customs, since their hosts at Steyr Mannlicher just happen to have a couple of Scouts on hand. The 308 is indeed a bit much for that little mountain goat, but it is better to be overgunned than undergunned, I heard somebody say.

It has been suggested that I preach for power in pistol cartridges, but not in rifles. This is true, and my reason is that the pistol is a conceptually defensive instrument, while the rifle is not. The purpose of the pistol is to stop a fight that somebody else has started, almost always at very short range. This calls for the most power that the shooter can control so as to save his life, under conditions where there is no time for finesse. But with the rifle, on the other hand, one chooses his target and sets his conditions. Field rifle shooting is almost always slow fire, permitting perfect placement of the shot if the shooter is in control of his nerves. Under these circumstances, precise placement is more significant than brute strength.

Thus it is that for personal defense you want a large cross-sectional area of impact and as much mass as can be comfortably stuffed into the load. For field shooting, on the other hand, while you do not need excessive power, you do need delicacy of delivery, which is more a psychological than a mechanical consideration.

(Using power to flatten trajectory in a field rifle is, in my opinion, unproductive. Trajectories of all modern rifle cartridges are so flat that bullet drop at any range is far less significant than the holding ability of the shooter.)

We now hear that there is a faction in France which suggests putting girls into the French Foreign Legion – for crying out loud! Certainly I never thought it would come to this!

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 11

October, 1999

Hunting Season

Now is the grand time. October is the finest month, and Autumn is the finest season. How nice that they coincide! Now is the time for all the faithful to re-read "*Meditations on Hunting*" by José Ortega y Gasset. It is a work that needs to be re-read once a year, and now is the best time. About every third line in "*Meditations*" deserves quoting. If you have any friends who dislike hunters and hunting, Ortega provides you with a perfect ammunition for return fire. Hunters know and understand things that non-hunters do not, and this fills the latter with envy and malice. As Sheridan put it, "There is no passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy." We may be sorry for these poor people, but we cannot let that bother us. "So hear the call! Good hunting all, who heed the jungle law!"

This year's *Gunsite Reunion and Theodore Roosevelt Memorial* is also upon us (15–17 October). We assume you have made your reservations, but if not, you may make them at the front office at the Whittington Shooting Center in New Mexico (505–445–3615).

Daughters Parry and Lindy jumped the gun somewhat at the invitation of Steyr Mannlicher in Austria. They scrambled into the Alps to harass the Gams (chamois) and each took a nice trophy. The hunting thereabouts is strange, since, while the animals live way above timberline, they are not particularly wary. Getting up to them calls for some hard hiking, but once you are up there the beasts are not very shy. Despite the professional hunter's insistence that there would be long shots involved, the two animals were taken at 120 and 170 paces, respectively. The occasion is all very ceremonial, replete with all the Waidmanns Sprache. We can sincerely thank the management at Steyr Mannlicher AG.

The ladies also took the opportunity to hike the Eiger trail along the base of the terrible precipice. (It is said that any bodies you find there you may keep.)

As you doubtless know by now, the Gunsite Training Center has been sold, and is now to be known as The Gunsite Academy. The new owner announces that he wishes to restore the traditions and prestige of Orange Gunsite, which is certainly a worthy objective. There is much work to be done to repair the decay which was allowed to set in during the 7-year excommunication. But where there is a will there is a way, and we hope for a bright future. Classes are continuing at this time, but not under my supervision, and no certification granted by The Gunsite Academy will bear my signature of approval until all matters of faculty, doctrine and policy have been put in place.

When I was a lad a classmate of mine in junior high was asked to name the four seasons. His answer was, "Trout Season, Duck Season, Deer Season, and Christmas." Now there was a lad who was being raised right!

At the last class at Whittington we had a chance to examine the reflector rifle sight, which seems to have much going for it. It seems best suited to the battle carbine, and how it will stand up in the hunting field remains to be seen. I intend to install one on my G91, which is no sort of hunting rifle, but I can use it on the Whittington Rifle Walk and draw some preliminary conclusions.

Bumper sticker:

"My child is alive because a good man with a gun was on the spot."

Recent reports from Mozambique suggest that while there are plenty of buffalo there, this is not a good place to hunt them. The forest is so thick that all the hunter can see is a fleeting patch of black hide, which cannot be analyzed nor evaluated. Shooting at what you cannot properly identify, at a range of 10 paces, can become pretty exciting, but it would seem to be an acquired taste.

The 376 "Dragoon" from Steyr is now available, but it has fallen into peculiar paths and deserves a certain amount of reservation. First, the company insists upon calling it a Scout, which it is not. Second, Steve Hornady was conned into producing a 225-grain load, which is unsuitable for a weapon of this type. This piece is not a deer gun, being suitable for targets of a thousand pounds and up. When I acquired one of the very first 375s from Winchester (in 1937!) I found out right away that a 235-grain bullet in this caliber is too short, both for exterior and impact ballistics. A 225 should prove just slightly worse. I was astonished to find that the Dragoon weighs exactly the same as the Scout, at 7lbs on the nose with telescope in place. As you might suppose, a 7lbs 375 is a bit on the brisk side and not for the recoil shy. I have made a date with Clint Smith in Texas to do a bison between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The new 376 Steyr cartridge should prove just about ideal for the task – using the 270-grain bullet.

It seems usual at this time to reopen the question about why men fight. *Family member* Frankie Lou Nicholson from Nebraska says, "I don't know why men fight, but I'm sure glad that the right men want to."

At the recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the NRA in Arlington, the first item on the agenda was the granting of a second term as President to Charlton Heston. While there is a faction which holds that Mr. Heston's politics are impure, he has proved to be the greatest single asset that the association has had in memory. He is a truly magnificent orator, and his words have changed the minds of people deemed to be hitherto unreachable. In a sense he resembles Ronald Reagan in being a convert who came to see the light. Converts, like St. Paul, are often more convinced ideologues than those born and raised in the true faith.

"Nobody is completely worthless. He can always serve as a bad example." That seems to have been said about Bill Clinton, but I cannot find out by whom.

We find it perplexing that there are people who do not realize that a right may be neither granted nor withdrawn by the State. If the Bill of Rights were repealed, the right to keep and bear arms would still exist, since it was to defend that right that the Constitution was established. (See the Declaration of Independence.) Thus the state may destroy me, but it may not rescind my right to self-defense. This all seems pretty clear, but frequently I find people who do not understand it.

