

Premiere Issue

Spring 2021



SG²



Snub Gun Study Group

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Dear Reader,

I hope you enjoy our first issue. You're free to share this magazine electronically or print it out and distribute physical copies. All we ask is that you provide proper attribution to the Snub Gun Study Group (SG²), don't charge money for it and don't modify it in any way.


Snub Gun Study Group (SG²) is a project to encourage discussion, education and training related to short-barrelled revolvers. It is so named because the predominant use of revolvers, in this era of nearly ubiquitous plastic pistols, is of the easier to carry short-barrelled variants. However, participation in SG² is open to all revolver enthusiasts.

We are inclusive and welcome everyone, regardless of race, sex, religion, national origin etc., because self defense is a universal human right. Whether you've been shooting for 30 years or you're still considering whether or not to purchase a firearm, we'll have something for you.

At this time, our primary activity is the publication and distribution of digital copies of this magazine. As things progress, we may provide an option for mailing print copies of the magazine to those who request it, in addition to producing other publications.

We look forward to your feedback and ideas for future issues. Even better -- how about contributing an article? You can also send in your photos, drawings, shooting drills or anything else you'd like to see in print. You will get full credit for your work and we can include a link to your website. If you are an instructor, a gunsmith or a manufacturer of revolver-related products or accessories, we want to help you promote your business.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at snubgunstudygroup@protonmail.com. Every e-mail will receive a response. Thank you for reading -- see you next issue!


Nick Walker
Editor



Tactical Reload for the Snubby

by David Kidder

August 1975 will always hold a special place in my memory. That was when I hit the streets as a rookie police officer. A Smith and Wesson Model 10 Heavy Barrel in .38 Special rode on my hip along with 12 rounds in a double dump pouch and 12 more in belt loops. All of my initial firearms training and follow-up in-service training for the next 15 years was with the revolver. It was our friend and we learned to take care of it and how to use it. In return, it always took care of us.

Revolver training in those days consisted of a lot of reloading drills. We loaded from dump pouches, belt loops and even from loose rounds in the pocket. Later on, we got really fancy and added speedloaders to our repertoire of loading skills. Eventually, the dump pouches pretty much gave way to the speed loader on our belts. The belt loops hung around much longer, due in no small part to the fact that speedloaders are an all or nothing proposition. What the loops lacked in speed was made up for in their versatility.

We didn't feel outgunned or undergunned while carrying our revolvers. We knew the limits of the system (the gun and ourselves) and we trained to maximize the effectiveness of the system within those constraints. When you only carry 18-24 rounds, you are much more likely to learn how to hit what you shoot at.

One of the skills we practiced was a Tactical Reload for the revolvers. I realize there is much debate within various aspects of the handgun community as to the value or even the need for the Tactical Reload. I feel comfortable in saying that when your ammunition capacity in the weapon is restricted to 5-6 rounds, you will quickly begin to see the value of the Tactical Reload for revolver shooters.

The concept of the Tactical Reload is simple. You have expended part, but not all of the rounds in your revolver. There is a "lull in the action". You are behind cover and have the opportunity to bring your revolver back up to full capacity. Performing the Tactical Reload with the revolver is not difficult, but it does require practice. I learned to shoot the revolver using the FBI method of loading/reloading.

Here are the steps to perform the Tactical Reload with the revolver:

1. Keep it in the support hand once the cylinder is opened and bring the butt of the grip in close to the belt buckle with the muzzle angled down.



2. Press the extractor rod with the support thumb only enough to move the rounds about one third of the way out of the cylinder.



3. Release the extractor rod, allowing the unfired rounds to drop back into the cylinder. The fired cases will have swelled slightly and should remain sticking up in the cylinder.



5. Refill the empty chambers from belt loops, 2x2x2 pouch, or from loose rounds in your pocket.



4. Pluck the fired cases from the cylinder.



6. Close the cylinder and re-establish your shooting grip.

Using the Tactical Reload after defending yourself with your revolver makes sense for a number of reasons. Your attacker may be down, but not necessarily out of the fight. There may be more than one attacker. You may have missed with your first shots. You may need to move to a better position. The key to using the Tactical Reload correctly is that it is only performed behind cover and only when there is a lull in the action allowing you the opportunity to prepare for the possibility of round two of the fight.

As an individual who has been trained in all methods of reloading the revolver, I can state with confidence that skills fade over time. Practice loading techniques regularly and consider adding the tactical reload to your drills. It is definitely a skill worth knowing how to perform. Train hard and stay safe.

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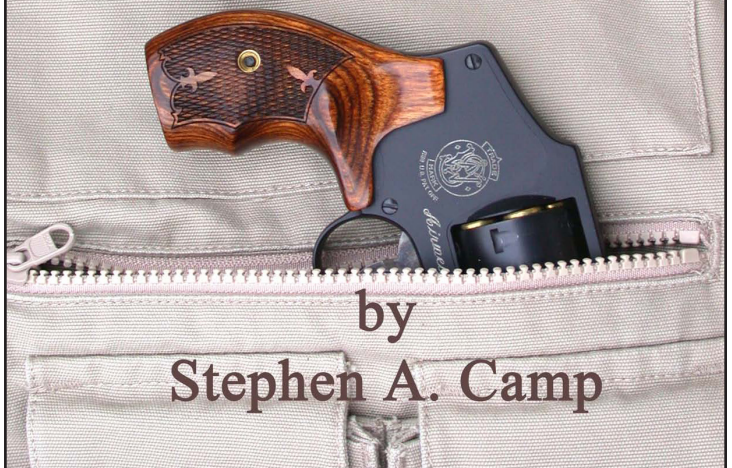


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**The Shooter's Guide
to Airweight J-Frames**

A user's guide to the classic S&W carry gun

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by
Stephen A. Camp

Those Speedy but Bulky Speedloaders

by Stephen P. Wenger

There are two basic types of speedloader -- twist-release and push-release. The choice is somewhat like a man's choice between briefs and boxers -- folks tend to fall into one of the two camps and adhere strongly to their preferences. Admittedly, I was trained with twist-release loaders -- specifically HKS brand -- and am most familiar with and partial to those.

