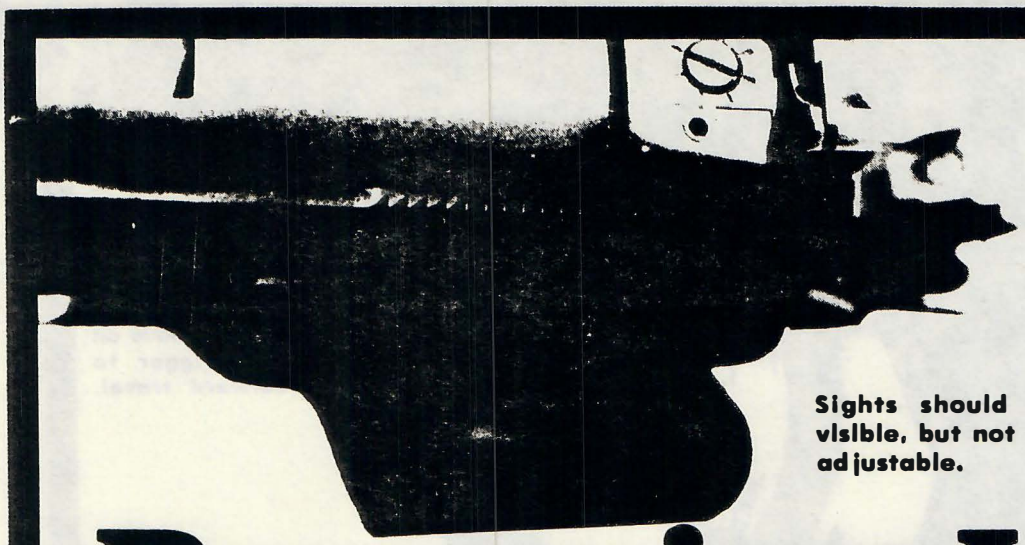
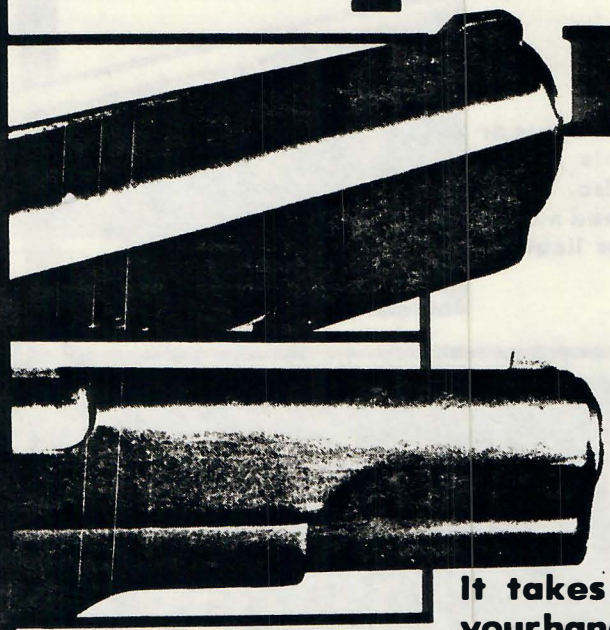


Sights should be highly visible, but not necessarily adjustable.

Preparing Your Handgun for Combat

By Chuck Taylor



Front sights should be ramped to avoid the accumulation of foreign matter. Sights with pronounced edge or hook also tear clothes.