And now Canada has gone ghastly. A law is now in place effectively to disarm the Canadians, as happened in England and Australia. Regardless of the best efforts of our enemies in Congress, the United States remains the last best hope of Earth. Those other people are going to do their very best to destroy us in the months between now and the next election. We must remember that this is the most serious trouble that our liberties have been threatened with since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. They are going to work very hard. We must work even harder. Regardless of how senseless hoplophobia may be, it exists, and, being a true phobia, it does not respond to reasoned argument. We must defeat it by exposing it as a psychopathic threat to our cultural liberties. When we force our adversaries to the wall and make them admit that they do not care about crime or child welfare or "animal rights," but just hate us because we are morally better off than they are, we can pick up votes, and votes are what we must have.

In this connection, I proposed at the recent board meeting of the National Rifle Association of America that we post signs at all border crossings into Mexico and Canada warning travelers that they are leaving the protection of the Bill of Rights, and we must make it clear that those signs are the work of the NRA, which is far the most powerful defender of liberty in the world.

George Orwell predicted the future flowering of thought control in his book "1984". We are well past that date now and things did not turn out exactly as he predicted, but they are well on their way. As of right now, in the English-speaking world, you are not only told what you must think and what you must not think, but you also may be subjected to economic and social discipline if you think the wrong thoughts. That is not what the founders of this country had in mind, nor Voltaire in his ringing claim that "I disagree entirely with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

We were delighted recently with an anecdote reported to us by family member Sam Mantooth. It seems that a Finnish veteran of the Russian war was being interviewed about his experiences of those days.

Q: "You saw a lot of infantry action?"

A: "Much."

Q: "Did you ever engage in a fire fight?"

A: "Often."

Q: "Did you ever have occasion to shoot at a human being?"

A: "Yes, several times."

Q: "Did you find this difficult?"

A: "Yes. You see they tended to duck, to get behind cover, and to run in zigzag."

I note with some annoyance that there are people who will claim they are Gunsite graduates when they are merely Grey Gunsite graduates. In my view, only Orange Gunsite credentials mean anything.

Note that the stock length on the Steyr Scout is adjustable. This is thought by some to be a good thing, but not by me. To get the best performance out of your Scout you should remove all those spacers and shoot it at its shortest length. The Scout is essentially a compact weapon, and should not be an inch longer at the muzzle or the butt than absolutely necessary.

Anyone can make up any doctrine he chooses as he goes along, but I wish people would not attribute changes to me without my approval. For example, there is no such thing as "Condition Black." In Condition Red you have crossed the final barrier. The decision to shoot has been made and there is nothing to be added to that. In all doctrinary matters it is essential to keep things as simple as possible. The four colors of white, yellow, orange, and red cover your mind-set. You can neither add nor subtract from those four conditions without losing a part of the exercise.

As we learned many years ago, happiness may never be pursued as an end to itself, because happiness is the by-product of accomplishment. That may be the reason why we see no element of happiness on the faces of people in the casinos of Las Vegas and Reno. Nobody has accomplished anything, and nobody is likely to. Hitting a jackpot may be fun, but you did nothing to achieve it, and it cannot bring you happiness.

Andy Garrett of Oregon has issued a couple of hot new loads for his large-caliber ammunition. As you doubtless know, Andy specializes in homogeneous hard lead, flat-point bullets. He now makes up a new load for the 44 Magnum, which should certainly serve the purposes of those who wish to use a handgun for bear defense. Additionally he puts out a new African load for the 45-70, starting a 530-grain bullet which will

shoot right through a buffalo from side-to-side. It should be noted that the new heavy pistol bullet is only suitable for the Ruger Red Hawk and Super Red Hawk, and for Marlin rifles. Do not use it in your M29, and the 530 "Sledge-hammer" is not to be used in a trap-door Springfield. The 45-70 is a superb cartridge for large animals at short- to medium-range, and it is probably the perfect load for the bear or lion guide.

In a recent issue, we pointed out that we had never heard of a python swallowing a human being. Now it turns out that a couple of zoologists have reported to us that this occurrence, though extremely rare, is not entirely unheard of. By choice, the constrictor always engulfs the head first, and if he can get his mouth down over the face of the victim, death by suffocation is quick. The problem is getting the mouth parts over the shoulders, and this usually ruins the whole enterprise. But in some cases involving small, underfed, under-aged victims, the shoulders may be crushed in upon themselves sufficiently to permit engulfment. Unlikely, but not impossible.

If we think the schools (and the parents) in the United States are bad, consider the following: Recently a fighter pilot veteran who had fought in the Battle of Britain was invited to make a presentation on the subject to a high school audience. You may not believe this, but it is reported that nobody in the audience had ever heard of the Battle of Britain, and neither had the teacher. Obviously we have schools on both sides of the water, but I sure do not know what people do in them.

There are many grand experiences available to us in life, and, of course, their grandeur depends in large measure upon the personality of the individual. If I were to make up a list of the top ten, I would certainly list being completely alone in the wilderness as the sun sets. As the light dims and goes out, you become clearly aware of your significance as a human being. It is a pity that this profound experience is not at all common.

We are informed again that piracy is up in Southeast Asia. This has always been a good place for piracy, and the Indonesians take naturally to it as a profession. The situation was better in the 19th century, however, because then you were permitted by whatever government was in charge to fight back. Today the authorities take a very dim view of your attempting to arm yourself properly.

Must we say it again?

"Never do your enemy a minor injury."

Machiavelli

I have been studying this matter of personal combat for many decades, and I have almost never run across a case in which outstanding marksmanship was influential in the conflict. There was that case of Bill Hickok at Independence (74 yards), but it was very exceptional. Ordinarily lethal confrontations take place from arm's length to across the table, at distances at which the quality of marksmanship is almost irrelevant. There may be more to it than that, however. In a recent discussion with family member Mike Waidelich, he pointed out that confidence in one's ability to put his shot exactly where he wants it, under all considerations of stress and time, is a powerful factor in proper mind-set. You may not have to shoot like a combat master in order to stay alive, but knowing that you can powerfully eases the mind. On three occasions in my own experience in which it appeared that I would have to shoot, I was greatly soothed by the fact that I knew what I could do, and that if my adversary played it wrong, he would have no chance at all. If it had been necessary for me to shoot I believe that I would have shot the better for this knowledge. Thus it is possible that good shooting actually does win fights – if not directly, then indirectly.

In re-reading "*Pondoro*" (John Taylor), I discover that he was a strong advocate of what I have come to call the "ghost-ring," though he did not call it that. Both he and Bell emphasize the speed and precision afforded by a large aperture with a thin rim. These two men were not congenial, but they reached the same conclusion.

I believe it was I who first used the term ghost-ring to emphasize the fact that the rear aperture vanishes when you look through it rather than at it. However that may be, it works.