Twist-release loaders are pretty simple. The body has openings for the cartridges, appropriately spaced so that they will align them with the chambers of the revolver for which the loader is intended. A knob turns a "star" clear of the openings for insertion of the rear of the cartridges, then turns it in the opposite direction, to engage the rims. When it's time to release the cartridges, the knob is turned back. On HKS loaders, the knob turns clockwise to accept and to release the cartridges and counter-clockwise to secure them. On the twist-release Pachmayr and 5 Star loaders, it's the opposite. A significant concern with speedloaders is the potential for an ergonomically shaped grip stock to interfere with the optimal alignment of the loader with the cylinder. This can be an issue even when the grip is shaped with a so-called speedloader clearance. Pachmayr uses a rounded hexagonal shape and 5 Star uses a scalloped shape to minimize that potential problem.

Some people dislike the fact that twist-release loaders depend on gravity to seat the cartridges in the chambers. While I recognize the potential for the chambers to get a bit "sticky" after a few loaded cylinders have been fired, I see that as more of an issue in a match or in training than in an actual gunfight. I prefer to look at the other side of the coin. The ability to release the cartridges without having all of them already partially chambered offers a few options:

- Cartridges whose bullets don't present a rounded ogive or taper, allowing easy, simultaneous alignment with all the chambers -- typically low-recoil loads with target-style wadcutter bullets or Federal's similarly contoured +P HST Micro load -- can still be loaded from a speedloader by indexing two of them at the outer edges of two chambers and twisting the knob.
- When revolvers ruled the roost, some officers who carried a K-frame S&W revolver in the duty

holster found that, in a pinch, they could use the same technique to reload a backup D-frame Colt revolver (e.g., Detective Special or Cobra), with its slightly smaller cylinder. I'm under the impression that this also applies to twist-release loaders sized for the five-shot S&W J-frame and Ruger SP101 revolvers to reload Ruger's LCR/LCRx revolvers, with their slightly smaller cylinders, and vice versa.

- In fact, this last technique can even be used to reload - at least partially - a five-shot J-frame revolver with the loader for a six-shot K-frame revolver. With no intervening practice, I demonstrate this from time to time. I can usually get four of the six rounds chambered and, on a good day, five of them.

Push-release loaders require the cartridges to be inserted far enough into their chambers to depress the release button at the center of the body of the loader. The only push-release loader that I can recall whose body was scalloped to facilitate that was the German-made SL Variant, which is not currently available. Thus, some people who prefer this system have found it necessary to deepen the speedloader clearance on the left side of the grip. At that, Safariland's more compact Comp II loaders still depend on gravity -- or finger pressure -- to finish seating the rounds. Others, such as Safariland's Comp III loaders, which use a spring to drive the rounds out of the body, add a bit more bulk on top to house the spring mechanism.

Speaking of gravity, reloading a revolver generally requires the muzzle to be pointed at least partway below horizontal or the cartridges will start sliding out before the action can be closed. That's just part of the price of using a revolver. Of course, as mentioned above, a faster alternative that is not dependent on position is a so-called "New York reload" -- transitioning to a second revolver. Speaking further of gravity, in a fight, the loader itself is expendable once the new rounds are chambered. Whichever type of loader is used, once it's performed its job, it is simply released so that that hand can reacquire the firing grip and the action closed as quickly as possible. Let gravity take the loader to the ground by whatever course it chooses -- don't waste time tossing it aside. On the range, empty loaders can be recovered when it is safe to do so. On the street, they're likely to end up in evidence bags.

(If some cartridges fail to drop out of a twist-release loader when the knob is turned, that's probably because of some interference between the grip and the body of the loader. One or two spins of the cylinder with the thumb already on the cylinder should let the remaining cartridges drop into place and allow the empty loader to find its way to the ground.)

Out of uniform or off the range, one challenge of speedloaders is carrying them discreetly. Add to that the fact that most users find it more ergonomic to align the cartridges with the chambers by holding the barrel of the loader rather than by holding the knob. (Tip: Once you've got the loader positioned at the rear of the cylinder, it's easier to use the thumb holding one side of the cylinder to rotate the cylinder than to rotate the loader for the final alignment.)

Cartridge spacing and belt thickness allowing, I like to carry the loader straddled vertically over the belt, with half the cartridges inboard and half the cartridges outboard of the belt. (That's usually three inboard and two outboard when the loader only holds five rounds.) With my experience limited almost entirely to HKS loaders, the two carriers that I prefer are the Second Six pouch from DeSantis and the Speedloader Clip from Ted Blocker Holsters. The former will work with both the J-frame and K-frame .38/.357 HKS loaders and provides the security of a snap while still allowing acquisition of the body of the loader with thumb on one side and middle and ring fingers on the other. It is adjustable for use on 1¼", 1½" and 1¾" belts. The latter is a spring clip, available in two versions for use with 1½" or 1¾" belts, and gives the fastest acquisition of an HKS loader, in the preferred grasp, of any system that I've seen.

Several makers produce pouches suitable for the more compact Safariland Comp II loaders, typically of ballistic nylon with a Velcro closure or of leather, with a snap closure. I see two problems with them: First, they place the entire bulk of the loader outboard of the belt. Second, they usually require that the loader be grasped by the knob, not by the body. There are a few offerings made of Kydex, which may or may not offer the preferred grasp. I recall seeing one that places the loader horizontally, over the belt. A major concern of mine is that Kydex is not tolerant of flexing. I have no reports on the durability of the section that holds the loader but I'd be very wary of any Kydex belt attachment that would be susceptible to flexing from the wearer bending over or from the belly hanging over the belt.