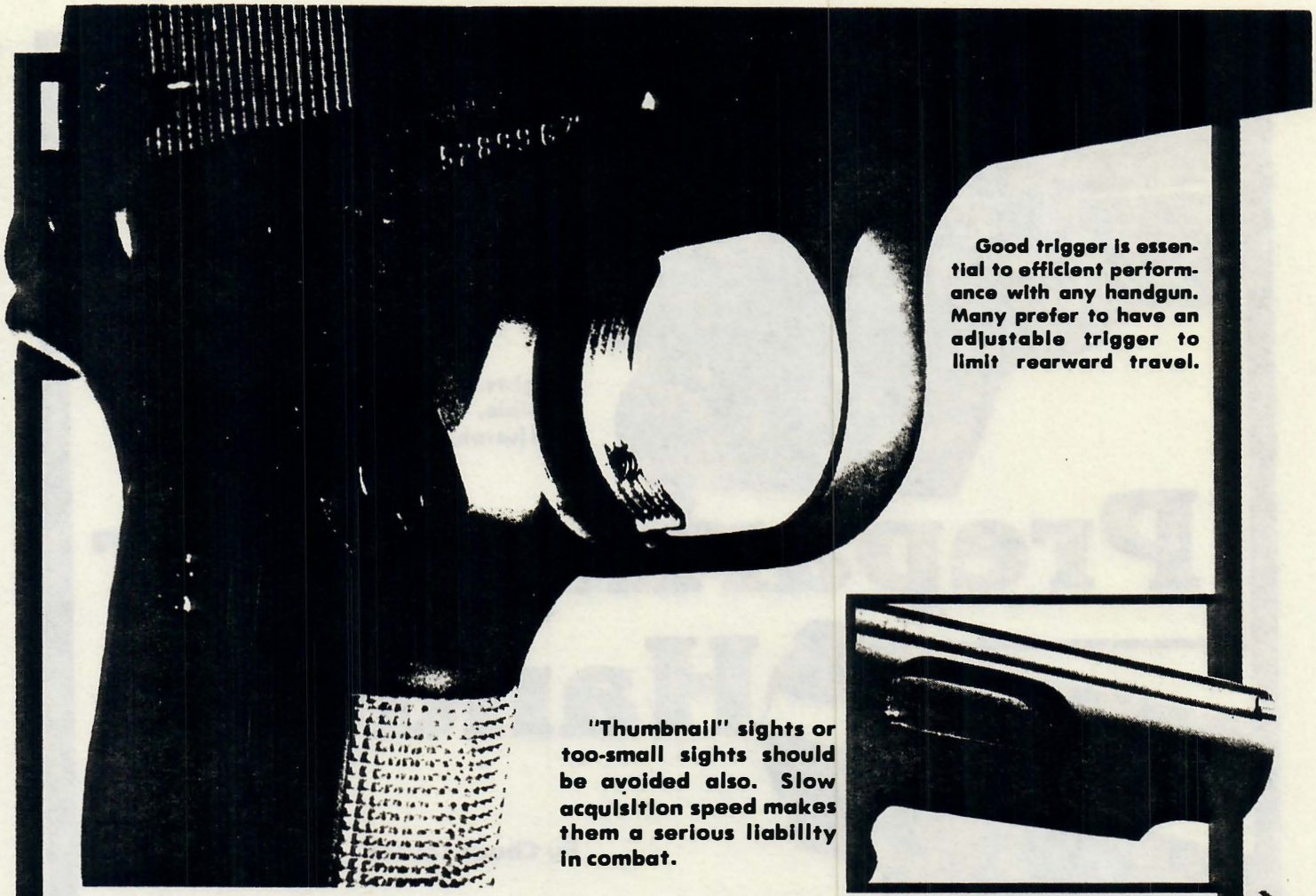
It takes work to ready your handgun for a deadly confrontation. Here is advice from an expert.

Fixed rear sights are more rugged than any adjustable, but do reduce ammunition flexibility.

So you've finally gone and done it. You've bought yourself a handgun with which you intend to defend yourself, your family, and your possessions if the occasion should arise. Well, *good for you!*

But before you put your new piece in the holster or nightstand—aren't you forgetting something? No, I don't mean zeroing it, or function-testing it, or selecting the proper ammunition, although these things are certainly important. Take a look at your gun, go ahead, take a *good* look. *Will it perform to its potential when the chips are down?*

Surprisingly, the answer is usually *no*. No? What am I talking about? Well, guns are, in their good examples, perfectly capable of inflicting a serious or even mortal wound. This, of course, is what makes them useful, for indeed, some people require shooting to prevent them from committing atrocious acts, but beyond that, what more do you need, right?



Good trigger is essential to efficient performance with any handgun. Many prefer to have an adjustable trigger to limit rearward travel.

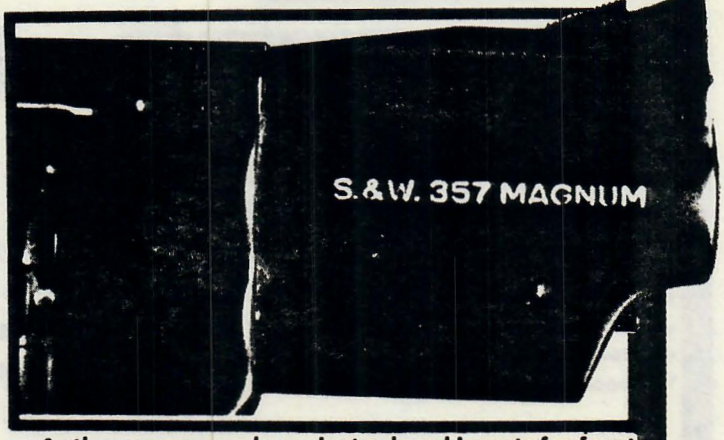
"Thumbnail" sights or too-small sights should be avoided also. Slow acquisition speed makes them a serious liability in combat.

There are a number of areas worth looking into by one who has decided to become the owner of a serious defensive handgun. The guy who intends to simply purchase a pistol, a box of cartridges and proceeds to load the magazines (No, its not called a "clip!" and lock the weapon in a dresser drawer or nightstand to keep it away from the kids is not the man in which I am interested. We said *serious*, remember? I'm addressing the fellow who is consciencioulY contemplating his, and his family's, welfare. We all know that no such man would simply place the gun in his belt or in the nightstands without first familiarizing himself and possibly his wife and even the children with its operation. No, I'm talking to the guy who intends to get to *know* his weapon and, more importantly, how to best carry and *use* it.

