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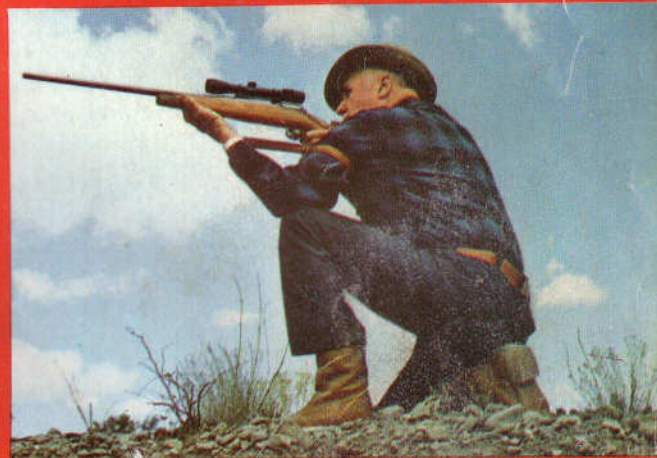
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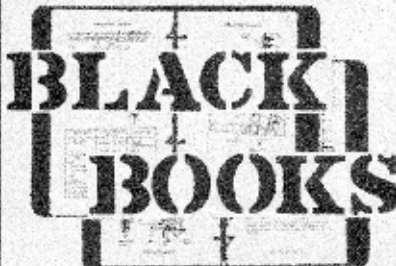
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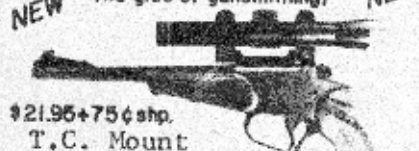
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MASSAD AYOUB ON HANDGUNS TODAY

IN SEARCH OF THE ALL AROUND AUTOMATIC

Last month, we took a quick look at the concept of an all-around handgun, and touched on the different revolvers that might fit the bill. This issue, we'll give autos the same treatment.

For those who missed the last issue, we're going on the premise that an all-around gun is something desirable here and now, primarily as a "traveling iron" but in other situations as well, and that the whole concept has to be geared to the needs of the individual and the tasks he expects it to perform.

The auto is sometimes better, sometimes worse when it comes down to assessing all-around versatility, use by use. It's generally accepted as better (in some calibers and formats) for combat; it's ideal for target work in anything but a PPC match, where it's usually forbidden; and most handgun hunters cleave to wheel-guns and single shots.

Again, let's take the circumstances of a typical active shooter (me) who wants multiple duty out of a single auto. For defensive carry, where legal, it has to be compact yet powerful. For hunting, it's got to be accurate and potent, and the same holds true in spades if I'm going to be hitting a metallic silhouette match, and is almost as important if I enter a free-style (i.e., Jeff Cooper type) match along my route. For NRA offhand matches, I need pure accuracy and a little versatility.

Let me start with what I'm going to end with: the .45 automatic. It is as close in versatility to the .357 chambering in a revolver as any auto can come. You've got 185-gr mid-range wadcutters for accuracy, 230-grain jacketed ball for all around, KTW Armor-Piercing (Western has discontinued their metal piercing load, which, fine as it was, never equalled the deep-drilling capability of a KTW with its steel or tungsten core and its jacket of friction-drag-reducing Teflon); and a new breed of high-speed hollowpoints that are devastating as either hunting or anti-personnel rounds.

230-grain ball ammo, as we started to say last issue, has great potential for all around use. A lot of NRA state and regional championships have been won by