Most people can reload more efficiently by transferring the empty gun to the non-gun hand for the reloading

process and handling the loader in the dominant hand. Thus, loaders are typically worn on the gun side – if the gun is worn on the dominant side – or at the front of the body. With some holders that position the loader vertically, it may be possible to wear one loader just forward of the holster so that the two bulges blend into each other, making for easier concealment than two separate bulges.

Some people carry speedloaders in pockets. If you do so with a five-shot loader, here's a "hack": You can cut or grind down a 13- or 16-dram prescription vial (look for the number 13 or 16 on the bottom) so that the body of the loader just barely sits on the new rim and the bullets are protected from such things as pocket lint plugging the cavities.



Note that the speedloader is grasped with the pad of the thumb on one side of the body and the fingers projecting past the bullets of the fresh cartridges. It helps to use a carrier that allows removal of the loader with this grasp.



Clockwise from upper left: The extended fingers help align the loader with the cylinder, even if it's dark or the eyes are kept on potential threats. If the bullets don't slip into the chambers, the cylinder can be rotated slightly in each direction with the thumb of the hand holding the gun until they do. The knob has just been twisted, releasing the cartridges, which have dropped into their respective chambers. At this time, simply let go of the knob and let

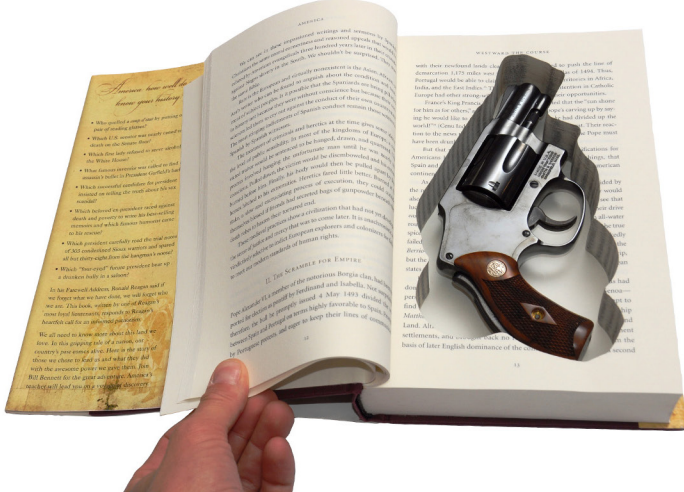
the loader find its own way to the ground. The knob has just been released and the gun hand is about to reacquire the firing grip, after which the action can be closed. The empty loader has fallen to the ground and the action is in the process of being closed. Once it is, the fight- if there still is one - can be resumed.



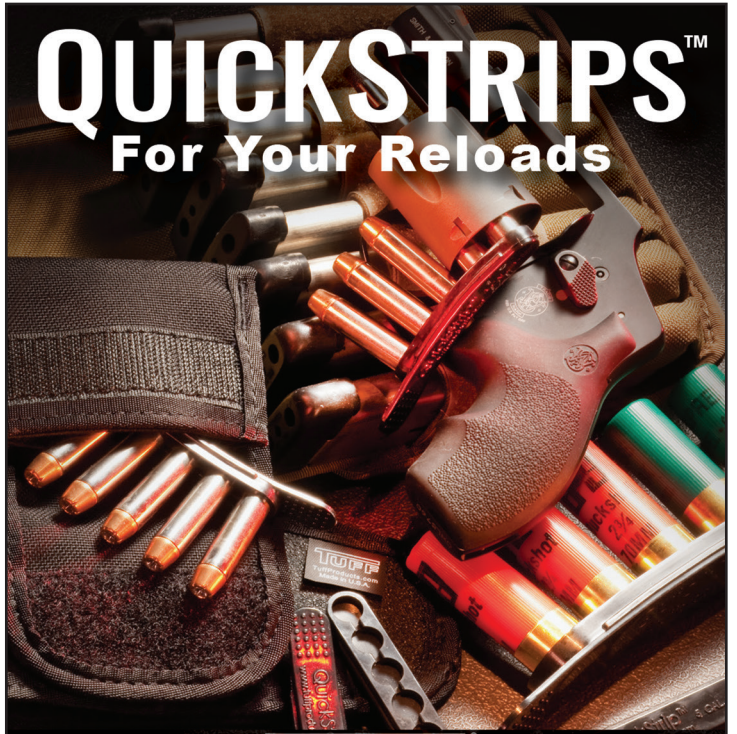
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Review: Leonard Pouches

by Nick Walker

A few days ago I had the opportunity to interview Blaine Leonard of Leonard Pouches. I was drawn to his products because of their high quality and low profile appearance – on a belt they look like a well-made holder for a lighter or similar-sized object. So I asked him how he got started.

“I’ve had revolvers for years,” said Leonard. “My first one, it was a cheapo, I can’t even tell you what kind I had. I originally tried speedloaders, they were nice, I had a dual pouch but it was just too bulky. I’m a 150 lbs dripping wet, something that thick on me was just too much. So I looked into some other options, saw speedstrips, I thought, I’d like to carry these everyday – who makes a pouch?”

So Leonard looked at the options. He could buy dirt cheap pouches made out of nylon, but most of them were ugly and not well proportioned. He then looked at the leather options, many of which were very nice – but they tend to cost \$60 or more. So, since his father had been a leathermaker and Leonard had all the tools, he decided to try to make one himself.

He used his downtime during his job at U.S. Forest Service to sketch the initial designs and had a prototype in September 2019. (I was surprised by that part – I thought he was going to say he had been making these for ages!)

“The first one I ever sold, that was maybe the third one I had made”, said Leonard. “I posted it to Facebook, a lot of people wanted to buy them. I made a few changes here and there, made it easier to fit onto belts, I started using Tandy fasteners and rivets, because they’re better quality. But in general, not too much has changed.”