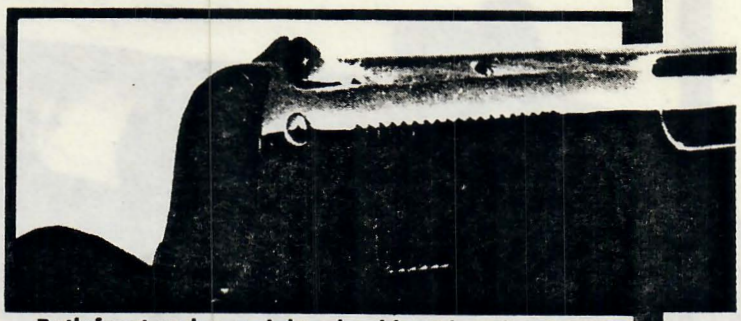
Other than the selection of an appropriate holster (a task in itself but largely the function of one's individual lifestyle), there are a multitude of things that can be done to a pistol, some good, some not so good, but all quite popular these days. Careful utilization of them can do much to enhance the "combat utility" of your piece.

If the gun is an auto-pistol, the first thing that should be examined is its *trigger pull*. Is it reasonably good or is it excessively heavy? Does it have any creep? Is the trigger compatible with your trigger finger?—Too short? Too long? Too wide? Too narrow?

Any competent gunsmith (and there aren't as many as you might think) can rebuild the trigger to "fit" you. Pull weights are a subject of controversy, but generally a novice should not insist on a light trigger

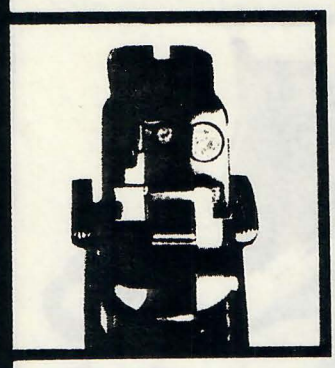


Author recommends against colored inserts for front sight since they are fragile and, he feels, accomplish nothing to increase sighting efficiency.



Both front and rear sights should not be a bright color such as grey or silver. Sight picture with such colors is inferior and susceptible to changes in light.

The original M1911 .45 auto appeared with a flat mainspring housing. In early '20's an arched version replaced it. Which is best for you is matter of individual circumstance.



"Dehorning" or removing all edges from weapons is important and saves wear on both clothing and skin. Best way to determine locations of sharp edges is to briskly rub hands all over weapon. Wherever edge is felt, it should be removed.

Since good grip is necessary for effective use of the auto-pistol, particularly at high-speed, it has become popular to either stipple or checker the front strap of the piece.

because he does not *need* a light trigger to shoot well. He needs a *crisp* trigger. This means minimum creep, *none* if possible. Pull weight should be in the vicinity of 4 to 4.5 lbs., no more, no less. Some people like featherlight pulls of under 3 lbs., but such things are probably more of an affectation than a serious asset. If you are an expert then you know enough about yourself and your firearm to have a pretty good idea of what is best for you. Otherwise it would be better and safer to stay with the basics until you further develop your skills. Then and then only reexamine your criteria.

The matter of *sights* calls for intelligent consideration, for the wrong sights on a gun can literally be the death of you. You need sights that are *highly visible*—easy to pick up at speed. *They need not be adjustable.* although adjustable sights do allow a bit more latitude in the selection of ammunition.

The front sight shouldn't be narrower than about 1/16 inch and 1/8 inch widths are becoming almost de rigueur. The notion that one must have "thumbnail" sights to obtain an accurate sight-picture is erroneous and the lack of acquisition speed of such sights makes them a liability that can totally negate whatever marksmanship skill you possess or attain. For, if it takes you too long to pick up the sights, you'll be dead long before you can shoot. I suggest that you opt for a "hi-viz" partridge type front sight and let it go at that.

A current fad is to place red, white, green, or yellow plastic inserts into the front sight to increase its visibility under poor light conditions. It is almost as popular to sport a sight that is squared or even finned to enhance the clarity of the sight to the eye. Colored inserts do not provide the answers to the problem and, as you might suspect, actually *create* as many problems as they solve.

The handgun is used mostly under conditions of dim light, according to the prestigious *FBI Uniform Crime Report.* Not total darkness, you understand, but parking lot or streetlight levels, as opposed to what you might encounter in a basement or warehouse with the lights extinguished. There one cannot see *anything,* including his target, without artificial assistance. So that colored insert won't help and, for that matter, neither will an illuminated sight. Remember, you shouldn't fire unless you can visually identify your target as being hostile. *If you cannot see your target then it matters little if you can see your sights.* This makes nonsense of the idea that such things are a cure-all.

Under typical indoor conditions you'll need a flashlight, and if you learn the right technique of using it, you will find that your sights are beautifully silhouetted on the target. All you have to do is obtain a normal sight picture and fire.

At normal nighttime light levels, one who has proper control of his gun can place a center-hit on his opponent as far away as he can be identified, regardless of whether the gun is in hand or drawn from the holster. Your "stroke" or draw and/or stance, if properly learned, will take care of this naturally. If it does not, the solution is to learn the correct technique, not substitute a gadget that won't help.