I was recently shown by Shooting Master Louis Awerbuck a 12-gauge short cartridge, which is just about 1½" long. Why a short? To permit more rounds in the magazine. I do not know if a fight is ever going to be influenced by the number of rounds in a shotgun magazine. If you have to use a shotgun in a fight you are unlikely to use it more than a couple of times. Having ten rounds available in the tube may make you feel good, but only if you are a bad shot.

There are now six members of the "Fossa Society," being those correspondents who have written in to enlarge my knowledge of the fossa. The last correspondent was the National Geographic Society, which did not tell me exactly what animal they were talking about (no Latin name was forthcoming), but did mention whatever it was it weighed about 25lbs. This is quite a bit larger than the little striped variety which has been extracted from a couple of encyclopedias. It seems that nobody really knows what a fossa is. (It is definitely not a civet, which some people believe.) Room for enlightenment here.

People keep telling me that the Steyr Scout is "too expensive." Now, just what does that mean? If it means that you have not got the price in your wallet, that is clear, but obviously the issue is relative. An object may only be considered too expensive if you can get something just as good for less money. A Ferrari is too expensive if you think that a Porsche is just as good. As of now, you cannot get a rifle just as good as a Steyr Scout for any price, and certainly not for less. So I do not know what the question is. If you want a cheap rifle, there are plenty of those in hardware stores. If you want a Steyr Scout, with all of its advantages, you will pay the price and never feel that it is too expensive.

A recent buffalo pounding is reported from Zululand. All I have is a newspaper account, which leaves much unsaid, but it appears the subject was not a hunter, but rather a farmer mending a fence in conjunction with a working party. The report says the man heard the buffalo approaching, and had time to run and climb a tree, whereupon the buff butted him out of the tree and proceeded to squash him severely. His workmen are said to have "driven the buffalo off" and the victim reached the hospital alive, though barely.

If this story is true, it is the second case that I know of in which a man survived a buffalo pounding. But stranger than that it would seem that here we have a case of an unprovoked charge. That is very uncharacteristic. Possibly the buff had a leg festering from a wire snare, but how did the man have time to climb a tree while this buff was in full charge? We await details.

We often hear of war described as if it were some kind of impersonal affliction, such as the Black Plague or famine. The fact is that war is not something that just happens, it is something that people make happen, and they make it happen for reasons. As Clausewitz said, war is the continuation of politics by other means. Exactly. War is neither a hurricane nor a flood. It is, on the contrary, the cutting edge of ideology.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 12

November, 1999

Thanksgiving

If we wish to lead a good life, we should count our blessings continuously. But in this country, we set a day aside decreed by George Washington in order to give proper thanks for the blessings of liberty bequeathed to us by those extraordinary men who were not afraid to put their lives on the line for the cause. It seems clear that our liberties are more endangered at the turn of the XXI century than they were two hundred years ago. It is tragic to note that large numbers of American citizens are deeply uninterested in liberty, which is the thing most worthy of all for fighting for. The socialist promises security in return for the surrender of an increasing portion of liberty. As Franklin put it, the coward deserves neither.

I ask myself this question frequently, and ponder about whether I am worthy of my ancestors. Whenever I quail at the thought of the Left triumphant, I try to give myself a moral shot in the arm by reading the inspiring words of those "Dead White Males."

As of now, we still have a firm hold on the legal structure of our liberties, which is, of course, The Bill of Rights of the US Constitution. The people in Washington frequently find this annoying, as well they should. The Constitution was specifically designed to annoy the central government. It is critical, however, that the people, and particularly our legislators, understand this. As it is proclaimed at the Alamo Monument, "Freedom isn't free!" There is a price, and historically that price has been paid more often in blood than in cash. This idea is frequently labeled "extremist" by the Left, and it may indeed be so, but this nation was founded by extremists, and what we may be thankful for at this Thanksgiving holiday is the fact that extremists made this country "the last, best hope of earth."

We hope that you are enjoying a notable hunting season. May all that wild meat in your freezer serve to keep you healthy, happy, and grateful for the good things in life!

The change-over in policies here at Gunsite proceeds with appropriate deliberation. One cannot undo seven years of degeneration by a mere stroke of the pen. I wish I could provide you with a quick and simple analysis of the local scene, but I cannot do that at this time. The best thing we can say right now is that the previous owner is gone completely, and that is cause for rejoicing.

We have sometimes felt that a garbage-mouth is evidence of a paltry vocabulary. Some recent social observers, however, have said that this use of unimaginative obscenity in speech and writing is simply a function of conformity – doing what everybody else is doing. When children are properly raised they eschew conformity. Legend has it that when Alexander of Macedon was a boy, he never did anything that all the other boys did as a matter of principle. Peer pressure should be spat upon at an early age – by both mothers and fathers.

Reports of successes with the Steyr Scout keep right on pouring in. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the weapon is a triumph of design. It will apparently take some time for the press to find out about the Scout, but gun writers as a group tend to be set in their ways, and it will take a lot of field work, well away from both the office desk and the bench rest, to establish across the board what is obvious to those of us now on the inside.

In the 376 version, the situation is not so clear. I have been asked politely by the factory not to refer to the weapon as a "Dragoon," but then the piece in my possession has the word "Dragoon" stamped clearly and brightly on the receiver. This 376 Steyr cartridge is a compact bruiser and not a piece for the faint of heart. Magnum ballistics in a 7–pound rifle introduce certain stress problems which were difficult to anticipate. The tendency for the butt magazine well to flex open on recoil was unexpected – at least by me. If you mount the butt properly into your shoulder and take the thrust from midpoint to the heel, all is well. If, on the other hand, you mount the piece too high and take the thrust with the toe, you may drop the magazine out.

The 376 ammunition may be something of a problem for some time to come. It is important to remember that this cartridge is not for deer. The Dragoon, or whatever you call it, is absolutely not a deer gun. The 308 is a deer cartridge, but the 376, while it will certainly kill a deer, is an exaggeration for such purposes. Unless your proposed target weighs a thousand pounds or more, you are far better off with the original 308.

(It has been suggested that we advertise the new piece as "No gun for a lady." This may sell 300 examples within the week.)

When our good friend and colleague Bob Brown was recently asked his age in the course of an interview, his reply was, "I am so old that I can remember when the Kennedys killed their women one at a time."

I guess it is not surprising that military heroic reputation is largely a function of publicity. Everybody knows who Alvin York was because Theodore Roosevelt wrote him up in fine style. Very few know of Sam Woodfill, who pulled off a very similar individual feat within a week of York's act, and also received the Medal of Honor. Likewise, everybody knows of Carlos Hathcock's achievements as a sniper in Vietnam, but very few know of Charles Mawhinney, who was also a sniper in Vietnam and ran up a slightly higher score than Hathcock (103 to 93). Hathcock had a book written about him, but Mawhinney did not. It is wrong to be competitive in these matters. Both of these Marines did splendid jobs, and the one does not rate precedence over the other. It is just to point out that you are a hero only if people say you are. If you do not get the notices, you do not lead the parade.