“A lot of people have told me that it really conforms well to their body, they put it on and they don’t even notice it”, said Leonard. “They tell me it’s very comfortable, just another part of their gear at that point. I really enjoy hearing that.”

Leonard’s pouches are available at www.etsy.com/shop/LeonardPouches.



Smith & Wesson Model of 1950 in .45 ACP with a lopped barrel next to Leonard speedstrip Pouch.



A pouch for half moon clips in .45 ACP.



Leonard’s Pouches are available in four colors. He says the black is the biggest seller.

Shoulder holsters: the ugly stepchild of the CCW world

by Steve Collins

The shoulder holster is seen by many as a relic of years gone by, or something that is only worn by Hollywood actors. The gangster movies of the '30s, '40s and '50s all showed the good guys and bad guys wearing some kind of shoulder holster. Ultra cool, ultra hip Lt. Frank Bullitt, played by Steve McQueen in the 1968 movie Bullitt, carried his 2 ½" Colt Diamondback .38 Special in a Safariland upside down shoulder rig. And no one can forget Clint Eastwood portraying Inspector "Dirty Harry" Callahan, carrying his Smith & Wesson 6 ½" Model 29 .44 Magnum under his left arm. In real life, the shoulder holster was used on the frontier to carry a second gun, or to keep it concealed when towns started to become more "civilized." But the shoulder holster is still a vital component of the concealed gun carriers holster battery today.

I've met a lot of first time concealed gun carriers and first time buyers of guns. Invariably, they bought a shoulder holster of some kind, usually a cheap nylon version, tried it and found it incredibly uncomfortable. They then proclaimed that the shoulder holster is impractical for every day carry, and never tried it again. Getting a good shoulder holster is just like everything else: you get what you pay for. Buy good gear! Don't go cheap. Firms like Bianchi, Galco and Ken Null offer excellent shoulder holsters. Expect to pay more, but you'll get more, as well.

There are aspects to the shoulder holster that definitely work against it. First and foremost, many of them require a substantial covering garment to conceal them. While this may work for most of the year in someplace like my home state of Oregon, it's pretty hard to get by with it in places like Alabama or South Texas. Also, it's difficult for a lot of folks, men especially, to get used to having something across their shoulders like that for many hours a day. Larger chested men soon find out that just getting their hand on the gun is difficult, as they just don't have the range of motion to get there.

Conversely, while the shoulder holster may not be the choice for a lot of men, it seems to work well for many women. Their greater flexibility allows them to get to the holster easier. A lot of women's fashions don't utilize belts or belt loops, so where is she supposed to put a holster? The shoulder holster does away with this problem.

Types of Shoulder Holsters

There are times when the shoulder holster becomes the best choice for the job. One of those times is when we're carrying a heavy gun, such as an N-frame Smith & Wesson or a Colt Government Model 1911. The traditional vertical shoulder holster, typified by the Bianchi X15 that has been around since the Vietnam War, works well for distributing the weight of such a gun. With the grip straight up and the muzzle straight down, it is easily accessible through the open top of a winter coat in cold weather, or a lighter coat in more mild weather. One notable feature of the medium sized X15 is the variety of handguns that it will fit. Everything from a 5" 1911 to a Beretta 92FS to a 4" Smith & Wesson K-, L-, or N- frame revolver will work with it.

The upside down holster made famous by Steve McQueen in Bullitt is not seen much anymore. This is because it was really designed for short barreled revolvers like the Smith & Wesson J-and K-frames, and the Colt Detective Special and Diamondback. As those fell out of favor in both law enforcement and the civilian sector, so the holster design fell out of favor as well. Both the Safariland and the Bianchi 9R have been out of production for some time, but can still be found online with some looking. Current versions are made by Ken Null, who makes the SMZ and SKR for revolvers.

The most popular one today is the diagonal shoulder holster, or more appropriately shoulder system, pioneered by Galco and made famous by actor Don Johnson as Detective Sonny Crockett on the television series Miami Vice. This rig allows the gun to be carried with the muzzle positioned at a 45 degree angle under one arm, and spare ammo under the other. The whole setup can be taken off or put on all at one time, and keeps all of your essentials together.

Special Considerations

There are certain things you have to keep in mind when working with the shoulder holster. When using the upside down variant, it's not always easy to get a full firing grip. Using the middle finger of your shooting hand, you sort of "flip" the grip towards you, get ahold of it, and present the gun to the target.

With the vertical shoulder holster, a lot of people will simply rip the gun through the front of the holster, where the metal clamshell holds the gun in place. This is how the shoulder holster got the reputation for being unsafe on the range, since this technique sweeps everyone to the left of the shooter. Instead, the gun is drawn straight up, keeping the muzzle pointed down until the gun is in front of you, then it's presented to the target. Reholstering is the same.

The horizontal holster is another kettle of fish in that not only do you cross everybody else, you also cross your own arm when you draw! The proper technique is to bring your support arm elbow up, once again keep the muzzle pointed down until the gun is in front of you, then present it towards the target. The upside down holster is similar to this, as well.

When Do I Use It?

While most will not use the shoulder holster, for others it makes perfect sense. Those that work behind a desk or a counter will find it easier to get to their gun in this manner than a traditional hip carried gun. Drivers or chauffeurs, for obvious reasons, will prefer this method of carry. The shoulder holster makes an excellent backup gun carry method, as well. Many police officers have carried and do carry a second gun in this manner.

It doesn't have to be the same gun, either. In college, I would routinely carry a Smith & Wesson J-frame .38 Special with a Barami Hip Grip inside my waistband, and often I'd wear a 4" Smith & Wesson Model 29 .44 Magnum in a Bianchi X15 vertical shoulder holster under my left arm. In the mild Oregon weather, I could wear a covering garment most of the year with no worries.