Colored inserts are made of fairly soft plastic and have the annoying tendency of chipping, breaking, rounding

at the corners, or just plain falling out of their mountings. These are serious flaws and, at best, contribute heavily to a poor sight picture during daylight conditions. They also cause many shooters to fire high due to an optical phenomenon. When these things are weighed against the fact that they provide no real increase in sighting efficiency they do not appear as attracting as one might at first think.

Unramped front sights tend to wear clothing excessively and pick up foreign matter from the interior surfaces of the holster. Upon drawing a weapon so-equipped you may be astonished to find a blob of fuzz in place of your front sight! Hardly conducive to good marksmanship, hey? Much the same applies to white outlines or color patterns on the rear sight.

Turning now to functioning, one should consider the idea of having the ejection port of his auto relieved to enhance ejection reliability. Likewise, to improve feeding, he should have the feed ramp polished and barrel "throated". Even if you intend to use only ball ammunition, these things won't hurt a bit!

Many combat competitors bevel the inside corners of the magazine well to allow faster insertion of the magazine. If you choose this option I recommend that you require a 60-degree bevel with all edges and corners rounded. Many gunsmiths provide only a 45-degree bevel, and after evaluating both for some time, I feel that the 45-degree angle is more cosmetic than efficient.

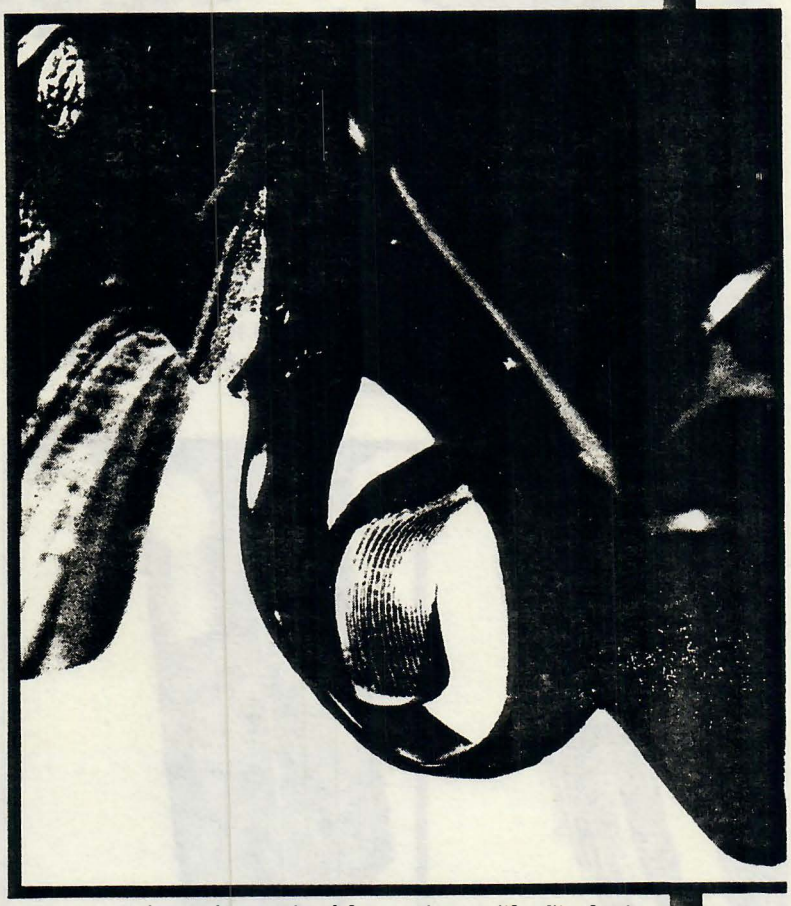
Originally, the Colt-Browning 1911 pistol featured a flat main-spring housing. In the '20's it was changed to an arched design. There is no inherent superiority in either one. Whichever feels best in your hand should dictate your choice.

Grip safeties should be pinned only if you discover that your grip style does not depress the device. I have personally found this to be the case. If you experience a similar situation, then by all means pin it, because a gun that doesn't go off when you press the trigger is no help.

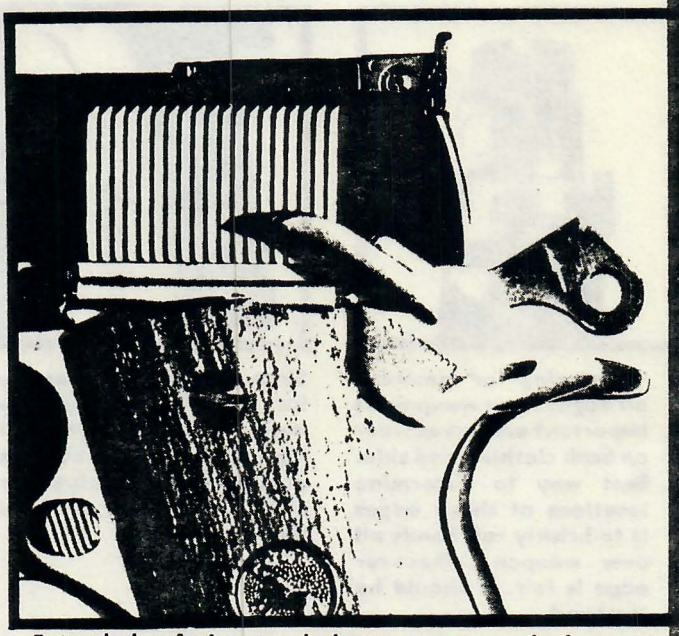
The so-called extended safety or "speedy safety" as it has become known is an improvement over the original government .45 type. But on commercial models the standard safety seems to handle the problem quite satisfactorily. Extended safeties are the result of IPSC competition and while they help some people, they do not help others at all. Consider the issue carefully when you decide.

