
Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

Volume Fourteen, 2006

- Vol. 14, No. 1 Winter `06
.....1
- Vol. 14, No. 2 Winter Set
.....5
- Vol. 14, No. 3 Springtime In The Rockies
.....9
- Vol. 14, No. 4 Wicked Weather
.....13
- Vol. 14, No. 5 September Song
.....17

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Vol. 14, No. 1

January 2006

Winter `06

Well here we are in a new decade, which seems to be marked by some outstanding numerals! Take for example 1906, the date year of the landmark cartridge of our time. The 1906 cartridge, which was a modification of the 1903 cartridge previously standard, is as near perfect as things of that sort can get. It is amusing (and slightly annoying) to see how the purchasers of sporting rifles seem to think that improved cartridge design is the answer to everything. I have long taught that if you can't do it with a 30-06, you probably can't do it. Every time some new brass powder bottle appears for sale, all sorts of people, qualified or otherwise, leap into the breach to explain how this new round is somehow better than what has gone before. Whether it is better or not must depend upon what it is designed to do, and it is effectively impossible to say that a shooter accomplished his purpose in the field with the new cartridge in a way that he could not have done with a 30-06. As it is said in Lindy Wisdom's verse: "There ain't many troubles that a man can't fix with seven hundred dollars and a thirty ought six." We do not know about the \$700, but we do have confidence in the great 30-06 cartridge.

The Steyr Scout, which is now pretty much the definition of what a sporting rifle should be, is furnished in 308 rather than 30-06, but that is simply because the slightly smaller 308 cartridge can be fitted into a slightly smaller action, which has little to do with what comes out the muzzle. The 308, in modern loadings, is the ballistic equivalent of the 30-06, apart from its failure to accommodate the 220-grain bullet, which has definite, if minor, advantages for the medium-size hunting of medium-size animals.

I confess that I now rather fancy a 376 Mannlicher cartridge because of the way it affords the proven killing power of the 375 in a weapon of scout configuration. This piece, which is now properly designated the "376 Mannlicher," is a particularly fine answer to a somewhat limited question for a shooter who confines himself to moose and the big bears of Alaska and the heavier of the bushveldt animals. The 376 Mannlicher, which I like to call the Dragoon, is a nice item, but that does not mean that it wipes out the winner and still king – the 30-06.

We appear to have about 300 cougars hereabouts, which pleases some people and alarms others. I suppose that under certain very special circumstances, a hungry cougar could be prevailed upon to scarf up a house pet or an unattended child. But an unattended child is much more likely to be run over in the street or beaten by its parents. Personally I like cougars. I spent my formative years in the Southwest, and I ran across them very seldom. You do not want them in the Hollywood hills, but out here in the sticks they are welcome.

We understand that the Chinese have set up a section of the Great Wall to allow tourists to cut some hot laps thereon. Who furnishes the cars and what sort of qualification is required is unclear, but the idea is enormously attractive. This is certainly something for those who like to say that they have been there and done that.

To our great satisfaction, "Baby" has finally arrived at Gunsite. This involved a lot of doing by a lot of people, and I must say that it took more paperwork to get the rifle back into the States than it did to get it out of South Africa. I had left it in South Africa to be used on further hunting trips, which now I am too old to enjoy. Since Baby is not useful for anywhere but Africa, I just thought it better to bring it home, a matter of more difficulty

than I would have suspected. So Baby now resides in the *Sconce* armory, though it will be moved down to Legendary Guns in Phoenix so that *Shooting Master* John Gannaway can tidy it up in a couple of minor ways. For those who came in late, Baby is my idea of an idealized heavy rifle intended for use on pachyderms and buffalo. It started life in Brno (Bohemia) as a "Czech 602" in caliber 375 H&H. This features the best version of the classic Mauser action that I know of. Among other things, it mounts a compacted ghost-ring rear-sight which is nowhere else available. Once in our hands the piece was re-barreled for caliber 460 G&A Special and restocked in classic Claro walnut. A five-shot extension magazine was mounted, together with a trigger-guard adaptor. This work was carried out by Georg Hoenig of Boise, Idaho, and the final assembly is wonderfully satisfying.

I find that I have transgressed upon the footprints of Sir Samuel Baker, who christened a favorite heavy rifle of his own as his Baby. I'm sorry about that, but I did not know of the mistake at the time. Today's Baby – the Gunsite Baby – is a very modern heavy rifle, weighing 10½lbs and starting a 500-grain bullet from its 22-inch barrel at an acceptable 2300f/s. You can easily raise this to 2400 if you wish, but this tends to break up available bullets when encountering massive bone.

Baby hits very hard – at both ends. Whether it kicks excessively depends of course upon the shooter. As we have long preached, subjective recoil – that is to say, recoil effect – is a personal matter. Fred Wells of Prescott, who specializes in great big guns, insists that recoil effect is 85 percent mental, and is best addressed as such. I am not sure about the percentage, but I do know that recoil can be mastered by the individual shooter, if the will is there. The trigger, which Georg Hoenig tuned, breaks cleanly without any trace of take-up or follow through, at 4½lbs. Some might prefer it to be a little lighter, but I do not think that would help things. The heavy rifle is intended for use on very large animals at ranges from arm's length to perhaps 50 yards. Usually the shot will be taken from offhand. Baby meets this requirement to perfection, as I have discovered personally in the field. This is the rifle which, on my 80th birthday, took two buffalo with two shots in 2 seconds. (How do I know it was 2 seconds? I don't, but I know how fast I can work the bolt, and I was working it just as fast as I could.) This rifle served to drop a running buff instantly with one shot at 125 yards. It is a thing of beauty, and will serve as the centerpiece for our proposed museum. I do not foresee taking it afield again, but it may be shot for demonstration and entertainment occasionally – as at the *Reunion*.

So Baby is once again in our hands, and this gives us delight. Many psychologists will tell you that experiencing excessive joy in handling an artifact is a symptom of obsession. This could well be, but it does not bother me, as long as it does not stamp on other people's pleasures. The only things that Baby is going to stamp on henceforth are probably inanimate. We extend our thanks to all concerned!

Recently we were asked by our friend and colleague Jan Libourel if we had invented the numerical code for The Conditions of Readiness of Repeating Small Arms. This is the system which calls a cocked-and-locked condition as "*Condition 1*," fully loaded and hammer down as "*Condition 2*," and so on. I cannot definitely answer that, since it is difficult to trace the origin of terms in technical discourse. Possibly I did invent that (the Countess thinks so), but it does not matter very much. I have been around so long that I have simply forgotten where a lot of things started. I am pretty sure that "hoplophobia" and "ghost-ring" are my own. Certainly I did not invent those two conditions, but I did decide what we should call them. As you doubtless know, hoplophobia is a psychotic affliction characterized by unreasoning terror of inanimate objects. The ghost-ring is that form of aperture sight which features a small diameter ring with a large diameter aperture. A ghost-ring is not an "open sight." It is called ghostly because when it is used properly it fades out and the eye is left free to focus upon the front sight alone. This is both faster and more precise than any form of open sight, including the express sight usually featured on heavy doubles, though speed differential is very slight. The GI rear-sight on the M1 rifle, while not a true ghost-ring, can be made so simply by enlarging the aperture. It helped to make the M1 rifle what it turned out to be – the best individual combat instrument so far devised.