An interesting sidelight on Mawhinney has to do with remounting his sight. When he took some leave, he left explicit instructions that no one was to mess with the zero on his rifle. When he went back to duty, he discovered his instructions had been disregarded and proceeded to miss on his first two shots. Moral: "When you get a good zero, leave it alone." I thought everybody knew that, but obviously I was wrong.

To the *family* we recommend "*Understanding Firearm Ballistics*" by

Robert A. Rinker, Mulberry House Publishing, Apache Junction, Arizona, 85217.

A "busybody war" is one which is fought in order to straighten out the morals, ethics, practices or religion of another group of people. Defensive wars are morally justified, and we can even put down reasons for wars of conquest, but "nanny wars" are disgusting. The American Civil War is an example of one, as is the Boer War in South Africa. In both these cases, the more powerful side fought basically for the purpose of changing the lifestyle of the other. Losers fight well in these busybody wars, as morally they should. What the invader thinks when he attacks to make sure that "those other people" part their hair on the right side is not always easy to discover.

("Charge! Get in there and give it your best to make sure these creeps clean up their act!" Men rarely choose to die for reasons like that.)

I should not brag about it but I cannot resist this: A correspondent recently told me that when he discovered some of my writings he sought to amass the entire series of works on the grounds that "truth is addictive." Gee wheez, wow!

Neighbor and colleague Colonel Bob Young recently dug up a curious piece of professional history that certainly came as a surprise to me. It turns out that the 4th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Gale, was dismissed from the service by a general court martial for what must be seen as generally disreputable behavior. Apparently he was a drunk and a roughneck and a dedicated lowbrow who did not conduct himself as an officer and a gentleman, openly frequenting brothels and generally helling around. On one occasion before he was commandant, Gale took offense when one of his Marines was clapped in irons by a naval officer without consulting Gale. Waiting until both officers were on liberty, Gale called out the naval officer and killed him. Anthony Gale is the only Marine commandant of whom we do not have a portrait in Washington. It seems he was a little too much of an "Old Marine" even for the "Old Corps."

As an amateur of semantics, I am increasingly annoyed by the use of the word "tactical" as an adjective to apply to everything from fishing tackle to potato soup. Some people obviously believe that if you paint anything black, that makes it "tactical." Perhaps if you paint it red it would become "strategic." I once did a little book called "Fighting Handguns" for Petersen Publications. Perhaps it is time to redo the pictures and captions and retit it "Tactical Handguns."

The new Marine Corps is something else again. Our current Commandant, General Jones, has decided that the Marine Corps should be a "kinder and gentler" organization in order to encourage kinder and gentler recruits to stay in as career Marines. I am sure the General knows what he is talking about, but we Globe, Eagle and Anchor dinosaurs do not fancy the Marine Corps as a soft organization. When I was on active duty it was said, "If you want to learn a trade, join the Army. If you want a clean bunk every night, join the Navy. If you want to fly, join the Air Force. If you want to fight, join the Marines." Times have changed.

When I asked for audience participation on the matter of the fossa, I had no idea my audience was so large. Everybody from here to there has been writing me to explain about the fossa. In this age of communication, I now have a stack of letters setting me straight. I do appreciate this kind assistance, but I must say that source material in *The Age of The Internet* is difficult to assess. I hear people tell me now that the fossa is a civet, which it is not. I have been told in no uncertain terms that its claws are retractable or are not retractable, according to which item you saw. I have been told that it is a variety of mongoose. A term I enjoy most is "the panther of Madagathcer." It seems obvious that people do not know as much about the fossa (*Cryptoprocta ferox*) as they thought they did. I was attracted to the beast because, of course, *ferox* means fierce, or ferocious, and that certainly arouses one's curiosity. (As did *Ursus horribilis* in an earlier age.) We have so much interest now in this beast that I am thinking of organizing the *International Fossa Foundation*, in which we can all be called "Founding Fossas." Let us hope to hold regular meetings at Tananarive with prizes for those members who ferret out the most fearsome fossas.

Many thanks again for all of those who leapt into the breach!

I would like to think that nobody knows, but somebody must have. In a previous issue I quoted Rousseau when I meant Voltaire. Hush my little old mouth!

At the 1999 SHOT Show, I ran across the major-caliber titanium pocket revolver from Taurus of Brazil. At 19 ounces in 45 Colt it took my fancy, and it was made almost entirely of titanium, which is strictly Star Wars stuff. I have been trying until quite recently to get my hands on a personal copy of this piece, but without success up until last month. I now have my own "Super Snubby," which I suppose might be called the "Titan." The piece was offered in 44 Special and 41 Magnum, as well as 357, for obscure reasons. But in 45 Colt, it is pretty fascinating. It includes a 5-shot cylinder that rotates to the left, a right-hand twist in its 2-inch barrel,

and (get this) a key lock on the hammer! (Let's see now: if you want to make sure your gun will not shoot, do not load it. If it is a self-loader, simply take it apart. If you suspect some mean little kid will find the ammunition and load it without your authorization, simply swing out the cylinder and put a cheap padlock around the top strap. This hysterical striving to avoid litigation at any cost – even the cost of appearing a blithering idiot – seems to be a curse of the times.)

But let it pass. I think the *Titan* is much fun. Its trigger action is almost unworkable, but can be modified by any competent gunsmith, since both hammer and trigger are of steel, as are the ejector rod and star. Also the barrel includes a steel sleeve. Obviously titanium, while pretty spectacular in some ways, does not replace steel in others.

As you might suppose, the recoil of a 19 ounce revolver in 45 Colt is noticeable. However, the designer incorporated a set of very comfortable over-sized soft rubber stocks, which obviate damage to the fingers, though they can do nothing to soften the blow. Thus the *Titan* – the *Super Snubby*. Good fun!

Our good friend and host Johannes Roller of Vienna has proposed a classical menu for our forthcoming feast of bison (when as and if). He suggests glazed onions, sauteed mushrooms, potatoes Duchesse, and a particularly sound Cabernet. As with the classic recipe for "Jugged Hare," the opening instruction is "First catch your hare." We will do our best.

Sam Colt must be turning in his grave. Referring to the recent cowardly behavior of the Colt Company, one commentator pointed out that the Colt Company invented the "six-shooter." Let us correct that. The Colt Company did not invent the six-shooter. Sam Colt invented the six-shooter, and went down in history as the man who made all men free and equal. I did a research paper on "Sam Colt as a Progressive Industrialist" when I was back in graduate school. It was well received, and I think I will dig it up again in honor of the occasion.