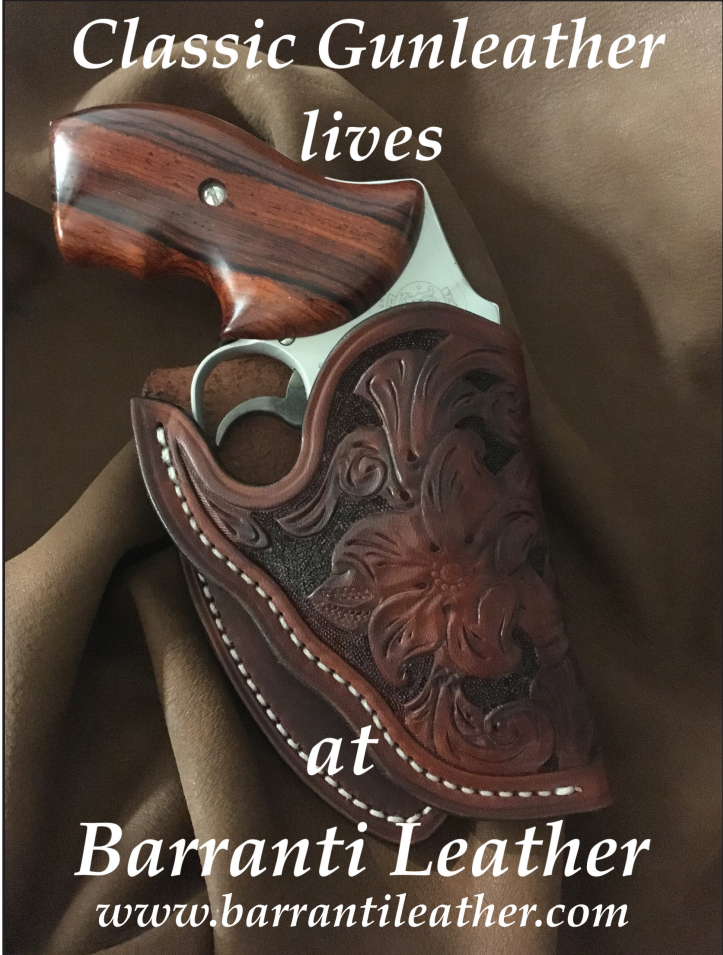
The shoulder holster should be a part of every shooter's gun "wardrobe." I like them, and wouldn't be without a couple of them for certain situations. For some people they just won't work. But for others, they may be the best thing going.

Steve Collins is a firearms instructor and writer based in SW Missouri. He is a US Army veteran, former member of the US Army Marksmanship Unit, and a Master class IDPA competitor.

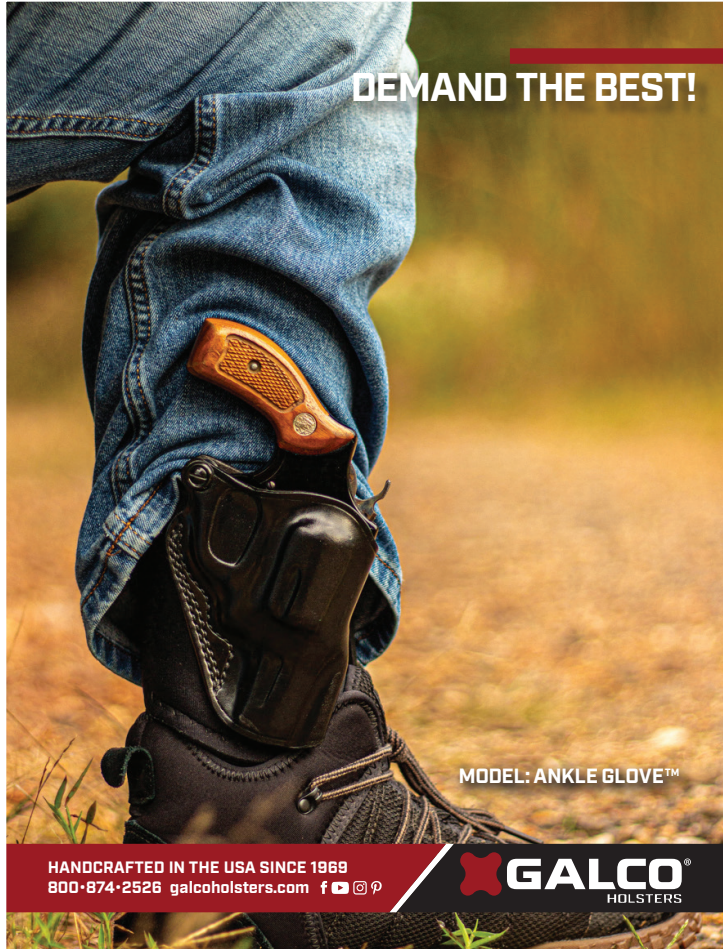
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The Taurus Model 856: A Modern-Day Snubby for EDC


by William Bell

Taurus International has introduced a redesign of its small frame .38 Special revolver that's been a standard bearer for many years. The Model 85 is similar in size, function and appearance to the J-frame Smith & Wesson .38 Special wheelguns, with both having a 5-shot cartridge capacity. Now Taurus has upped the ante and produced a revolver that closer in size to a Colt Detective Special (one of our favorite classic snubbies) with the same 6-shot cylinder.