"Who invented what" is a tiresome enterprise. Too many people evidently have too little to think about, and thus attach importance to what is essentially unimportant. The modern technique of the pistol, for example, is really important only as it includes proper understanding of mind-set. If you are thinking properly when confronted with lethal force, your shooting technique hardly matters. It is important, however, to understand proper shooting technique in order to instill confidence, because confidence is an important element of proper mind-set. Thus it is well to teach the student how to shoot in order for him to do things right when the need arises. Over the years I have concluded that certain body and hand positions are helpful to deliver better and quicker hits, but if a student chooses to disregard my teachings it is all right with me, as long as his results are good. Naturally it is hard to establish what techniques are used in actual combat. If there is a camera around it is seldom pointed at the shooter, so it cannot really tell what system he was using. We simulate stress in competition, and we have reason to believe that the stress experienced in competition is equal to, if not greater than, that experienced in reality. Few people can remember just what they did when the flag flew, so our studies are not as profound as they might be.

As to instruction, most institutions are more interested in student turnover than in student perfection. Only a few Masters are dedicated to excellence.

Various observers view our general decline of literacy with alarm. To us it seems that the reasons for this sort of thing are quite obvious. *The reason no one reads is television.* In homes where television affords "instant babysitter" for children and instant conversation for adults, there is no need to learn the pleasure that may be experienced by the exploration of our culture. Television provides a substitute for original thought. This in turn obscures the delights of learning, and this takes much of the fun out of life. Learning is the one pleasure in which there can be no satiety. Anything else you like to do will become tiresome if practiced too much. (Perhaps you do not think so, but if you ever have the opportunity to try it you will find out.) In my youth, back in the period between the great wars, reading for pleasure was very widely experienced. That is what people did in the living room after dinner, and every member of the family could choose his own delights. Hemingway, *before television*, habitually packed a "book bag" with him in the field. During the noon pit stop, there was a choice of two or three volumes to enjoy. Onboard the ocean liners there was a 10 o'clock reading session on the boat deck. Do you know of anyone today who will sit down and pick up a volume which does not have any utilitarian or self-aggrandizement purpose? By reading you can improve your language skills, and your language skills enable you to take advantage of our wonderful English language. I am not instructed in comparative linguistics, but I am told by people who are that the English language is the most explicit of any in use. In English you can say exactly what you mean, which is certainly not true of other tongues we know about. When my work is translated from English into German, for example, it usually takes more space – sometimes as much as three times as much space – to make the same point. When I was teaching through Chinese interpreters, it was pretty obvious that getting a given point across was a major undertaking.

The point is that as our level of literacy decays, our culture decays, and with television in the saddle, this is not going to change. By all means try to turn your children into intellectuals. This is the greatest gift you can give them, but do not expect too much as long as that tube is playing.

Did you write it down? If you did not, you should have. This is because only what you have committed to paper has significance. Man's experience is only that which he has recorded. The more you consider that, the more significant it may become. The Heinlein Hypothesis declaims that only the historic record establishes the essence of the human experience. If it was not written down, it might as well not have happened. This certainly impresses itself upon me in these closing years. A great deal has happened to me, and I have had a long life, and I am truly thankful that much of it was recorded. Therefore whatever you did is only real upon the printed page. In examining the recent activities of the wise and the great, we are truly grateful for what was put down and truly sorrowful for what has been lost. In this I am delighted to see that my old friend and colleague Barrett Tillman, in his book *"Clash of the Carriers,"* has been able to record accurately so much of the great exploits of the war in the Pacific. I did not know what was happening all around me, even though I

sat in the midst of it, but Barrett's work has made it real, not so much because it is well written, but rather because it has been *accurately* written. I lived in it and I saw it happen, but I certainly did not understand it until it appeared on the printed page. For this we may be truly blessed.

The fist rest, or a modification thereof, sometimes referred to as the "Hawkins" position, seems to be becoming more commonplace in the field, if not on the range. The fist rest is impractical to be used for large bodies of troops or big schools, and thus was not taught in "the good old days." It works fine, however, for individuals in the field. I recall two cases of my own in which I shot from prone when the fist rest would have been superior. These things develop all the time.

We talk a lot about heroes and heroism today. In doing so we denigrate the term. Heroism, properly speaking, is rare. Everybody I knew in World War II, fought because he wanted to, but of course combat duty does not necessarily involve death. That it involves the chance of death in the line of duty is perhaps commendable, but it is not heroic. The term "above and beyond the call of duty" is indefinable, since anything that you *can* do is what you *should* do.

Lord Nelson defined the heroic death at Trafalgar. He was convinced – correctly – that his wound was mortal. As he lay there on the deck, his repeated words were "Thank God I have done my duty!" He fought because it was his duty to fight, and he died doing his duty. This is heroism. Signing up for combat pay is not.

I did not know Joe Foss during the war, but I had the honor of his acquaintance thereafter, and it certainly seems to me that Joe truly merited the title of hero. He repeatedly went aloft with what must be considered obsolescent equipment to confront enemies who overmatched him in every respect, from combat experience to retractable landing gear (!). Joe was a hero, and he deserved his Medal of Honor. We have heard no sounds from Washington about our proposal to grant remission of federal income tax to Medal of Honor winners. Possibly those in charge do not feel our standards are high enough. Frankly I do not feel this matters. The loss to the budget caused by Medal of Honor recipients would be completely negligible. Clearly there are things about this that I do not understand, but I do not intend to drop the subject.

To go back to the item on Baby, we should note that a true heavy rifle has only limited usefulness from the off-hand position at very short range.

Baby's front sight is a ramped rectangle featuring a square scarlet insert. This combines speed of acquisition with resistance to bumps and bangs, and does not include unsightly excrescences.

Steyr Mannlicher has now got into trouble with export to Iran by selling those people large numbers of 50 caliber "Sporting" rifles. Large corporations are naturally more anxious to market in large numbers rather than to individual sportsmen, and the superb Scout series is pretty much a one man-one gun proposition. Hence you are advised to get your personal Scout before it gets sanctioned off the counter. I got mine (several). Go thou and do likewise. Substitute scouts are a mistake.

We note with profound grief the passing of Fred Wells (85), the famed gunsmith of Prescott, Arizona, who put his name on the map as a true artisan of distinction. The artisan is one of the credits to our culture, who elevates handicraft to a level above that of the tradesman. His rifles are works of art. Be grateful if you own one.

Few people make any difference, but Fred has left his mark. He will not be forgotten.