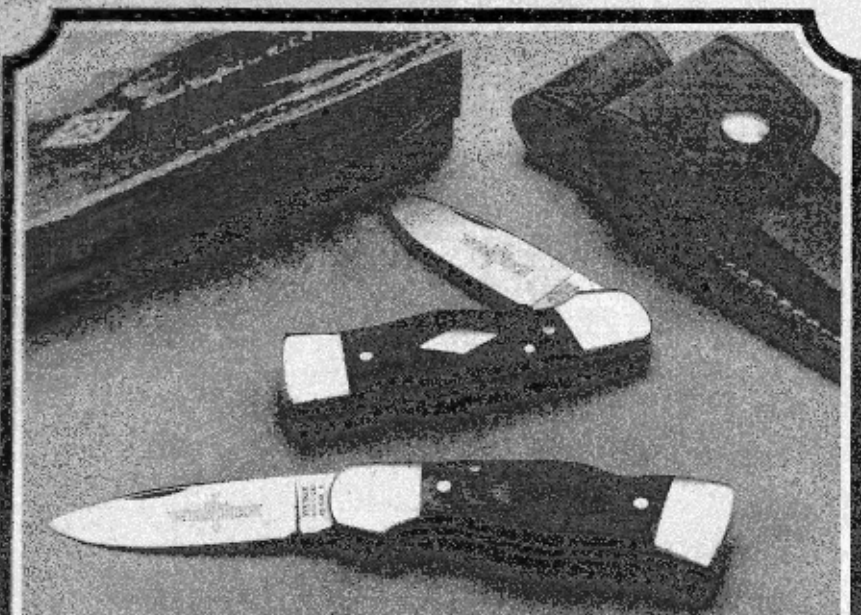
military shooters with match hardball, in competition with civilians shooting wad-cutter guns, which attests to its accuracy. Its stopping power is legendary (though by no means infallible, as I have about five or six cases on file where perpetrators shot through the torso with it refused to cease and desist, though I have citations on the same number of anti-personnel failures with 12-gauge deer slugs); and the round has unique potential on game. I know people who have shot deer with it, and claim it drops them in their tracks with thorax hits. They have taken deer with this round because, in some states, the rules that tell you you can't use full jacketed ammo on deer are phrased so that they can be legally interpreted as applying to rifles only (the same holds true of the .45 auto's eight round capacity: while some states prohibit you from hunting bucks with an autoloading rifle that holds more than five shots they so word their laws that pistols ain't covered.)

The same .45 hardball slug so effective on humans (and, we now know, on deer), is a great small game load. It knocks the little critters flat, but doesn't open up and blow away all that meat (which, in a bite-size animal like a squirrel, is all the meat). In light-bodied small game, the .45's destructive impact doesn't seem to have time to take effect. This is why, some shooters tell us, rangy Southwestern jack-rabbits can take .45 ball hits and keep going: tough and wiry-muscled, yet small in the body, they take the impact with a small puncture wound and often keep running. Big animals take the full, hard shock of the hit; less determined small game animals just fall over and get ready for supper from the good-size wound channel.

The .45's long range capabilities have never been fully explored in print. I always suspected that it had a lot to offer, and when people like Dick Marple began doing serious long range accuracy tests, I became convinced. The final kicker comes in the burgeoning new sport of metallic silhouette handgun competition: it

(Continued on page 36)

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for hunting; techniques for hunting big and small game; precautions to be taken in hunting dangerous game; long range handgun work; black powder and muzzle loading handguns; and tuning handguns for top performance. These are just a sampling of the subjects covered in the 22 chapters and 245 pages of the book.

Although the technical coverage, beautifully researched as always by Nonte, leaves no questions unanswered, the book is far from dry fare. Woven into the chapters are stories of hunts, usually with hunting buddy and co-author Lee Jurras, sharing with the reader the excitement attendant to the use of the short guns in taking game, on this continent and in Europe, Asia and Africa.

An autographed copy of "HANDGUN HUNTING", priced at \$8.95, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling, is available from: George Nonte, Box 3302, Peoria, Ill. 61614.

My only criticism of the book is relative to its coverage. There is one serious omission. If you buy this book, study it and put the techniques explained into practice, you are likely to wind up with a lot of wild eating meat on your hands. The book does not give a single damn recipe for cooking it. 

HANDGUNS TODAY

(Continued from page 16)

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seems that the .45 auto can win out over Contenders, AutoMags, and 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " S&W .44 Magnums. Last year at the Eastern Regional Championships, Skip Clark surprised the long range aficionados by using his .45 hardball competition auto to take home first place. Now, I wouldn't have bet on Skip to take it; he and I had shot together, and in fact had each captained the first-string pistol team of the famous Wilson Hill Pistol Club, and I knew he was a superb handgunner. I had seen him take championship matches with his almost stock hardball gun, shooting Match Ball ammo, but that was at the 50-yard line and I didn't think that punkin-ball bullet would be accurate or fast enough at 200 yards to knock over the steel silhouettes. But Skip showed 'em it could be done. Some observers said he would have done better yet with a .44, because he supposedly hit three or four silhouettes at the farthest distance that quivered with the impact yet stayed up. But those observers didn't win; Skip did. With his .45 auto.