This new Model 856 is available in both an all-steel version as well as Ultra-Lite model. My steel test model came with a matte blue finish, but it is also available in a stainless version. At around 22 oz. it's a bit heavier than a Model 85, but is not much bulkier, plus you get the extra shot. It has a traditional SA/DA mechanism and the firing pin is mounted in the frame. It has an internal hammer block safety, but doesn't have the safety lock feature in the hammer. The cylinder has two locking points; one at

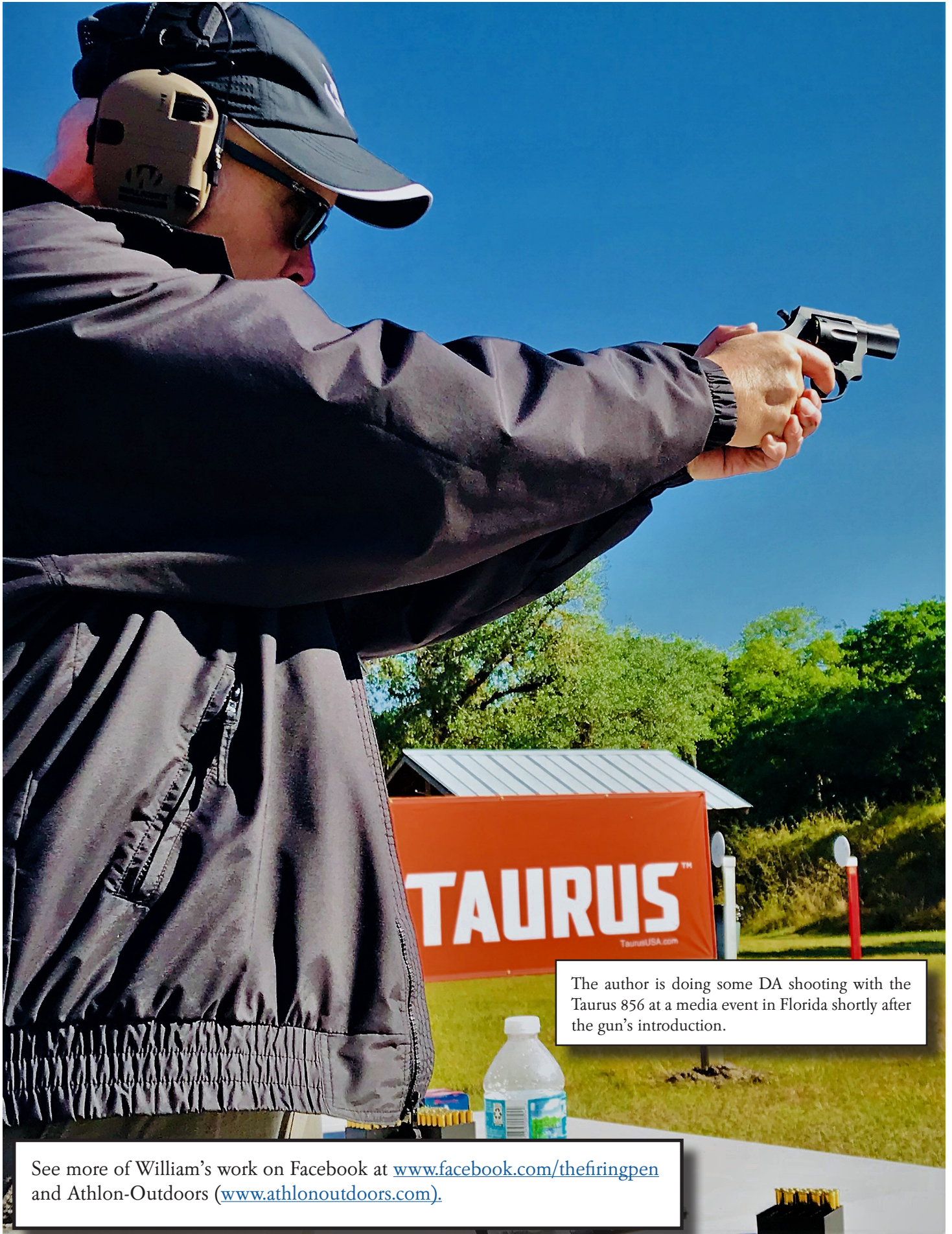
the rear of the cylinder and the other on the cylinder yoke/crane. It has a longer ejector rod because of the true 2.0" barrel and as there is no locking point at the front of the ejector rod shroud, the rod could've been made a tad longer. The single-action trigger pull was a shade over 5 lbs. and the DA pull estimated at 13-14 lbs., but smooth throughout its travel. A good design, the trigger has a wide, smooth face and the hammer spur is checkered. The rear sight is a fixed square notch and the front sight a sloping, serrated blade about 1/8" wide. This Taurus does not have a plethora of laser etchings on it; something that plagued earlier Taurus handguns. The black rubber grips fill the hand well and afford good control for rapid fire shooting. Overall fit, finish and quality were very good.

Early production markings on the Taurus 856 have .38 Special and not .38 Special +P. I inquired about this and Taurus has now approved use of high-pressure ammo in this .38 revolver. However, I chose to shoot the standard



The new Taurus Model 856 is a compact 6-shot revolver in .38 Special and makes a great EDC; it was tested with 5 different .38 loads.

Photo credits: Action photos by the author and stills by Jordan Bell



The author is doing some DA shooting with the Taurus 856 at a media event in Florida shortly after the gun's introduction.

See more of William's work on Facebook at www.facebook.com/thefiringpen and Athlon-Outdoors (www.athlonoutdoors.com).

pressure stuff. There are non +P .38 Special loads that can be effective with proper shot placement and they are easier to control for rapid-fire shooting in smaller, lightweight handguns. For a traditional target load and one that can double for defense due to the bullet shape and round controllability, I chose Black Hills 148 gr. wadcutter. Its bullet has a flat face that cuts a .358" hole in a paper target or an animate target. I measured its velocity at 636 FPS in the Taurus 856. Another traditional .38 Special load is the 158 gr. lead round nose bullet; a cartridge that was the service load for many American police departments in days past. It's represented by Remington's Performance WheelGun cartridges and flies out of the 2" barrel at 694 FPS. A standard velocity JHP load in the 158 gr. bullet weight was produced by HPR Ammunition and it gave 691 FPS. A lighter weight JHP is the Colt Defense Ammunition's 110 gr. bullet as loaded by DoubleTap Ammunition; it gives 1,043 FPS. Then just for enjoyable plinking or practice, I used Winchester's "Cowboy" load with a 158 gr. lead flat-point bullet at 693 FPS.