Family member Joshua Robinson, son of *family member* Art Robinson, recently had occasion to repel cougars up on their establishment in Oregon, using his personally owned Scout rifle. We will ask for details and get back to you.

I believe you have noticed that these middle aged richniks who wander around conventions and tournaments and such, are usually accompanied by conspicuously beautiful girls, whom they refer to as "nieces." We recently caught a photograph of Donald Trump at some occasion with his current "niece," who appeared in the picture to be quite up to the assignment. We see that Trump is thinking of running for president. It would certainly be amusing if he actually got there and moved into the White House with the nation's "First Niece."

At the *Gunsite Reunion* just past, we introduced the drill known as the "Guatemalan Steak House," which is a competitive exercise which I took from life down in Guatemala some years ago. A young lady in the audience, Diana Torres, asked in all innocence why people in these circumstances seem to want to kill each other. Now, that is indeed a deep question, and I must think about it sometime and try to cover the subject in print. I guess we will have to start with Genesis.

As someone has pointed out, while Karl Marx advocated the achievement of the "classless society," he never quite made it. Now, however, we have indeed reached a society in which nobody has any class.

Statistics from the California Department of Justice tell us that in the years 1994 through 1997 84.9% of homicides committed in California were committed by "non-white" perpetrators. Any conclusions drawn from this figure depend upon what sort of person is defined as "non-white." Categories in the table list: White, Hispanic, Black and Other. I assume that "Other" suggests Oriental ancestry, but if "Hispanic" means "Mexican," certain problems arise. The people we know of in California as "Mexican" are primarily a mixture

of European and Indian, though in what proportions we cannot say. The difficulty here is that a large number of Mexican citizens have no trace of Indian blood at all – witness such stage personalities as Dolores del Rio, Cesar Romero, and Margarita Cansino (Rita Hayworth). When we start basing our conclusions on something known as "race," we had best be very sure of our scholarship.

You may remember that at the 1998 Reunion at Whittington, *family member* Marc Heim of Switzerland distinguished himself by breaking four out of five clay birds in the air with his Scout rifle. Breaking those clays with a rifle is a good trick, and doing it even once is very satisfying. If you can bring off two out of five, everybody applauds. Four out of five, however, is so outstanding as to be worthy of a medal. In the decades during which I have taught marksmanship, I have run into some truly great performers, and Marc is right up there with the best.

It has been suggested that it is impossible to take seriously a man who is wearing an earring. Having cast through that matter with some care historically, I am forced to agree. Even scouring the steppes of Central Asia or the wilds of Borneo we still do not discover earrings in the ears of men of importance. Contradictory opinions will be entertained, naturally, but best be sure of your sources.

Reports we get from the wars in the Caucasus (Chechnya and Dagestan) tell us that the Russians have been learning many interesting things about this sort of warfare. The weapon of choice for infantry, as we approach the turn of the century, is unquestionably the rocket propelled grenade (RPG). When available, which is most of the time, it seems to have pretty much replaced the squirt gun for close range anti-personnel use. Beyond that, we discover that aimed rifle fire has been staging something of a comeback. Handheld full auto-fire has decreased in both effectiveness and importance.

The matter of morale continues in all aspects of warfare. A man fights better when he is convinced that God is on his side, and a man fights best in defense of his own home territory. These wars in the Caucasus are effectively religious, since while the invading Russians are nominally atheist, the defending Caucasians seem to be sincere Moslems. The predominant motive of the Russian trooper is to get out of this mess and get home to Moscow, while the predominant motivation of the Chechen or Dagestani is to kill the unbeliever. The Russians find this intensely irritating and it causes Yeltsin to give forth with angry bluster about "extermination." All this is very interesting, but it does not arouse one's enthusiasm.

I suppose you are all aware of the fact that a Texas hamlet down on the Mexican border has taken civic action to secede from the United States. This is the municipality of El Cenizo, which has passed ordinances rejecting US border control. Secession is basically a federal matter (remember the war we fought about that), but first I'd like to see what Governor Bush the Younger plans to do about this.

Family member Mike Baker contributes the following observation from Florida. When asked for an essay on "Good Government" in high school, the winning response was as follows, to wit: "Good government! Good government! Sit! Stay!"

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Vol. 7, No. 13

December, 1999

Shopping Season

I suppose everybody has his Steyr Scout by now, but if you know anyone who does not, such a piece would make an elegant Christmas present. If the price thereof is a little high for your Christmas list, you might consider a case of 45 hardball – for practice. Another cheerful thought is a reserve telescope sight for your friend's hunting rifle.

We note that the city of Birmingham (England) has now re-instated Christmas. Two years ago the members of the city council took it upon themselves to replace Christmas with "Winterval" on the grounds that celebrating a Christian holiday might prove offensive to non-Christians. The observation that an ancient festival of good cheer sanctified by custom throughout the millennia may possibly hurt somebody's feelings is evidence of what may happen when you take democracy to extremes. This mystic veneration of "democracy" is pretty ridiculous. As Churchill put it, democracy is the worst possible form of government – except for all the others. Democracy means many different things to many people, but at its roots it is simply mob rule, which in itself may cause a plethora of hurt feelings. In any case, the good people of Birmingham have decided to re-instate the Christmas holiday. Considering the track record of these people, this may not be much of a satisfaction to Our Lord and Savior.

Our colleague Paul Kirchner has suggested the foundation of a fraternity for people who actually think. *PWAT* makes an unseemly sound, so we thought to take refuge in our nickel's-worth of "ski Greek." This gives us the acronym _____. There must be at least a couple of dozen people eligible for membership.

Those of you who are considering the purchase of a Blaser 93 (since Steyr will not undertake the production of a left-handed Scout) should note that the stock is probably too long for most people. It is of wood and may easily be shortened, though this is offensive to certain aesthetes who prize the ornamental wood that often comes on this weapon. I took an inch-and-a-half off of mine and rounded the heel, which rendered it as close to perfect as you are likely to find.

How about this ridiculous capering we see on the field after the commission of a successful opus! Capering after victory is essentially a stone-age custom and can hardly be encouraged at an institution of "higher learning" – whatever that may be. One of the characteristics of a gentleman is dignity in triumph. Today, of course, gentlemen are almost as rare as ladies.

We would scarcely have believed it, but colleague Rich Wyatt reports a case study in which a 380 (9mm Short) achieved complete penetration on a car tire at about 90 degrees impact angle. I cannot recommend that anaemic cartridge for serious self-defense purposes, but it did puncture that tire. Better than nothing, I guess.