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Previously Gunsite Gossip

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Winter Set

Family member and cousin Steve Lunceford is recently back from Mozambique with all sorts of sea stories gathered up in the Zambezi Delta. There are a lot of animals there for the taking, but not especially for the trophy hunter, as they run generally small. Steve was using Baby 6, and as you might expect, with consistent success. Whether one needs a heavy rifle for buffalo remains an open question, and an experienced hunter of dangerous game such as Steve probably does not. With perfect placement and the right bullet even *Syncerus caffer* will go down to the shot. This bolsters my enthusiasm for the 376 Mannlicher, which I like to call the Dragoon. Using the 300-grain solid bullet, this cartridge will do whatever is needed, though I would not recommend it as first choice for the pachyderms. Its delightful friendliness renders it a joy to handle in the low veldt, as well as in Alaska. The ammunition must be made to order, which is a drawback, but not a serious one. Most serious hunters make up what ammunition they need (and return with plenty to spare).

I now have the original Baby in my armory, along with my cherished "Dragoon." My cup sloppeth over.

We now have two different sources of information regarding the current international scene. First there is that furnished by the media, and the second is that given to us by returning combat veterans from the Middle Eastern front. The media seem to insist that we are doing it wrong, especially that the current administration is doing it wrong. The men back from the war zone insist that we are doing the best possible job, and that while the battle is not yet over, the situation is well in hand. I prefer to put my faith in the word I get from the troops. I know those people better than I do the journalists.

It is an uphill struggle, but I wish that we could distinguish more carefully between freedom and liberty. These conditions are not the same, though they are certainly related. Freedom is the absence of restraint – a physical circumstance. Liberty, on the other hand, is a political situation denoting the lawful capability of the citizen to defend himself and his near and dear without interference from the state. Note that the Declaration of Independence forcibly and particularly establishes the blessings of liberty upon ourselves and our posterity. I like to carry a pocket copy of the Declaration, plus the Constitution, in my travels. It is a good thing to have in hand when discussions arise.

The continued sales triumph of the Glock pistols demonstrates the virtues of skillful marketing. The Glock pistol is okay. It is generally reliable, it is comparatively inexpensive, and it is available in respectable calibers. Above all, its after-market service is superior. The great part of its sales comes from police departments where maintenance and quick service are of primary importance. It may not be the best choice for the private *pistolero*, but such people are not in the majority. For those who feel that only the police establishment should be interested in sidearms – which includes all of the socialist states of Europe – this is a major advantage.

We must face the fact that the pistol is an emergency device. Very few people – even the most adventurous – run into a need to shoot to save their lives. Statistically, there is no real need to shoot a pistol, only to *have* a pistol, since the mere possession of a sound firearm is nearly always enough to stop a fight. However, one's state of mind dominates the scene here. The man who is carrying a pistol and is fully aware of his ability to

use it well, can solve the problem. A higher degree of practical marksmanship is an essential tool to the proper combat mind-set. If you know that you have the upper hand, you almost always do have it.

We are annoyed by the assumption on the part of certain public figures that the citizen should be able to prove the need for the citizen to acquire a means of protecting himself. The citizen's personal needs are no business of the State. Liberty, when in place, grants the right of the citizen to do what he chooses, as long as he does not stamp on the rights of others. Nobody needs caviar, or a pleasure boat, or opera tickets. Whether or not he wants these things is no business of the State. On this side of the prayer rug, the Jihadies do not see it that way. That seems to be the main reason they have declared war upon us.

We made the proper effort to catch the opening ceremonies for the Super Bowl, and we were reminded that some sort of penalty should be exacted for mangling the National Anthem. Vocalists who cannot carry a tune should reserve their attention for listeners who cannot tell the difference.

Our proposition that federal income tax be remitted for holders of the Medal of Honor continues to meet with a resounding silence. No one has told us we are wrong. They have not told us anything – at the top of their lungs. Can it be that they are not sure of their philosophical position? This proposition has much to recommend it and nothing against it. Its drain upon the budget would be practically indiscernible, and it would grant a powerful reward for those who deserve it. But I cannot get up an argument. If there is something wrong with the proposition, I would certainly like to hear it. I guess I will just have to shout louder.

The SHOT Show was a tremendous enterprise, as usual, covering more ground than was easy to survey. There was much more there than could be seen in a couple of days, and we spent more time discussing daughter Lindy's forthcoming books than we did talking about new equipment. As to that, there was not much in the way of new equipment to merit our attention. On a somber note, we had to remark upon the termination of the illustrious Winchester Model 70, which was one of the few noteworthy personal firearms of the age. We hope you got yours, because (*Semper Fi*) I got mine. This one is serial number 4522 in caliber 375 Holland & Holland. I acquired it from my first major big game hunt in Jackson Hole in 1937, and a lovely thing it is. It is hard to believe that this individual arm was strictly stocked over-the-counter offering a lovely 3½lb single-stage trigger that never needed any sort of customizing. Oddly enough that rifle never needed customizing of any sort and shot one-hole test groups at 50 yards on its first day on the range. It is there in my armory today and certainly merits a pride of place in my forthcoming museum – when, as and if.

This rifle is slightly off-center, mounting a 25-inch barrel with no step-down, since it was made at the factory by simply boring out a 300 Magnum target barrel. It is hard to answer the question about what it is for, since I do not see a real purpose for a 375 prairie dog gun. Nevertheless it is a great pleasure to have aboard – if just to admire.

In this sense it offers a very high degree of the "fondle factor."

This term – the fondle factor – is an offering of our friend and colleague Roy Skagen, retired Chief of Detectives for Seattle PD. It need not become involved in the erotic, since all sensual pleasures are not necessarily those of the flesh. Fine guns, among several other things, may demonstrate the fondle factor to a high degree. Baby, for example, now in my armory, is a masterful example of the art. It is a true heavy. It has no utilitarian function, except as an "elephant gun." Nobody needs an elephant gun anymore, but a good one is there to be admired – and fondled.

The Perazzi shotguns always add to the glamor of the SHOT Show. It is nice to know that they are there and have been manufactured with tender, loving care for those who can appreciate such things.

In looking further into colleague Barrett Tillman's studies of the Pacific War, we are staggered by the achievements of our carrier battle groups. The agglomeration of technical excellence, marvelous equipment, literally incredible expertise, all the way from the admiral commanding to the hook runner, is astounding. Getting those fleets into position and then getting their deadly weaponry into position, and then using it with consummate skill, is hard to believe. (And right near the top of the list perhaps is the great 50 BMG cartridge, which when used properly simply exploded Japanese aircraft.) Those men who performed these exploits are nearly all gone now. It is their grandsons, rather than their sons, who are properly to render "glory and love to the men of old."