Ambidextrous safeties are intended for left-handed shoorters and they are, in reality, the only ones who require it, contrary to current vogue. It is nice to have one for certain IPSC competitive events that require certain "tricks" to successfully compete, but such devices are of no value whatsoever in a fight, *unless you are left-handed.*

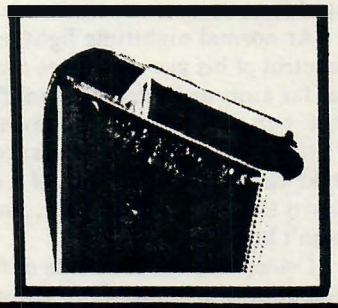
Extended slide stops, oversize magazine release buttons, and reversed magazine release buttons (for left-handers) should be avoided. They are the result of either ill-informed



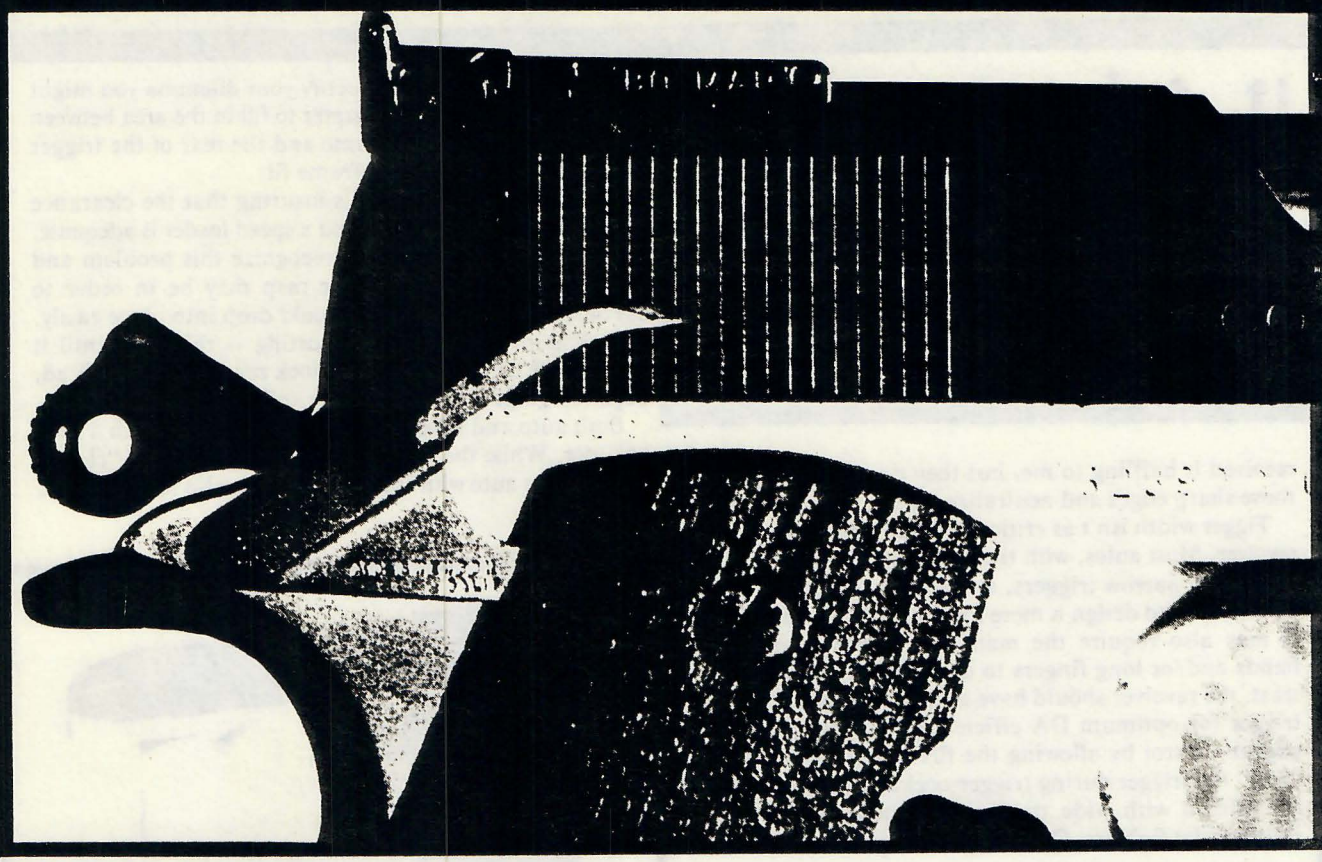
Narrow trigger is required for optimum "feel" of trigger during fast DA action with revolver. Serious combat shooter should avoid target shooters accessories such as this wide trigger.