All this talk about the "millennium" gives us to wonder what is taught in schools. The Hindus invented zero a very long time ago and we have been making good use of it ever since. Today, however, a great number of advertisers and commentators seem unable to differentiate between a zero and a one. Using this system, any number that begins a series ends with a one, not a zero. We will have to wait another year before the beginning of the Third Millennium, AD.

Zakia Meghji, who is Resource Minister of Tanzania, reports that 21 people have been scarfed up by lions and leopards in the Tanga country so far this year. Man-eating leopards have always been rare in Africa, though reasonably common in India, so we may assume that man-eating lions have been attracting more attention recently. There is a place called Marloth Park located in the valley of the Crocodile River just south of the Kruger Park. Its residents seem to be utilizing the local lions as curfew enforcers, which encourages prowlers to stay home at night. Certain observers have claimed that this is "racist" behavior, though any connection is pretty darn indirect.

This British outfit that puts out such publications as "*Jane's Fighting Vehicles*" and "*Jane's Fighting Ships*" has now come up with a new volume listing what purports to be "terrorist" organizations, and includes Gun Owners of America and the Citizen's Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms in this category. Neither *Soldier of Fortune* magazine nor the American Pistol Institute is listed, but this may be simple oversight. As is well known, both GOA and the Citizen's Committee derive their principles from the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence. Thus we are putting up for listing the US Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. We can really see how George IV might well have considered the establishment of the United States of America as a terrorist act. After all, we threw all that tea into the harbor at Boston.

Defining one's terms becomes more and more complicated in *The Age of Ignorance*. There is a strong tendency at this time on the part of leftist organizations and governments to describe as "terrorist" any group or act which they dislike. As I see it, a terrorist is one who murders people (or attempts to) in order to persuade political groups to change their ways. That is just one definition, of course.

We have a new item for inclusion in a list of examples of the tidal wave of ignorance – or something. It seems that when this airliner was flying over northeastern Arizona, the pilot pointed out to the cabin that Meteor Crater could be seen to one side. A stewardess looked out and saw this for the first time. "Wow!" she cried. "It almost hit the highway!" So much for a college education.

What with these lions and bears and all, to say nothing of coyotes, we made two indirect contacts with the "assault grouse" this year, one in Colorado and the other in Connecticut. It appears that these beasts when provoked attack people, though not very effectively. It may be that the "barefoot boy with slingshot" – a species now extinct – is what has served over the years to keep wildlife properly wary of human beings. Certainly this past year has been one for uppity animals.

"Vice is a monster of such fearful mein,
That to be hated needs but to be seen.
Seen too often, familiar with her face
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Alexander Pope wrote that about two hundred years ago. As with many powerful truths, it seems to be timeless.

So far we have logged three strikeouts on elk. That is to say, three parties of hunters who are friends of ours never got the safety off during the season. I was of the impression that the western mountains were crawling with elk at this time, but if they are, they must be cleverer than those who stalk them.

A new cartridge has made its appearance in South Africa, known as the 338 Sabi. It claims to start a 275-grain bullet at 2350 from the long barrel of a conventional rifle. That compares somewhat to the 376 Steyr, which starts a 270-grain bullet at 2550 from a 19-inch Scout barrel. We are having a bit of trouble promoting a proper ammunition supply for the 376, but these things will be worked out in time. As we

announced in a previous issue of this paper, we plan to harvest a bison with that 376 just before Christmas. I expect to dress out the wound channel (if any) and make appropriate observations.

Shooting Master John Gannaway recommends that anyone contemplating purchase of a 376 Dragoon put at least a thousand rounds of 308 through his Scout before acquiring the 376. The recoil of a seven-pound 308 is brisk. That of a seven-pound 376 is more so.

Many years ago Theodore Roosevelt expressed his annoyance with the notion of "hyphenated Americans." Any American who wishes to qualify himself thus is not a member of our team. All of us American citizens derived our cultural inheritance from other lands, and not so very long ago in the historical context. To hyphenate one's Americanism is to imply that Americanism as such needs qualification. This is a bad attitude, and we believe that those who hold it should think seriously about repatriating themselves.

We learn that our current glorious leader is contemplating the construction of a library dedicated to his accomplishments. We suggest that Hugh Hefner contribute one hundred full sets of *Playboy* magazine (since its inception) to the reading room of this establishment.

We recently read the narrative of a Japanese naval ensign who rode the Yamato down to Okinawa and was left in the water when that super-ship was sunk. Curiously enough, the Yamato was not hammered to pieces by opposing titans, but was rather pecked to death from the air, rather as if a tiger were to be done in by a flock of crows. The aircraft that got the Yamato were all single-engined-torpedo planes, dive bombers, and fighters (TBM, SB2C, F6F). All these aircraft carried bombs of various sizes, but the report from the doomed ship speaks most impressively of the effect of airborne machine guns on topside personnel. The TBM carried two Browning 50s, the F6F six of the same, and the SB2C four 20s. These guns effectively chewed the topside of the great ship into shreds.

That great 50-caliber BMG, another creation of John Browning's genius, was still being called "the Queen of the Battlefield" in the Gulf War.

That is a hard act to follow.

We learn of a farmer who actually attempted to defend himself against hoodlums in Britain. As you might suppose, he is in deep trouble. In England it is against the law to fight back. It would be nice if Schumer would get that message, but I doubt if it would take in his case.

There are many ways to assess the competence of the hunter, but I think that the dimensions of his trophy are a distinctly secondary index. High up on the list is the distance at which the shot was taken – the shorter, the better. The hunter who lucks out on a shot longer than he should have taken ought never to brag about it. Probably the only valid reason for taking a long shot on game is to prevent the escape of an animal already wounded. I have done this once on buffalo, and while I was highly pleased with the result, I must admit that the range, while far greater than normal on buffalo, was still within my marksmanship capacity, shooting from sitting position with the sling looped on. Also, I was shooting a very powerful rifle, and the target was large. In my opinion, these 400-yard shooters should confine their discussions to bars.

Another consideration in hunter's skill is how far the carcass had to be hauled. The more skillful the hunter, the less haulage involved.

The Discovery Channel has announced that there are now four hundred thousand snoop cameras in the hands of the British police. According to the release, they are there "for the protection of the people and to control terrorism." George Orwell's "*1984*" has arrived.

Big Brother is really watching you.

If you are inclined to use a Glock, bear in mind that this piece calls for a stiff wrist for reliable function. If fired from a limp wrist, it may well not fire. We had a case in point recently here in Arizona involving a law enforcement officer who was able to get off one shot, but not two.