It is annoying to note that the press, in general, cannot seem to differentiate the cartridge from the weapon that fires it. Continuously we hear of "the 45," as if that signifies only a weapon made to take that cartridge. This is as if the carrier could handle only one type of aircraft. There are good pistols which take only inferior cartridges, and there are good cartridges which are only available in inferior launchers. I suppose that expecting technical competence from journalists is too much to hope for, but a bit of study helps us to straighten this out.

We fortunately obtained a tape from the Marianas Turkey Shoot which gave us a marvelous picture of the wonderful power of the great 50-caliber BMG cartridge. In the great days of propellor-driven aircraft, both the Germans and the Japanese favored acquiring a target by the use of rifle-caliber tracers, and then delivering a knock out blow with a heavier cartridge. This system works, but it does waste time – especially when employed by a master fighter pilot. The greatest of the piston fighter pilots were able to develop a one-shot kill system, which was a great advantage employed by a pilot who was skillful enough. Joe Foss, for example, favored opening fire with four of his great 50 calibers while reserving two guns for his opening heavy blow, as well as providing reserves to handle both intruders and malfunctions. For the big guns did malfunction when subjected to side-loads, and it was nice to have two guns available for the unforeseen circumstance.

This reminds us that most of the aerial killing in the piston days was carried out by a few of the very best practitioners. Those were good men to have on our side, and as the war continued, we had more of them on our side all the time, due to normal attrition.

J.P. Denis, ex-president of IPSC and master *pistolero*, has developed a drop-in trigger system for the 1911, which requires no gun smithing. It is available through FNH USA in McLean, VA, and is just the thing for the man who has no access to remedial work. It is intended to be used for the 1911 that has the worst trigger that you have encountered.

People who have trouble with semantics cannot separate a smallarm from a sidearm. A sidearm is a weapon which may be carried on the belt ready for immediate defensive use by the wearer alone. A smallarm, on the other hand, is usually a crew served weapon which may be operated by one man but which is normally operated by a small crew. Sidearms are immediate defensive instruments. Smallarms may be put to complete combat use by teams with several men operating the gun and others dividing ammunition and mounting systems. The 1911 and the wheel gun are sidearms. A light machine gun is a smallarm.

We have had occasion to play around at some length with the Broomhandle Mauser during the last few months. We find this to be a curiously efficient instrument for its task, which is a very curious task. It was never a GI sidearm, but it was available on private purchase by officers who were called upon to buy their own sidearms, and it worked pretty well for this, since it was never a proper defensive pistol, but served as a sort of "kit gun" for officers who packed it in its wooden shoulder stock and had available an emergency carbine for unusual situations. Used this way, and fired normally from the carbine mode, it did a pretty good job for the junior infantry officer. You carried the weapon normally in your luggage in its wooden stock, but only went to war as the circumstance demanded. This was not the way it was employed by Churchill at

Omdurman, but it did him well, nonetheless, on that occasion.

Of course the 30 caliber cartridge for the original Broomhandle is not much of a combat round, but neither is the 9mm Parabellum. They both go bang when you press the trigger, and you do have the carbine option available.

Whenever there is a mishap with a firearm, one of the four basic safety rules has not been properly observed. Recently, therefore, a lot of excitement has resulted from lack of observation of *Rule 4*, which is simply, *be sure of your target*.

We note a new set of stamps featuring a group of outstanding Marines from our previous wars. They show off John Basilone and Chesty Puller. These men were a credit to both themselves and the Corps, but they hardly cover the subject. When I went aboard as a second lieutenant at Basic School in Philadelphia, my commanding officer was Clifton Bledsoe Cates. The war burst over us before school was out, and Cates was wafted off to Guadalcanal to command the 1st Marines with distinction as a full colonel. He went up to the Marianas where he commanded the 2nd Marine Division on Saipan as a two-star general. General Cates then commanded the 4th Marine Division for the reoccupation of Tinian.

General Cates got his start at Belleau Wood in France in World War I where he won his Croix de Guerre and his Navy Cross. At Basic School we noted that the only thing he wore on his greens in the way of decorations were his shooting badges, and this is a custom which has been honored ever since. You will note that the senior Marine commanders now on duty in the Holy War follow this example. They wear their shooting badges without the addition of fruit salad.

The twentieth century was distinguished by the careers of a full set of outstanding Marines, beginning perhaps with Hanneken. It was my distinct honor to have served with some of them. The banner still waves.

We are just in receipt of a batch of new artwork from Paul Kirchner for use in daughter Lindy's forthcoming publications. This is great stuff as usual, and it bids fair to decorate the new books in proper fashion. We are now working on captions, among other things.

Among other new elements which offer an outstanding fondle factor is now the defunct Savage Model 99. We have always admired this weapon and had occasion to work extensively with it way back in our college days. We set up a 99 for a fraternity brother who happened to be left-handed. We acquired it in caliber 300 Savage which was practically identical with the 308 and topped it with a Lyman Alaskan telescope. Its usually inferior trigger action was corrected by the late Bob Chow of San Francisco, and the result was a very advanced weapon indeed. It went off to war with good results, so far as I know, but I have lost track of it, and I can only hope that it is now the proud possession of the son and grandson of my college chum.

I set up a Model 99 in caliber 250 3000 for the Balsas Expedition, and it rendered excellent service throughout, being superbly accurate and powerful enough for anything we might encounter in Latin America.

Amy Heath, Jeff and Janelle Cooper's granddaughter, is running for the Board of Directors of the National Rifle Association. The NRA must receive your ballot before the April 30th deadline.

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Previously Gunsite Gossip

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Springtime In The Rockies

Certainly it is time for drought relief in the Southwest, where we have been drying up much like this hard desert for the past six months. Perhaps this has to do with the machinations of the Mullahs in their Mesopotamian mosques. Let us hope that the tide has truly turned. It does not help much to raise our box score in the land between the rivers, since the Moors propagate faster than we can pick them off. It is hard to feel sorry for these people who kill us unbelievers in small numbers steadily and without cause. Our tactics and techniques proceed in a mannerly fashion, but without much effect upon the morale of the murderers. This has historically been an exasperating aspect of "little wars."

The *guerilleros* are assisted in this case in no small extent by a leftist political establishment which seems to feel that winning elections is more important than winning wars. This does not help our military people who are conspicuously successful in the field, but who cannot seem to prevail on the home front, no matter how well they do at the point of contact. We have Gunsite graduates now on third tour in the sand box and still volunteer to go back for more. How inspiring it is to note that our entire overseas establishment is a voluntary organization! Our men are fighting because they see a reason to do so. They are in no way disheartened by a home front news establishment which does its best to cut away their reason for existence. Our war department gives us overwhelming reason to be proud of this point in history. I am personally proud to have been an active member of that establishment for many years, and I am further proud to have known personally many men who have been over there and seen that – *and done that*.

It does seem to us that there should be some sort of penalty for mangling the national anthem. We have seen various celebrations on the tube in which some sort of pop singer was given the job of rendering the Star Spangled Banner for the multitude. It would appear that many of these people do not only have poor voices but they are unable to carry a tune. This hurts my feelings. Possibly my feelings are too easily hurt.