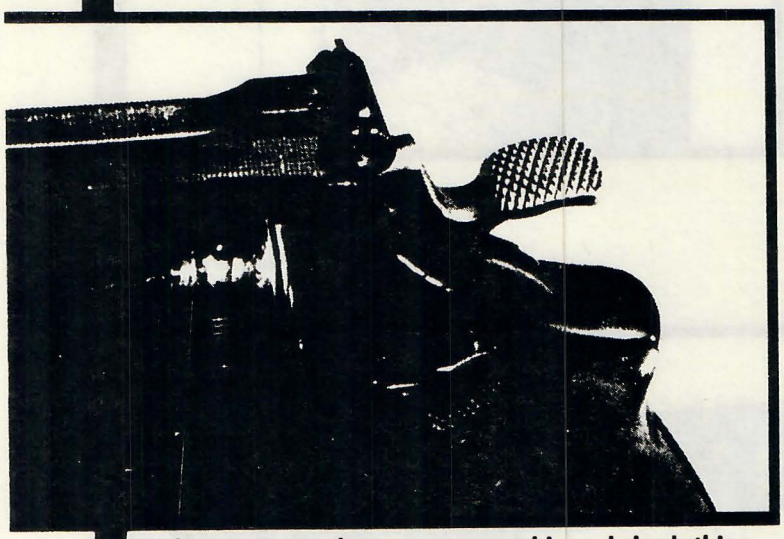
Extended safeties are help to some people but not others. Selection should be based upon examination of hand to gun fit and operation rather than fad. Commander hammer also helps prevent "hammer bite" and is esthetically pleasing.



Magazine well can be bevelled for increased reloading efficiency. If done, should have a 60-degree bevel, not 45-degree, and all corners should be removed.



Ambidextrous thumb safeties are required only by left-handed personnel and are no real importance to right hander. Is popular to use such devices in IPSC competition where certain competition "tricks" are helpful in winning matches but is not required for combat use.



Wide target-type hammers gouge skin and rip clothing. Should also be avoided for a serious use.

people or people who are more interested in making money than improving the performance of your pistol. Actually, the auto should never be "shot dry" in the first place, for the ability to remain in action, if required, while reloading is one of its biggest superiorities over a revoler. To fail to utilize this indicates a lack of competency on the part of the shooter, and can cause malfunctions that just might get you killed. Oversize magazine release buttons have the disturbing propensity of droping your magazine out of the gun at the time when you can least afford it, usually when you aren't even aware that it has happened. Not good, eh?

Reversing the magazine release button to accommodate a left-hander is also evidence of ignorance, for the standard configuration works even better for a "lefty" than for a regular right-handed person! Using your left index finger—try it. See what I mean?

Many gunsmiths install a long recoil spring guide rod on .45's as part of a "combat" package. These do nothing at all to increase the accuracy or reliability of your piece, but they *do* present a considerable nuisance in trying to check the condition of it. You cannot "pinch" open the gun in order to check its chamber and magazine well because the guide rod prevents the slide from retracting under pressure from your left index finger.

If you have decided upon a revolver you should also examine the trigger, and upon so doing will discover that you have both single *and* double-action pulls to consider. Because of the time frames involved in pistol fights, DA shooting is pretty much required and for this reason you should insure that your piece is given a smooth, glassy DA pull. This will minimize the tendency to fight your way through the long DA process, yanking your sights off of the target in so doing.

Most revolvers come out of the box with pretty good and quite often adjustable sights and this is great. Now, pick up the gun and rub your hand all over it, particularly the sights. Feel that? *Burrs and edges galore!* Anyplace you feel an edge, remove it (this applies to autos as well.). Doing so will reduce wear on clothing and skin. Why gun makers insist on leaving such an important matter un-

It takes work to ready your handgun for a deadly confrontation. Here is advice from an expert.

resolved is baffling to me, but they do, so you must find those sharp edges and neutralize them.