At my usual outdoor range I set up a portable target stand at 21 feet attached a large paper target and moved back to the range bench. Using a sandbag rest, I shot three 5-shot groups, in SA, with each of the test .38 Special cartridges using the Taurus Model 856. The best group measured 1.13" and was made using the Remington Performance Wheelgun 158 gr. RNL cartridges. It also produced the best average group at 1.45". Second place went to another 158 gr. lead load, the Winchester Cowboy load with a 1.27" cluster. The best groups of the other three .38 loads were anywhere from 1.52-1.96" and the biggest average group was just 2.22". The Colt Defense 110 gr. JHP shot about 3 inches below point of aim due to its light, higher velocity bullet. I'd consider none of these cartridges "punishing", the rubber grips helped absorb recoil and my thumb joint didn't get mauled by the cylinder release latch during any of the shooting.

To do some combat-style shooting I put up a B-27 silhouette target at 10 yards. I then strapped an old Don Hume Agent 9 holster on my belt and loaded the Taurus Model 856, securing it in the holster. I then loaded a Model 10-A HKS speedloader that works well in the Taurus and put it into a Safariland belt holder that I'd secured just ahead of the holster on my trouser belt. Next, I filled a Bianchi Speed Strip and it went into my right trouser pocket. The ammunition I used was a mixture of the five .38 Special test cartridges, but the first cylinder-full had the flat-faced Black Hills wadcutter rounds. Shooting began at 3 yards, drawing and firing point-shoulder, strong-hand only, six shots, then a reload from the belt and six



This is the results of the combat course the author shot at distances of 3, 5 and 10 yards with the Taurus 856 and a mix of test .38 Special ammo.

more shots, support hand only, then a reload using the speed strip and re-holstering.

Just to keep in a good tactical habit, I did a 360° assessment of my immediate area for threats. After replacing the ammo in my speed loader and speed strip, I moved back to 5 yards. From here, I drew and engaged the target with a series of 3 double-taps, taking a flash sight picture for each 2-shot string. I reloaded, re-holstered and then drawing I performed a failure or body armor drill. This amounts to drawing and firing 2 shots center-mass and then one to the head, twice. Then I reloaded and moved back to 10 yards. Here was shooting from beside a barricade, drawing and firing 2 shots left-side standing, 2

shots right-side standing and 2 shots right side kneeling. Deliberate aim was taken with these at the center-mass area of the target. All this was in DA.

Checking the target I had all center-mass shots in the 10 and X-rings, except for 6 hits in the 9-ring and 1 of the 2 head shots wasn't where it should be. The Model 856 ran well in rapid fire. The all-steel gun's weight, plus the well-designed rubber grips made for a quick recovery following each shot. A real plus was the grip design didn't interfere with use of the HKS speed loader. Empty cartridge cases extracted with ease and ejected using a technique I'd learned years ago in the U.S. Border Patrol. The sights were easy to see and kept me on target at 7-10 yards. There were no malfunctions of any kind. As far as I'm concerned Taurus revolvers are on par with any that I have tested and better than some costing a lot more.

By The Way, Taurus has also introduced a new Defender version with a 3" barrel and a tritium front sight. For more information on this revolver go to www.taurususa.com.

Specifications

Taurus Model 856:

MECHANISM:	Traditional DA/SA revolver
CALIBER:	.38 Special +P
CAPACITY:	6 rounds
BARREL:	2.0"
OA LENGTH:	6.55"
HEIGHT:	4.8"
EMPTY WEIGHT:	22.10 oz.
SIGHTS:	Serrated ramp front; fixed rear
FINISH:	Matte blue steel
GRIPS:	Black soft rubber combat style
MSRP:	\$363.53




Comparing the Taurus 856 with a classic Colt Detective Special, you can see the size similarity; plus it even looks almost like a post-72 DS.

FBI Miami Firefight

Five Minutes that Changed the Bureau




by
Edmundo & Elizabeth Mireles



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Casting Bullets for the Colt New Service
and Webley Revolvers
by Ed Harris



This week I am casting bullets for my Colt New Service .455 Eley from the new Accurate mold 45-264H, to load in my newly received Starline .455 Mk2 cases.

Starline .455 Mk2 brass is 0.76" long, vs. 0.86" for Dominion .455 Eley and .455 Colt cases.

Accurate 45-264D was designed with the absolute minimal 0.25" seating depth, to maintain powder capacity and reduce pressure in the shorter case. It also features a 0.1 wide, full-diameter front driving band above the crimp groove. This aids cartridge alignment in the chambers when using the shorter Starline, Fiocchi and Hornady Mk2 cases in longer Webley military and Colt New Service revolvers manufactured with long chambers intentionally dimensioned for the longer Mk1 (Colt-Eley) case, so that those WW1-era revolvers could fire either round.

The shorter Mk2 case was adopted in 1897 to reduce excess free airspace in the case to improve ballistic uniformity when used with smokeless powder. The correct powder charge to use in Mk2 Starline cases with this bullet is 3.5 grains of Bullseye. This matches the 625+/- 25 fps velocity of the WW2 era Mk2z service load.

The center ctg. in the photo (facing page, inset) is a .455 Eley with Accurate 45-290H bullet assembled in a 0.86" case, made by shortening Starline .45 Schofield brass to 0.87" and lathe-turning the rim. If this heavier bullet is to be fired in Webley top-break revolvers it should be loaded ONLY in the longer 0.87" case, UNLESS the powder charge is REDUCED to 3 grains of Bullseye. In the longer 0.86" length case which was pressure tested by Larry Gibson, the maximum recommended charge is 3.5 grains of Bullseye, which should not be exceeded.

Making the longer Colt-Eley-Mk1 case from Schofield brass is recommended for those loading ammunition for older marks I through III of Webley revolvers which are proved for black powder only, so as to hold the full 21 grain black powder charge.