We note that Gerhard Blenk, who designed the Blaser 93, is now pushing a brand new double rifle for sporting use. We have great confidence in Gerhard Blenk. If he designed it, it must be good.

These lever-action rifles have proven most satisfactory over the years, but I feel that my devotion to the bolt-action principle was not totally justified. Actually reaction type makes little difference in field service. If you shoot well, you do not generally use a second shot. Recovery from recoil enables the shooter to operate any sort of action – including a single-shot – if he works at it.

I have put it forth before but I wish to say it again – the five essential elements of a soldier are: skill-at-arms, discipline, valor, hardihood, and pride. The soldier must fight well with whatever instrument he carries or operates. Fortunately this is something which can be taught. Second, the soldier must do what he is told – always and every time. There must be no question about obedience of orders. On our promotion examinations in high school ROTC, we were always given a freebie on the fill-in section that stated as follows: "Before the soldier can aspire to command, he must first learn to (blank)." The answer, of course, was "obey." In a 50-question examination you got that one for free.

Valor. A soldier must be brave enough to face death without flinching. This is pretty obvious, but it does bear repeating. Every man knows fear when he faces death. It is essential, however, that he not allow it to influence his action. Everyone knows that horrible hollow feeling in the pit of his stomach when he looks in the cannon's mouth, but he must not show it. Valor dictates his behavior. "*Here we go!*" Everybody who has been there knows how it feels. It may be that is why we have leaders. The leader is just as scared as the follower, but he goes forward anyway into the face of death. This is a commonplace sublimation, but we observe it.

A soldier must be physically tough. Military operations of all sorts involve hardship. If for no other reason, military operations inflict hardship for one's adversaries. I remember quite well being pushed to the point of total exhaustion, but I was able to keep my feet and keep my eyes open without artificial assistance. But it was my business to make the enemy endure more than I did. This sort of thing can be inculcated, and well trained troops know about it. It has been observed in various organizations of the world that if training does not result in at least one death per thousand, it is not tough enough. This may be a simplification, but it stands as the critical point. If you do not feel that training is really too hard for reasonable men to endure, you probably have not got the point.

And the soldier must be proud of being a soldier. He must be inspired by his picture in the mirror. There is a tendency to lose this notion in *The Age of the Common Man*. It should be fought. George Patton, among others, made a strong point of this and frequently exhorted men who looked like slobs to "stand up and look proud." George Patton was one of America's most distinguished soldiers. I think his example should be heeded.

It is a continual annoyance to see the press is unable to separate the pistol from its cartridge. I suppose it is unreasonable to expect a journalist to know very much about his subject, but it does seem that any time a reporter works into a technical field (such as, for instance, skiing, self-propelled vehicles or smallarms), he might be expected to look into the subject.

Paul Kirchner, who has done the artwork for most of our previous volumes, has sent us some new sketches for inclusion in the new volume, "*Shotluck*." I continue to be amazed at Paul's superb drawing skills. To be able to sit down at a board with a pencil and reproduce reality, with better than photographic accuracy, is startling. The new book is about three-fourths get ready, and we would like to have it some sort of presentable form by mid-summer at the latest.

We wrote that Pat Rogers (Red Pat), late of Gunsite, has moved from New York to Virginia and is traveling and teaching. I regard Pat as a certified master. I recommend his training to anyone who needs education in smallarms technique.

We saw a number of new things at the SHOT Show, but nothing that could be called a flood. Smallarms, which have been my stock in trade for a long lifetime, comprise the rifle, the pistol, the shotgun, and now what may be called the bomb thrower or grenade launcher. From early on I have been a student of the rifle and the pistol, without large emphasis on the shotgun. My father thought I should cultivate the shotgun, since by doing so I would be inclined to associate with a higher class of people. This may be true, but I became first attached to the rifle as a hunting arm. I acquired a pistol at about the same time, mainly because it is easier to find a place to practice with a pistol than with a rifle. High school ROTC introduced me to the rifle at about the same time, and there I acquired the formal study of the long gun before being shown the authorized technique of the pistol. To this day I cannot separate the attraction of the pistol from that of the rifle. I have always shot recreationally because it is fun, and with more experience, the rifle and the pistol are equal in this regard.

When I was graduated from the rimfire rifle to the center-fire, I moved up a notch, but not until college did I step up to the center-fire pistol. They are both fun, but I surely cannot say which is more fun. You can do big

things with the rifle. Specifically you can hunt big game, whereas shooting the center–fire pistol for blood has only recently become feasible. And now the center–fire pistol has become so highly developed that it hardly resembles a handgun at all. Before I left full duty status, I did more work and more interesting work with the rifle than with the handgun. And I have had more influence in rifle design than in pistol. I am quite happy to carry the sidearm which is essentially unchanged from that which I knew in college days, but in the field I have developed the center–fire rifle well beyond the notions of my youth.

Is it that the pronoun "whom" has been abandoned? Perhaps it is that the English language is too ornate for the common people.

Baby, the great rifle which we plan to serve as the centerpiece of our forthcoming museum, is now about ready for complete re–servicing. The stock commenced to split just aback the tang (a problem which is not unusual with hard kicking rifles), and so now the stock will be shimmed, and the entire stock glass–bedded. This rifle is a work of art, and should rest along with its record at the head of the class. Its superior rear–sight has not been manufactured for a long time, so the piece cannot be reproduced.

In playing around with the Broomhandle Mauser, we have discovered something. Since this piece is 110 years old, I suppose it is time to discover things about it. What I have found is that the Broomhandle was not a pistol at all. It was not called that. It was called the "Mauser System 96" and served a purpose for which a pistol was not designed. The fact that Winston Churchill used it like one at Omdurman has confused this point. But basically the Mauser System 96 was a collapsible officer's carbine for service in which commissioned officers were expected to furnish their own weapons. Riding in its wooden stock, the Broomhandle gave a fresh–caught junior officer something to support his service sword, and I guess it did this pretty well, remembering that none of the world's armies issued the Broomhandle for any purpose whatever. Plinking with this piece with stock attached is rather effective and pretty good fun. It was assumed that junior officers would always have preparatory time when action loomed. Thus it was not a service pistol at all, and was not intended as such. It is not as effective as a carbine, but it was a lot handier. Times do change.

We continue to hear absolutely nothing about our proposition to remit income tax for the Medal of Honor winners. For this I am too simpleminded to see the unsoundness of a simple idea.