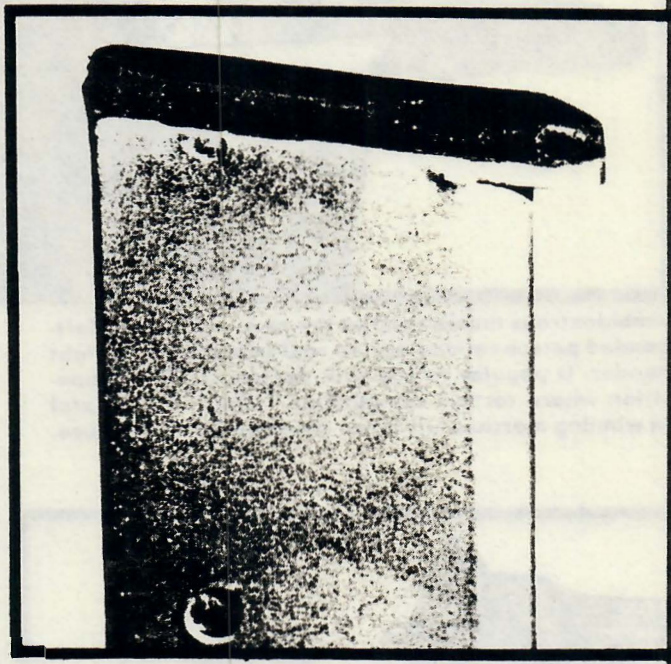
Tigger width isn't as critical with an auto as it is with a revolver. Most autos, with the exception of the Gold Cup, come with narrow triggers, and with reason, for the auto by concept and design is more forgiving of the wide trigger. It may also require the man with larger than normal hands and/or long fingers to use a wide trigger. In contrast, the revolver should have a *narrow, polished smooth* trigger for optimum DA efficiency. This abets superior trigger control by allowing the firer to more completely "feel" the trigger during trigger-cocking. Many revolvers are offered with wide triggers but these are for target shooters not fighters. One should bear this in mind.

Many people prefer to have the butt of their revolver trimmed to remove the square corner from its bottom. This is called "bobbing" and is useful in reducing fabric erosion if one wishes to wear an outer garment over his gun. An added benefit is that it frequently assists in obtaining a better grip on the gun, not an unimportant matter to say the least! Stocks (sometimes called "grips" in error) should also have all sharp projections and edges removed for the same reason. Such will not in any way reduce grip efficiency.

Anyone who finds that he simply *cannot* make his hand fit the frame of his chosen piece can purchase any of a multitude of stocks of both the custom-made and mass-produced variety. Naturally prices vary commensurate with which type you choose, but it is safe to say that with respect to this particular issue, *availability* isn't the problem. If stocks do not rectify your dilemma you might consider installing a grip adapter to fill in the area between the forward edge of the frame and the rear of the trigger guard to enhance hand-to-frame fit.

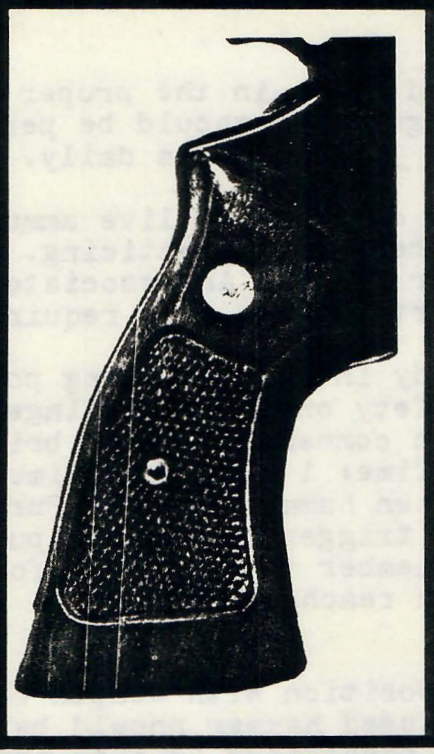
Another revolver matter is insuring that the clearance between the left-hand stock and a speed loader is adequate. Many manufacturers fail to recognize this problem and alteration via Dremel tool or rasp may be in order to alleviate it. The speedloader should drop into place easily. If it does not, then further cutting is required until it does. Some refinishing of the stock may also be required, depending upon personal tastes and requirements.

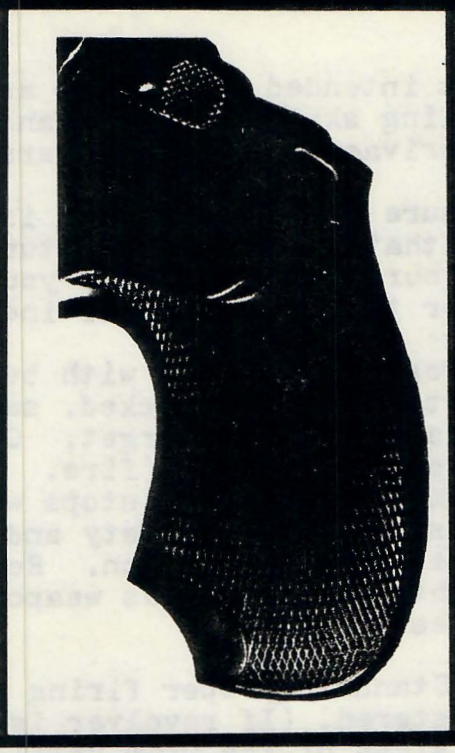
Both auto and revolver are generally found with a spur hammer. While the wheelgun is a more offensive "clothes gouger," the auto with spur hammer can also be a problem.



Many combat shootists place pads on bottom of magazines to allow more positive seating of magazine during quick reload.

Another option available for the auto is to relieve the ejection port to facilitate better spent case ejection.





For those who cannot make their hands fix factory stocks, most of which are poorly designed for serious shooting, custom stocks may be of help. This failing, grip adaptors frequently rectify the problem. Again, watch out for required speed loader clearance.