In a conventional match, the .45 auto puts you in centerfire and .45 competition, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the aggregate, more than any other pistol can buy you. You can even use it in International Centerfire, though as we explained last month, your scores won't stand for international record if fired with anything bigger than .38.

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What about the other autos? A short bull-barrel target .22 gives you eligibility for any NRA indoor match, or for International Standard Pistol, and superb capability for taking small game. It may also be an adequate defense gun if (a) you are a super shot, and/or (b) your opponent has a low pain threshold and really just wanted you to end his existence for him anyway. I think a good .45 will do more than that for you.

.38 Super? Good for combat, adequate for medium (deer-size) game, useless for any kind of tight-grouping match shooting because of headspace problems and chronic neglect by gun designers and ammo makers.

9 MM Parabellum? It's got potential, but again, comes short on accuracy and versatility. The all-around pistol for it would have to be the SIG-Neuhausen, the only *really* accurate 9 mm. ever built, but still a gun no top precision shooter has ever done anything with. The SIG has lousy human engineering, despite its superb workmanship, in areas like safety catch design and magazine release.

The P-38 isn't that accurate; the Luger isn't that reliable. The Smith models 39 and 59 have yet to prove themselves outside of combat situations. The Browning has the best reliability, along with the Colt, but the first suffers from a mediocre trigger pull, and neither is really match-accurate.

AutoMag? *Aha!* The potential is there. I get mixed reports on its accuracy, depending on caliber, producer, and production run, but the good ones seem to outnumber the bad. At one time, AutoMag was talking about a .45 ACP version that was going to outshoot the Gold Cup. Titled "the Hardballer", it never reached full production, and the name went instead to AMC's stainless, 1911-pattern .45. But an AutoMag with match accuracy, and .45 chambering coupled with interchangeable .357 and .44 AutoMag conversion units... it would have been something *else* for versatility, provided your own criteria for an all around handgun didn't include being able to carry it concealed in shirt-sleeves.

Going back to the 1911, in a suitably accurate version of course, we have excellent defensive and target capability, very good hunting capability on all handgun size game, and a decent assortment of ammunition. The .45's versatility expands further (as does that of any Government model or Gold Cup in any caliber) by the availability of the Colt Conversion unit for .22 long rifle.

Colt's conversion unit has excellent workmanship and reliability, though you'll find an occasional full size .45 that won't take to it readily; this is usually a tight Gold Cup or an accurized GM. Nor will it fit any of the Commanders. It isn't especially accurate—even on a fifty-foot gallery course, it doesn't have the necessary grouping ability—and what they tell

you about the floating chamber equalling .45 recoil for practice purposes is a crock, because it kicks like any other .22, no more and no less.

It does give barely adequate small game capability within thirty feet or so, and does let you practice cheap with the same feel and the exact same trigger as the gun you're going to be using "for real". What you can do is shell out the price of a mid-grade target .22 and acquire a Day .22/45 conversion unit, which *does* give you X-ring accuracy. You're increasing somewhat the space you'll need in your luggage, but not as much as you would with a whole extra pistol, and you don't have to re-sight-in every time you change barrels as you would, say, with a Dan Wesson revolver. If match shooting is not your game, I understand Day now offers, or at one time did, a non-heavy-slide version of his .22 unit called the "El Macho". It should bring the small-game capability of the gun right up there, though I reiterate, the .45 hardball in your base 1911 isn't going to be that destructive on pot-meat.

If you agree that the .45 auto makes more sense as an all-around piece, the next question is obviously, *which* .45 auto? Out of the box, I'd go with the Series '70 Colt Gold Cup. It has more than enough inherent accuracy for any but the 295 shooter. It handles full loads flawlessly, and often better than standard commercial guns since a chamber throated for

match semi-wadcutters likewise enhances the reliable cycling of hollowpoints and Keith-style hunting and defense loads. Rumors of it breaking down on a diet of hardball are a crock. The story stems from a few years back when Gold Cups came with light wadcutters mainsprings, and ignorant people used them with full loads without putting in a full-length spring. The result was that the slide came back much harder than it should have, battering the gun (and the shooter) excessively. A Gold Cup with a full-length recoil spring will take all the hardball you can feed it, even if it's an early model with an ounce or two taken out of the slide in lightening cuts.