Colleague Paul Scarlatta, writing in *Magnum* magazine, implies that the Steyr Scout is the "Rolls Royce of Scout Rifles." The assumption here is that there is a whole class of rifles known as scouts, which is not clear to me. I have written up the evolution of the scout concept on several occasions, and it seems to me that at this time we have in existence the pioneer scouts (mainly constructed here at Gunsite), the Steyr Scout, and the Savage Scout, which last is simply an economy version of the general idea. Personally I would not select the Rolls Royce as an example of "getting what you pay for." One can get a better car than a Rolls Royce for less money – depending upon what he means by "better" – but one cannot buy a better rifle than a Steyr Scout for less money. If you build your own, you spend more and get less.

Colleague and *family member* Barrett Tillman opines that a majority of Americans will opt for comfort over liberty, if it comes to that. That indeed may be the case, but even if we good guys are in truth a minority, we are a strong minority, and we have the better cause to fight for.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

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Solstice

The duck pond is now frozen over at breakfast time, so I guess we are properly into winter. Winter is not as much fun as Autumn (except, of course, for skiers), but it has its own charm for most of us until it begins to get tiresome along about the end of February. We have had an excessively dry Fall season here in the Southwest, but we hope that rain is on its way, as the weather casters say.

We ran some tests on the 45 titanium Taurus, and found the little piece very enjoyable, though its exact role in life is not entirely clear. If the hoplophobes succeed in placing further restrictions on self-loading handguns, the revolver, of course, is there ready for a comeback. As anyone who has ever seen Jack Weaver or Elden Carl shoot can testify, a revolver in competent hands is a very serious item. It is certainly harder to use well than the self-loader, but that is a drawback to be overcome with practice. The titanium snubby sports a 6-port muzzle brake, and the blast from the full-house 45 ("long") Colt is noticeable. We fired it inside a series of cardboard boxes to see just how disturbing that upward flash might be in a tactical situation. It blew away the cardboard boxes in impressive fashion. I would suggest if you get one of these, do not fire it inside your overcoat pocket in the style demonstrated in pre-war gangster movies.

I am told by Rich Wyatt, who obtained the piece for me, that it is the only one in existence, since the gold finish was discontinued after being used on that one example. So, I guess we have a veritable collector's item.

Rich Wyatt's people up in Denver mounted one of those reflector sights on my G91. I am sure I could get used to it, but as of now it seems curiously "unfriendly," besides being difficult to use against a light background. It mounts too high, and calls for considerable neck craning, but it does shoot pretty well once you get used to it. One of its main advantages is that it uses no batteries, and it is claimed to have a shelf life of about 15 years. How it stands up to intensive use remains to be seen.

There remain certain problems with the 376 Steyr "Dragoon," but they are by no means insurmountable. We will have further information in the next issue.

Remember that Jefferson told us that the Second Amendment would not be needed until they tried to abolish it. There are people who have that in mind right now. The personal ownership and usage of firearms is not a common aspect of today's culture worldwide. It is up to Americans – those who know what it means to be an American – to uphold the light of liberty in the face of those both here and elsewhere who would extinguish it. We see the hysterics who feel that the abolition of firearms would bring about major changes in the human psyche, and that crime would disappear. We cannot reason with these people because they are impervious to reason, but we can expose them to ridicule and frustrate their political clout. That is a job not just for the National Rifle Association, but for everyone. If you want to make a resolution for the coming century, resolve to do something in defense of liberty every day, and by liberty, of course, we mean true liberty – the right to keep and bear arms. Without that liberty all other liberties are meaningless.

We now have about twelve prospective members of the *International Fossa Foundation*. We should get together and foment a fossa frolic located in Madagascar along about June.

PRESS RELEASE

Paulden, AZ, Dec. 10, 1999 – Owen Mills, the new owner of Gunsite, has announced the Masters Series of classes for the year 2000.

This series will consist of two pistol and three rifle classes, personally instructed by Jeff Cooper, founder and fountainhead of modern smallarms technique. Colonel Bob Young (USMC, Ret.) will act as lead rangemaster for all classes. The faculty for this series will include such distinguished names as Louis Awerbuck, John Gannaway, Gabe Suarez, Mike Waidelich, Ed Head, and Dave Harris – as available – plus a full dozen more of the *Old Gunsite Breed*.

Curriculum will be general, with both rifle and pistol, emphasizing the developed and perfected arts of practical marksmanship, as evolved and accumulated in the field over the past thirty years. Novices are entirely welcome, but the general skill level will probably be high. Private citizens and public employees are equally acceptable, but good character and reasonably good physical condition are requisite.

Classes will employ the five-and-a-half day format, and certification will be stratified.

Old time get-togethers at the *Sconce* will be highlights of the series. Janelle Cooper has agreed to bring back her famous brownies for the occasion.

Cost for the course will be \$1,165. Class size will be limited to 24 students for the pistol and 16 for the rifle courses, so it is advisable to get your deposit in promptly.

Gunsite Academy in the year 2000 will feature newly revamped ranges as well as a general spruce-up of the entire facility.

"I took over Gunsite Ranch with the hope and resources to take it to a new level of excellence in the industry," said Buz. "The Masters Series is one of the ways to do this."

For more information call Gunsite Office 928-636-4565 or e-mail gunsite@gunsite.com

It is quite obvious by now that the United Nations organization is in principle hostile to national sovereignty, as well as individual liberty. It is not on our side. We may treat it with courtesy, but we must under no circumstances take orders from it, nor join in its various international machinations.

As a result of a question I inserted into this paper some weeks ago, I am now completely informed on the subject of iron and steel, in the chemical sense. What I lack, however, is a proper historical perspective. It seems that people knew about the difference between iron and steel before they knew what the chemical reasons were. The change over from bronze to steel took a while and had basic historical results. You could make good arrowheads, spear points, axes, and daggers out of bronze, but you cannot make a good sword until you have steel, and good steel at that. I am told that the Hittites knew about iron, but could not manufacture serviceable steel. It would seem that the Trojan War was fought without steel. Note that Homer has Hector and Achilles having it out with spears. (If any of the *family* think they understand the manual of the spear, we welcome the information.)

Probably the "800-Year War" in Iberia saw the evolution of the sword, as we think of it today. The Roman

Gladius was, I now believe, the secondary arm of the legions, who seem to have fought by choice with that "darning needle" pilum.

In any case, we thank the faithful profoundly for all the information we have about the Bessemer process and carbon content. We know what we know today, but what I find fascinating is how we learned that.

Since it is fashionable now to nominate various things for "millennial" consideration, we suggest a listing of the top butchers of the 20th century. These would be Pol Pot, Mao Tse Dung, Hitler and Stalin. Right off hand, I cannot think of any other candidates.