As times do change we note the demise of the illustrious Winchester Model 70. Apparently it was no longer selling, and, of course, that is what keeps a product alive. But one wonders what does keep a product alive. What keeps a sporting rifle alive. The marketeers feel that we are now in the age of the self–loader, and that a new and modern sporting rifle (of medium caliber) should load itself. We suppose this is true, but we do wonder just what speed of the second shot matters in a sporting rifle. *Shooting Master* John Gannaway has concluded from African discussions that the rifle for dangerous game should be a two–shot operation. My own experience is too brief to provide any conclusions, but I do think that a lot of shots is an unsound concept for shooting something that fights back. Having been born and raised, as it were, with a bolt–action rifle, I am very happy with this concept. I have done a certain amount of killing with various bolt–action rifles, but I have never found that action type was of any consequence. I am somewhat familiar with the lever–action in field use by being set up with a Savage Model 99 on three separate occasions for full–duty status. In the first instance, a fraternity brother of Stanford was left–handed and wanted to acquire a deer rifle for Christmas. We got him an M99 in caliber 300 Savage (which is operationally identical with the 308), and we cleaned it up. This action came over–the–counter with a very bad trigger, so we had that cleaned up by the late illustrious Bob Chow of San Francisco, who also mounted the Lyman Alaskan telescope. This was a very satisfactory deer gun, and I hope it survives the wars, one way or another.

Much later on I acquired an M99 in caliber 250–3000 for the Rio Balsas expedition, upon which it served with distinction, as I have written it elsewhere. Following these two lever–guns, I acquired a couple of Co–pilots from Jim West of Anchorage (not to be confused with the Marlin "Guide Gun" to which it is

conspicuously superior).

We like to remind ourselves that Lon Horiuchi and O.J. Simpson are wandering around loose. It appears that you *can* get away with murder, if the circumstances are just right.

And then there was the matter of Vince Foster. Vince Foster was officially declared a suicide. For the people who know how he met his death, he was a suicide when blood ran uphill. But obviously we have it wrong.

Islam may indeed have its virtues, but they must be sought for carefully and objectively. Winston Churchill, "the greatest man of the 19th century and the greatest Englishman of all time," put it thus:

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live.

"A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement; the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men.

"Individual Moslems may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it had vainly struggled, the civilization of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilization of ancient Rome."

Sir Winston Churchill (*The River War*, first edition, Vol. II, pages 248–50, London: Longmans, Green Co., 1899).

via *family member* Leon Flancher

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

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Wicked Weather

I used to assume that most practical rifle shooting was done from the sitting position, properly looped up. I am not sure of that now. I do agree that sitting is very useful, but over the last couple of decades I have discovered personally that I have shot more from a rest and from off-hand than from sitting. This, of course, depends upon the terrain in which hunting is conducted. If you are hunting in open mountains or prairie, you will probably use the same position more frequently than in the low veldt or in deer forest. In both the low veldt and most deer shooting you will use off-hand a great deal more and, of course, off-hand is the most challenging firing position. It takes more study and calls for more skill to bring off correctly. It should be noted that the shooting sling is of no use in unsupported positions. It only helps you when you have something to rest your elbow on. So the shooting sling is particularly useful in braced sitting and, if you must use it, in the kneeling position. Ordinarily you do not need it for prone because in prone you can usually get down onto the ground and use the Hawkins (a type of fist-rest) position. The rest position involves placing the left fist upon the ground or upon a rest and hanging on to the forward end of the sling strap. Usually there is a time problem in shooting from off-hand. There will be only a short time available in which to get off a good squeeze. You will have the chance to control your squeeze only if you are aware of the amount of time your target is going to wait around. Your target may not stand there forever, and often you will see that the time problem is going to be limited by the action of the target. For example, if the target is walking, he will walk between a clear space and cover, and you must be sure to get your squeeze off in the time available when he is still walking.

"Knowledge is power. Learning is fun." This gains something in translation.

Who is a good shot? That would have bothered me awhile back without a definitive answer. I know half a dozen practitioners I consider to be good shots (excluding those present, of course). Let us say a man who can do with his weapon what it was intended to do – always and every time – is a good shot. A man who spends much time in a target-rich environment with unvaried success may be called a good shot. This depends to a certain extent upon the nature of the challenge. If a shooter is never confronted with really hard problems, this standard may not apply. But if a number of challenges were reasonably difficult, I suppose he may be considered to be "a good man with a gun." I know half a dozen or more field marksmen who are really good, and I have seen them prove their point. If a man pulled off something really difficult three or four times, I guess that will establish him, but he has to be able to bring this sort of thing off on demand. It is not something that he once did under observation.

The Wright R-3350 "Cyclone" engine was certainly a terminal effort of piston-type power. It was a "double radial" with two rows of nine, supercharged, air-cooled displacement of 3,350 cubic inches and ranged in power around 2,500 horses. Since we are in the jet age now, it is probable that this Cyclone was the end of the line in piston engines.

It is curious to observe the clumsy nomenclature used by the press at this time. The terms *9mm*, *self-loading*, *semi-automatic* and so on seem to confuse them. I have not seen "revolver" used now for many years in the public press, though it is often more descriptive than "9mm."

The proliferation of the bench rest has been a definite backward step in marksmanship. Properly used, the bench rest practically eliminates human error, and human error is the measure of marksmanship. The revered Townsend Whelen left us with the troublesome dictum that "only accurate rifles are interesting." This is simply not true – in my opinion. Most rifles are more accurate in the inherent sense than almost all shooters, and this gets us nowhere. I was distressed by the idea as a youth, unaware that a rifle's worth must be evaluated by the purpose for which it is intended. A rifle which is particularly suited to stopping a charging elephant need not print minute angle groups – or two minute angle groups. Printing tiny groups is only critical if the printing of tiny groups is the object of the exercise, and this is usually not the case. In my opinion, the most important single desideratum in a rifle is "shootability" – a combination of at least half a dozen different characteristics. This is certainly not to say that intrinsic accuracy in a rifle is not important, but it is to say that small increments of accuracy are too often over-emphasized. Group size in a rifle is rather like drag time in a sports car. It is interesting, but it is not the whole story.

If nothing else, we professors of the modern technique seem to have got across *Rule 3*. The photos we see back from the contact areas all seem to demonstrate the straight trigger finger outside the trigger-guard prior to the moment of truth. This is a good thing, and if we are responsible for it, we will accept appropriate pats on the back.

There is no use in trying to sort out journalistic atrocity, but there is such a thing as *shrapnel*, and shell splinters it is not. The shrapnel shell is a sort of giant flying shotgun, disposing of a large number of small round balls which can be sprayed with deadly effect upon troops caught in the open. A man could be hit by a *shrapnel ball*, or several, or he could be hit by a shrapnel base cap or its fuse, but being hit by a shell splinter is something else entirely. This would not matter if it did not mean the diffusion of positive error.

We are amused at being steadily taken to task by commentators who insist that my rake of cap angle in photographs is non-regulation and uncouth. My original commanding officer in the Marine Corps was Clifton B. Cates, a Marine of such distinction as to be beyond criticism about style, and General Cates raked his cap – like it or not. If some moderns do not approve of this I am sorry, but I am not going to change.