The alternative is a GM or service pistol with what Jeff Cooper calls a "three-quarter accuracy job": tightened, but not so much that functioning will be impaired. The gun I'd take out of my own battery as all-around would be the gun I most often *do* use as all-around. It's a National Match that was accurized a few years ago by the Air Force Marksmanship Training Unit at Lackland AFB, and fitted with precision, low-profile BoMar sights and Pachmayr Signature grips. This is the gun I use for most free-style combat matches, and occasionally for NRA bullseye shooting; it is also the gun I most often carry on duty as a uniformed police officer. I frequently pack it in mufti as well, most commonly in a Roy Baker Pancake holster, which ac-

commodates the high, undercut front sight. (I've got a hi-ride Safariland Sight-track that fits it too, but the Pancake conceals much better).

I've shot enough ball and hot loads through this gun (I can hardly remember when the last time was I had the short spring in it for target ammo) that some of the tightening has loosened, and in effect almost become one of Jeff's "three-quarter accurized" guns. It functions flawlessly with anything I put in it, and still shoots one-holers at 25 yards. Come to think of it, maybe I've only worn it down to a 1/2ths accuracy job...

But we can't say often enough that the choice of an all-around gun depends solely on the nature of the all-around shooter: the gun that will work best for you will reflect your tastes and habits and interests and needs, and not necessarily mine.

The all-around gun is useful as hell. I appreciate this type of piece because I travel a lot with only room for one chunk of hardware. Another person who needs the all-around gun, obviously, is the guy who only *wants* one gun. Maybe he ascribes to the theory that the one-gun man is deadliest because he's so familiar with that single specimen of weaponry. Or maybe he's primarily a rifleman or a shot-gunner, but likes to delve into pistol shooting every now and then, on a broad scale, and doesn't want to buy a new gun each time he takes a fling at a new hand-

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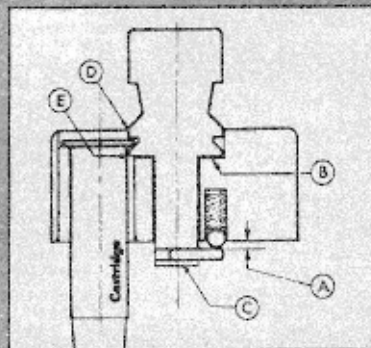
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HANDLOADING BENCH

(Continued from page 10)

ing from swaged lead semi-wadcutters for low-velocity target loads up thru high-performance jacketed-expanding types for hunting and defense, and on through jacketed semi-wadcutters suitable for a wide variety of uses.

At the present time, Remington offers three jacketed and two lead .45 bullets, and Winchester offers two jacketed and two lead. Federal offers three jacketed bullets covering service, target, and defense/hunting use. Speer offers three jacketed hollow point .45 bullets weighing from 200 to 260 grains (the latter being just now introduced) as well as an excellent 200 grain swaged lead semi-wadcutters for target use. Hornady makes at least two swaged-lead .45 bullets and three of the jacketed variety, two of them being hollow-points for hunting and defense use. And, under the well-known Sierra marque we have at least two jacketed expanding designs in this size. Then, in addition to the products of the larger companies, we have smaller outfits such as the Zero Bullet Company which produces mainly swaged-lead target-type bullets in this particular caliber.

All told, the .45 aficionado/handler of today may take his pick of literally dozens of factory or shop-made bullets weighing from 185 to 260 grains, and in virtually every form and design, and suitable for every purpose ranging from pip-squeak target loads up to smashing high-performance loads guaranteed to lay low man or beast.

Then, there are dozens of relatively small shops custom-casting lead bullets on a to-order or production basis. These shops will supply you with ready-to-load lead bullets of virtually every design and weight for which molds have been or are available.

The point we're attempting to make is that where it was once virtually a necessity to tool up and cast bullets to load the various .45's effectively and economically, there is no need to do so today. If you'll be shooting several thousand bullets per year, there is certainly an economic advantage to casting them yourself—even though the cost of a full-scale casting

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Please Send (postage prepaid):
12 oz. Bagged Unit \$6.00 each
12 oz. Bagged Unit \$3.00 each
12 Lifetime Naval Unit \$60.00 each
SEND TO (please print) Total Enclosed \$

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

All items... Money-back Guarantee