Back in the good old days, I dreamed up the notion of a course in "Safari Prep" to be held here at Gunsite. I would still like to undertake that, if there is a demand for it. It is astonishing to hear of the number of novices who go to Africa and make complete fools of themselves for lack of proper preparation. The notion that your professional hunter will take care of all things is not entirely correct. He may know his business, but sometimes he does not, and the client can be saved a lot of bother if he acquires a good idea of what to expect.

"Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote."

Benjamin Franklin, 1759

We hear that the Pentagon is considering doing away with soldiers. In this modern age we have computers. We can hire thousands of girls to operate the computers, and the computers can program the weapons, and the weapons can do the fighting. This is an interesting idea, but somehow I would rather not see how it works.

We learn that Comrade Mandela has announced in a speech that he hopes for a bright future in South Africa for "liberty" and "equality." Anyone who has thought about it realizes that liberty and equality are antithetical concepts. You can have one, or you can have the other, but you certainly cannot have both. As to that, either concept is a rather futile goal. Equality is biologically impossible, and liberty is only obtainable in homogeneous populations very thinly spread.

We recently had a telephone contact with *family member* Hans Westermayer from Munich. He gave us a full rundown on the nature of IPSC competition in Germany. It seems what used to be a practical endeavor has turned into a gamesman's paradise. The idea is to buy the most ornate equipment possible so that the shooter does not matter, only the pistol. They have decided that the 9mm x 21 cartridge is "major caliber" now, on some inexplicable basis, and the idea is strictly "spray-and-pray" – if you cannot shoot well, shoot a lot. There is no place in Europe where doctrine may be put forth authentically. There are few such places in the world, so what has happened is that a whole generation of competitors has grown up whose members do not really know what they are trying to do. It is a lot of fun though, and the equipment is strange and wonderful, coming as it does in a variety of designer colors – blues and yellows, reds and greens, and so on. Our friend Hans decided to enter the Bavarian championships using his old-fashioned Gunsite equipment and technique. Not to my surprise, he placed fourth overall out of about 400 shooters – to the confusion of the new generation. I am very fond of Bavaria as a place to visit, but it does not appear to be a world-class shooting locus at this time.

As the brave new world takes over in South Africa, it is now an offense to call a Boer a Boer. Oddly enough, if it applied to me, I would consider it a compliment.

We have been in contact with Andy Tillman, who has been doing a lot of research in terminal bullet performance in the major calibers. He concludes that for targets of a thousand pounds weight or more, the

Swift bullet is currently the best available – and he has certainly tried them all. I have been personally very happy with the Swift bullet over the years, having used it on medium to large animals from hell to breakfast. Just last year it put a zebra down very neatly using the 350 Short Magnum cartridge. As you know, a zebra is a conspicuously tough animal, very seldom stopped with one round. I look forward to being able to fit out the 376 Steyr cartridge with the Swift bullet in due course.

I suppose everybody noticed that our glorious leader has stated in a speech that he "saw the light" and resigned his life membership in the National Rifle Association. The statement, of course, was ridiculous, but more important is how easy it was to disprove. The record is there, and Bill Clinton is certainly not the kind of man to become involved in the venerable American tradition of marksmanship.

The fascinating thing about this is that he apparently believes what he says, even though he knows what he said was untrue and knows what he said can easily be proven to be untrue. This is certainly a mental aberration of some sort, so I called my local, friendly shrink (who happens to be my granddaughter) and asked her what sort of term there is for a wet wire of this kind in the control circuits. There should be a proper medical term for believing one's own lie, because this happens once in a while, witness O.J. Simpson. However, the best term we could come up with was narcissism, which is a way of defining self-love. The narcissist believes that whatever he says is true because he is perfect and cannot be wrong, not just in matters of opinion, but in matters of fact. If he says $2+3=17$, that makes it true. An interesting thing about this affliction is that the victim is not even slightly embarrassed when caught in his prevarication. It simply does not bother him.

I have long known about constitutional liars, but narcissism is somewhat different. This man is, shall we say it, nuts, and apparently the electorate does not mind. Such a way we have come in 200 years!

And now the Feds are beginning to be upset about the 50 caliber BMG cartridge, with good cause, I suppose. Let us hope the bureaucrats never discover the 30-06.

In an NBC debate of 2 October 1999, Larry Pratt confronted Representative Lawler of Connecticut concerning, of course, bureaucratic restrictions on firearms ownership. Larry confronted the Congressman with the statement that he, the Congressman, was flying in the face of English common law which upholds that a party accused must be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Lawler responded with a statement that we are not concerned with a person who is guilty, but rather who is dangerous. In his view, it does not matter what you have done or have not done, but only that you scare him. This is the bare face of tyranny, and has been around since the Bronze Age. This is what our enemy believes, and this is what we must fight by all means available as long as we draw breath.

I do not know if you find Dr. Laura Schlessinger to be one of your favorite commentators, but we do. We were very pleased the other day to hear her point out how safe she felt in Israel, where everybody is armed. This exactly reflects my position on the occasion of my visit to Israel during the Lebanese War. In truth, an armed society is a polite society, and if you have been in one, you know positively how secure you feel. I have been in several places besides Israel where everybody was armed, and I could not help but feel instantly that here was a place where nobody was going to pull anything stupid. Citizens have been troubled recently by an armed robber in Phoenix who has been conspicuously successful in his depredations up till now, since nobody has shot him. A lot of people now are indeed armed in Phoenix, but obviously nobody has taken advantage of that as yet. We look forward to the news tonight.

The Prime Minister of England at this time is one Tony Blair. We saw him on the air the other night, to our considerable disaffection. He twitters like a sparrow, with perhaps the least forceful presentation I can recall, and there he is presiding over the "Mother of Parliaments." (I gather that any sparrow would have more interesting things to say.)

"The fact is that the average man's love of liberty is nine-tenths imaginary, exactly like his love of sense, justice and truth. He is not actually happy when free; he is uncomfortable, a bit alarmed, and intolerably lonely. Liberty is not a thing for the great masses of men. It is the exclusive possession of a small and disreputable minority, like knowledge, courage and honor. It takes a special sort of man to understand and enjoy liberty – and he is usually an outlaw in democratic societies."

H.L. Mencken, February 12, 1923, *Baltimore Evening Sun*
Contributed by T.J. Johnson

While I cannot look forward to the world scene with any eagerness or anticipation, I do think that the situation here at Gunsite will be radically superior to what has been the case for the last seven years. There should be one place in the world where doctrine is examined, developed, and promulgated. This could be that place, and we will do our very best to restore it to the position it once held.

Expert weaponcraft is not for everyone, but there should be a source where it is made available to those who need it. There are too many "Schools " in proliferation throughout the world. There should be one "University." The Gunsite Academy has the resources and we hope to make it come to pass.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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