We hear rumors to the effect that the giant sable of southwest Africa may not be entirely extinct. It is furiously to hope.

Herbivorous quadrupeds tend to stop and turn 90 degrees when aware of pursuit. This is handy in offering the hunter a neat target picture, but, of course, it should not be counted upon. This sort of thing is offered more than half the time – let us say two-thirds.

Is a heavy rifle really necessary for buffalo? While it is not absolutely necessary, I think it is desirable. We do, however, want to avoid the problem of the hunter who is scared of his gun – and there are those. By a *heavy rifle* I mean 45 caliber and 500-grains, or about 40 caliber and 400-grains. The latter is a borderline case – a *light heavy*. People do just fine, of course, if the shot is properly placed, but that is true of a light rifle nearly all the time. If you have access to a heavy rifle and you enjoy shooting it, it is certainly your first choice for buffalo. You may do better, of course, with the 30-06/220, if you are happier with the gun.

Don't call it a *Cape* buffalo. Hasn't been one within a thousand kilometers of the Cape in one hundred years.

This is a *gaucherie*. *Syncerus caffer* is no *Bison bison*.

We recently ran across a gun camera revelation. The shooter showed again the fearful efficiency of the great 50 BMG cartridge. In this case our Hellcat pilot packing six 50s ran nearly head on into a Nip exiting from a

cloud at a target angle of about 345 degrees. His quick burst ate into the enemy aircraft at about the port side windroot and the Zero simply flew apart. Our pilot had no time to evade, but flew through the wreckage without apparent damage to himself. However he was barely able to land his aircraft, which was then declared unserviceable and thrown over the side.

Now O.J. Simpson has surfaced again, and this leaves us with Lon Horiuchi. And the killer of Vince Foster. You *can* get away with it, if conditions are right – at least some of the time.

The Steyr Scout is now a production item available for sale over-the-counter, and Baby, the idealized heavy rifle, now rests securely at the sconce at Gunsite. These are artifacts of which I am consciously proud. They are good things to know about, and I am glad to have participated in their creation.

When early man first affixed an axillary point to a shaft, he created the first pole arm. But curiously he never told us how to use it. This weapon is called different things in different languages, but in English it is normally called a spear – or a pike if it is used on foot, a javelin if it is thrown, or a lance if it is used on horseback. It has been with us through the ages, but nobody ever told us how to use it. Hector and Achilles fought with spears outside the walls of Troy, but we do not have any description of what spears they used or how they used them. The Roman legions, contrary to Gibbon, overran the world with the "pilum," rather than the gladius, but we are not sure how they held it. The Swiss mercenaries of the enlightenment frustrated Medieval calvary with the pike, and we do have some idea of how it was used – as a horse stopper, if not in a man-against-man mode. Hermann Göring, who was "Reich Jagermeister" was known to be the last German hunter to kill a wild boar on foot with the boar spear. According to illustrations, he used the cross piece and held the weapon knuckles up forward and knuckles down aft.

Coming down to us ceremonially, the British infantry senior NCOs used what was called a sponton, which was a badge of office and used to dressing the lines, among other things. The Swiss guard at the Vatican today display the halberd, which is sort of a sponton to which is affixed a cutting edge back of a point, though they do not cut anybody with it anymore, as far as I can tell.

I have a small selection of pole arms on display at the sconce armory, but I am past the point of using them for any serious purpose – I hope.

Since the military no longer teaches marksmanship in any serious sense, they do not teach the use of the shooting sling. I was taught the loop sling of the 03 rifle in high school ROTC, and it served me extremely well. I killed my one and only bull elk, my record ram, my mountain caribou, and my white goat using the loop sling. Naturally I think it is a technique worth knowing, and I taught it assiduously(!) here at Gunsite for many years. Go thou and do likewise.

Range Master Giles Stock informs us that various troops are asking about our use of the term "Dragoon" in reference to the oversized Scout. Well, that's what it is – a *big* Scout. The factory dislikes the usage, but I have in possession a 376 Scout Dragoon – so labeled by Steyr. It is a nifty item, and you are welcome to label your own copy likewise. A *true* Scout comes in 308 or 7-08, but nobody owns the title.

I still favor the "butter-knife" bolt on the Mannlicher action. Ease of the second shot is not a critical factor and the *true Scout* is neater.

The best part of any periodical is the Letters Column. One can always make sure that the contributor is interested in his subject, otherwise he would not take the trouble to write.

In the May issue of *Guns & Ammo*, we see reproduced an illuminating message from a *Friscan* – that being a correspondent who signs himself from San Francisco. *Friscans*, as a group, may be addressed with some

salinity, since the inhabitants of the Bay Region do indeed run to type. We see this as evident from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. This correspondent takes me to task with asperity as "having gone over the edge." He feels that my attitudes about the proper education of a young man are unreasonable and that I expect too much of youth. He feels that people today have no time to supervise the education of their young. Just what they do have time for is unclear. We note that Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, among others, somehow did find the time to do their homework, and they did a fine job in covering the generalized background. The writer feels that it is too much to expect of a young person to acquire basic skills and abilities such as geography, zoology, history, and literature. He goes on to say that today's parent should not devote unnecessary attention to the elementary education of his children. In my view, the supervision of one's child's education is what parents are for. Making money is nice, and I think everybody should have some, but what is more important is a properly grounded offspring.

The man goes on to ask what degree of competence I feel is necessary. When I say, "manage a motorcycle," I do not mean motorcross, but rather the ability to get from point *A* to point *B* with safety on a two-wheeler. When I say "comfortable in a foreign language," I mean the ability to make one's way on the street in an environment in which English is not the primary tongue. When I call for the ability to manage an airplane, I mean the ability to take off and land in a propellor-driven airplane with some degree of security.

The point is that a young man of 21 should be able to cope with the world around him in a general fashion. One of the measures of his ability to cope should be his ability to educate his son. What does that mean to a *Friscan* or the inhabitants of the Bay Region (and I suppose the megalopolis of the Eastern seaboard)? These march to a somewhat limited drum, or so it seems to me.

The *Friscans* are not necessarily confined to the Bay Region, but such a location may serve well as a starter. The correspondent feels strongly that I expect the impossible. My own experience and acquaintance indicates otherwise. High goals are not necessarily impossible, or even relatively so. I recall a high school student back in my teaching days asking if the goals set forth by Kipling in the mighty poem "If" were not impossible. The response was not whether they were impossible but whether they are striven for. To set one's goals high is not an unreasonable position. That is what parents are for. It seems to me that the important thing in life is the production of outstanding people – whether we can do it not. It is the attempt that makes the struggle worthwhile.