But for most users of Boer War era Webley MkIV and later Webleys, as well as the S&W .455 Hand Ejector and Colt New Service, buying Starline Mk2 cases is very much easier. This new Accurate 45-264D design mostly compensates for the shorter Mk2 case by reducing bullet seating depth to maintain powder capacity, reducing bullet jump and improving guidance of the bullet in its transition from case mouth to the cylinder throat. The large meplat will provide good crush characteristics with deep, straight-through penetration, at low velocities <700 fps where no expansion is expected.

My mold drops bullets as-cast from 12 BHN backstop scrap at .456" diameter and 262 grains. It fits my 1914 Colt New Service as-cast and unsized. The .425" long

nose above the crimp precludes its use in the .45 Colt, as cartridge OAL would be 1.71". Cartridge OAL is 1.525" in .45 Schofield brass, 1.323 in .45 Auto Rim, 1.285" in .455 Colt and 1.185" in .455 Mk2, and this ogival wadcutter should have excellent potential for those classic .45s.



Photo captions

Title page: This Colt New Service revolver with 5-1/2 inch barrel chambered in .455 Eley according to Colt factory records was part of a 650-gun shipment to The London Armoury Company 31 Bury Street, St James SW1, London on December 7, 1914. Having British commercial proofs, but no Broad Arrow property mark or regimental markings, it was a private sale to James B. Garwood, a British officer who like most at that time, were required to furnish their own "kit."

Above: Grouping from the Webley at 50 yds.

Facing page: This Webley MkVI originally produced in 1914, and underwent Factory Through Repair for WW2 service in 1940. Despite a frosty, "salt & pepper" bore, it is "combat accurate" with cast bullets. In 1916 Capt. C.D. Tracy and Capt. J.B.L. Noel produced the "Instructional Course for the Webley Pistol," which emphasized instinctive point shooting. Its objective was for every soldier armed with a revolver to be able to accomplish "The War Shot" – hitting a 16" high x 12" wide steel plate at ten yards in one second.



12
2304
CARTRIDGES
REVOLVER
455 INCH MK VI

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CARTRIDGES
REVOLVER
455 INCH MK VI



I am a pistolman by Frank Groth

In his 1950 book *The Secrets of Double Action Shooting*, the late gun writer and competitive shooter Bob Nichols devoted the fourth chapter to “The Pistolman”. The title of this article is the first sentence of the chapter.

A lot has changed in the world of handguns since Nichols’s book was first published over seventy years ago. The double action revolver that was the mainstay of police and law abiding citizens has fallen from prominence, largely supplanted by the striker fired semi-auto. Colt, mentioned prominently in the book and the world leader in handguns for more than a century, is today a shell of its former self. A vast majority of handguns are made today by companies that didn’t even exist back then.

The focus of Nichols’s book is how to properly shoot a double action revolver for both speed and accuracy,

something at which I have become very adept in over forty years of experience. Some of the secrets he imparts are not secrets at all, not to me anyway.

Pictured here in my hand is an unloaded Smith & Wesson Military & Police revolver, in a virtually identical pose to the photo on the cover of Nichols’ book. My revolver is wearing a set of Pachmayr Gripper Professional stocks which are a much improved lineal descendant of the Merston stocks that Nichols favored. The grip I am using is the proper one handed grip. I can teach anyone that grip, how to fit the revolver’s grip to hand size and both the fundamentals of marksmanship and more advanced skills and techniques.

What I can’t teach anyone is common sense and personal responsibility. Those come from within.

I grew my knowledge bank on pistol shooting at an





early age through the published works of Keith, Jordan, Cooper, Askins, Skelton and many other writers, including Bob Nichols. And I had the benefit of working with many competent instructors over the years. But at that time most shooters, even working cops, shot their revolvers by first cocking the hammer... even in a fight, shooting a double action revolver as it was designed was something of a novelty. Today, times are different. Some of the revolvers I own have never been fired by first cocking the hammer.

Mechanics and marksmanship aside, the core concept that Nichols identified, copied below, is what it's all about. It has not changed a lick in the seventy years since he published his book:

With the deadly serious side of the pistol frankly recognized, however, authorized permission to carry a loaded pistol on one's person is more than a substantial guarantee of a man's character and responsibility.

The loaded pistol carried on his person is a constant reminder to a man that he is always obligated to live up to his established reputation for responsibility.

The properly authorized pistolman is, therefore, a first-rate American – and quite a valuable man to have around too, as our municipal police should more intelligently comprehend.

There are a lot of people today who are authorized to carry a firearm; whether it be with a concealed carry license or by the permitless open carry that our constitution was intended, in part, to protect. These are good people that have taken an interest in protecting themselves and their families. They understand that in the unlikely event

trouble happens they are their own first and last line of defense and that the police, however well they mean, are going to get there long after the matter is settled. They understand innately that criminal violence does not work shifts, and it doesn't make appointments.

But there is a segment that does not take seriously the responsibility they've signed up for even though they've made the choice to defend themselves if they must. John Correia of Active Self Protection talks about this demographic a lot, and his analysis of it is spot on. That segment treats the firearm they carry as some form of magic talisman that will automatically deliver them from evil should evil happen to come calling on them. They take their concealed carry course, get a license, and go on their way. Some don't practice or train with their guns or their gear, ever. They haven't thought much at all about what they might, or should not, do in a moment of truth. They haven't trained their mind or their body to act appropriately in that moment. They think they don't need to.... they carry a pistol, after all.

I recognize the need to live up to the reputation for responsibility, every single day, that going armed for personal protection implies. I recognize that responsibility, or the lack of it, reflects on the character of the person. I understand not only the safe and correct use of a pistol, but also the legal and moral responsibilities of using them. I do not take the responsibility lightly. I practice and train rigorously. I've learned from my successes as much as I have from my failures. I am a first rate American.

I am a pistolman.



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