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Jeff Cooper's Commentaries

Previously Gunsite Gossip

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June - September 2006

September Song

Much discussion is circulating about the presumed new military pistol. It does raise a question, since it is not clear just what the pistol is for. Considered closely, it is apparent that the handgun is not a serious military item. The one-handed defensive firearm is conceptually a personal artifact. Soldiers normally express a desire to have a pistol, but they do not want to fight with it. I have asked several prominent warriors about this, and I have come up with several variegated answers. Beyond this, we see all sorts of pistols in military use, but not strictly speaking as combat weapons. McBride, the noteworthy *pistolero* of World War I, was a great believer in the 1911, which remains, I believe, the preemptive defensive sidearm of the present era. But McBride was preeminently a rifleman. Here at the beginning of the 21st century, it seems that the infantryman fights primarily with high explosives in the form of various kinds of personally directed bombs.

I find it interesting that I put in for fragmentation bombs for the 2.3" bazooka during the Korean war. I got no response. But I find that the idea is now widely accepted on both sides of the current holy war. We ride around in vehicles and they shoot at us with rocket propelled grenades. We retaliate where possible with massive applications of heavy automatic fire and vehicular-mounted cannon fire. This is an inconclusive arrangement, and will change in one way or another before any sort of decision is reached.

So the matter of a forthcoming military pistol remains afloat. Douglas MacArthur was very fond of the 1911. George Patton, as well as Mike Hoare, fancied the Peacemaker. I asked Rudel about this and he told me personally that he packed one of those miniature 25 caliber automatics on his antitank missions. When asked why, he replied, "Because I have never been a pessimist." Hanneken, of course, used the 1911 on his famous exploit, but that was strictly speaking an assassination, rather than a combat mission. So when we ask what the characteristics of the new pistol should be – if any – we come up with various sorts of responses, but they apply to the weapon itself rather than its cartridge. The cartridge – the venerable 45 ACP – seems quite satisfactory though its projectile might be improved by going to the jacketed truncated cone configuration (JTC). The new pistol, if any, will apparently carry the same cartridge we have used since 1911. New ammunition for this pistol seems to be going to feature the JTC bullet, which should be a distinct improvement. Thus the new gun will be 45 auto, using both reserve RNJ and the JTC at option. I believe this is good news. We can use all the surplus hardball until it is expended, and then use new issue JTC ammunition.

So the Mexicans have held forth with a hair-splitting national election! This is an occasion for great excitement. The Mexicans have a tradition of very exciting elections, even when they are one-sided. When they are pretty close calls, such as this last one, the results may be quite rousing.

Those of you who can put your hands on a large quantity of 30-30 ammunition ought to be doing very well in weeks to come, if not to say, months to come. The lever-action 30-30 has been the weapon of choice for all parties south of the border, during most of our lifetime.

Well I haven't heard the shooting yet, but we can expect it to begin at any time.

"We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails."

Bertha Calloway

Riflemaster John Gannaway tells us that he will have a 50-caliber service pistol available for display at the *Reunion* (plus a modest supply of ammunition); he will also bring "Baby" (plus a modest supply of ammunition). Here is something else to anticipate! (6–8 October 2006 at Wittington Center.) John Gannaway and Tom Russell will be overseeing the *Reunion*. If you need more information about the forthcoming *Reunion* call Tom at (214) 509–0602 or e-mail him: tom@americanfirearmsacademy.com.

We learn that Tom is now "in business" doing firearms training, and anyone wanting superior instruction from a proven master of the range, contact Tom.

The people at Smith & Wesson are hard at work playing with new ideas, ranging from the giant 50 caliber revolver to a baby 357, which should have less to recommend it. Looking at the reduced frame, 5-shot, 357 at the SHOT Show, we were reminded that when the new "Magnum" cartridge was introduced back in my youth, it was accompanied by all sorts of cautionary warnings about violence in handling, restricting its use to large and "brawny" hands. Times have changed. It appears we have grown up in some ways and down in others. Consider the Baby 17 Rimfire. I do not see any purpose for this last item. Just what, for example, is the mission of a Magnum 17? There is a purpose, I suppose, for an inner city pigeon gun, but it would seem to be widely illegal in most jurisdictions.

"Worry is the misuse of the imagination."

Dan Zadra

We have mentioned it before but we say again that the Spanish term "*macho*" is not a derogation. To be *macho*, at least in my day in Latin America, was to be spirited and manly. A previous president of Bolivia, by the name of Barientos, made his point one day when he flaunted his command of the situation by playing with a parachute to the dismay of the political opposition. When President George Bush landed himself on the carrier on the way in from the war zone, he was being *macho* – to the dismay of the congressional left. He was manifesting *machismo*, and more power to him. Our notably *macho* presidents have been George Washington, Andrew Jackson and Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. We can use as much of that as we have lying around.

Our current US state of training in smallarms continues to decline. Poor as it was, it continues to get worse. We have people now who have no idea what a shooting sling is for – and this is for instructors, not just the troops at large! We have in possession a Boy Scout training manual dated from about 1937 which sets up an excellent standard for the individual rifleman. Dismal as this may seem, our currently standard poodle shooter is not much to work with, but we can do better than that, provided the need to do so is established. We get back some pretty fair sniper examples, but on the other hand, shooting after dark in short range urban situations does not offer us much of a goal for which to strive. Apparently today's infantry action is a matter of short range, high-explosive bomb-throwing. Not all outfits are the same, of course, and we get different strokes from different folks, much to our annoyance.

It seems that the European brown bear is moving westward into the protected forests of Central Europe. Not only are there now some pretty good sightings from Romania, but we recently hear of a sighting from Bavaria, right there in the land of beer and pretzels. This is good news, I guess, but it demands both verification and amplification. I think it is unlikely that 20th century big game hunting is about to catch on thereabouts, but one can always hope. *Waidmanns Heil!* and all that sort of thing!

Correction. We have been calling the Broomhandle Mauser a pistol for lo these many years. In this way I followed the example of Winston Churchill, who used his Broomhandle with notable success at the calvary charge at Omdurman, but we note the factory never so called the Broomhandle, but rather a "system." The people who made it called it the Mauser System 96, and in this they established a precedence which the public failed to follow. The Broomhandle, properly so-called, is a short-range collapsible carbine suitable for use by junior officers or senior NCOs, when properly packed in its GI wooden butt stock, which serves as both a shooting aid and a carrying case. As a "system," it was never adopted by any military establishment, but it did serve a purpose around the edges of the war-torn 20th century. Look at the sights. Those are not pistol sights. Note the extensive magazine capacity. That is not the feature of a pistol. Thus the Broomhandle is indeed properly labeled a system – and in the words of the factory, Mauser System 96. Its ballistics are somewhat strange, to say the least. A small caliber projectile of moderate velocity is not a fight-stopper. Neither is it properly an item of musketry, since it does not pack enough muscle to serve as an efficient item of battlecraft. In the hands of a cool-headed junior leader, however, it may be used as a sort of thickener of scuffles, bearing an item for which there is no regular military title. The Mauser people simply call it a "system." It never swept the markets, but it certainly was made popular by certain people at certain times, and Churchill, of course, was the preeminent example thereof.

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