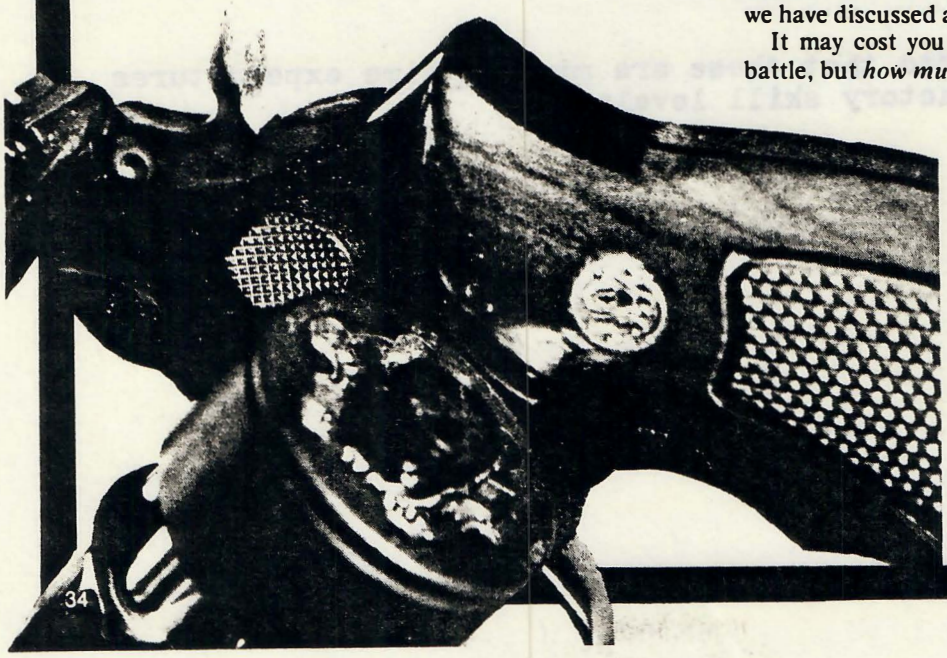
With either type the spur can be either reduced or removed entirely, thereby further reducing wear on that shirt and coat. For autos, a Commander type hammer will solve the problem nicely. Some grinding will be needed to relieve the grip-safety tang but this easily done by any competent gunsmith.

Last, the matter of *finish* must be considered. Those who dwell in areas of low humidity have the least worry, for obvious reasons. For persons who must carry their weapon near the skin, such as in a waistband-type holster, or in more moist geographic locations, industrial hard chrome, armoloy, electroless nickel, and Metalife finishes all have merit. Teflon and black chrome also have promise but the final choice rests with you, hopefully based upon an intelligent evaluation of the facts.

Remember to keep those sights black, for nothing is harder to see than white-on-white or gray-on-gray. You must have a good sight picture to get the most from your defensive firearm.

Not many things are as personal and yet as diverse as setting up one's personal defense handgun. What works magnificently for one man is a complete bust for another, we know this. In the preceding I have set forth certain parameters, within which if you operate you will go far in obtaining the best possible performance intrinsic in your pistol or revolver. If I seem opinionated, I can only say that I try very hard to remain objective in the pursuit of my business, which is solely that of combat weaponcraft. I teach it and see it day after day, and those things which we have discussed above are what *works*.

It may cost you some money to ready your piece for battle, but *how much is your life worth to you?*



If speed loaders are to be utilized, care should be given to insure that adequate clearance exists between frame of gun and speed loader. If such is not the case, stock must be relieved via Dremel tool or rasp until loader drops in easily.

Basic

Dry Practice Drill

This program is intended to develop and maintain the proper degree of handling skill with the handgun. It should be performed in the privacy of your quarters 30-45 minutes daily.

Remember to insure that your weapon is cleared, no live ammunition is nearby, and that you are not disturbed while practicing. Work hard and push yourself to increase your skill. An associate must be recruited for timing. 7 rds. of inert ammo is also required.

1. The Ready Position: Stand with body in proper firing position, weapon empty but cocked and locked, safety on, trigger finger outside trigger guard, eyes on target. On command to fire, bring weapon up to eye level and dry fire. Time: 1 second. Time starts wwhen firing command is given, stops when hammer falls. Purpose of this drill is to develop safety and trigger finger manipulation skill and hand & eye coordination. Remember to bring eye focus in to front sight from target as weapon reaches eye level. Practice time: 10 minutes.

2. The Draw: Stand in proper firing position with weapon cocked, locked, and holstered. (If revolver is used hammer should be down.) Practice the 5 steps of the Draw until smoothness is obtained, then work on speed. Draw Time Goal: 1 second. Time begins with command to fire, ends with hammer fall. Practice Time: 15 minutes.

3. Malfunction Drills:

a. Position 1: Individual Drill Time: 2.5 seconds.
b. Position 2: Individual Drill Time: 1.5 seconds.
c. Position 3: Individual Drill Time: 6 seconds.

Practice Time: 10 minutes.

4. Stress Reloading:

a. Automatic time: 2.5 seconds.
b. Revolver time: 4.0 seconds.

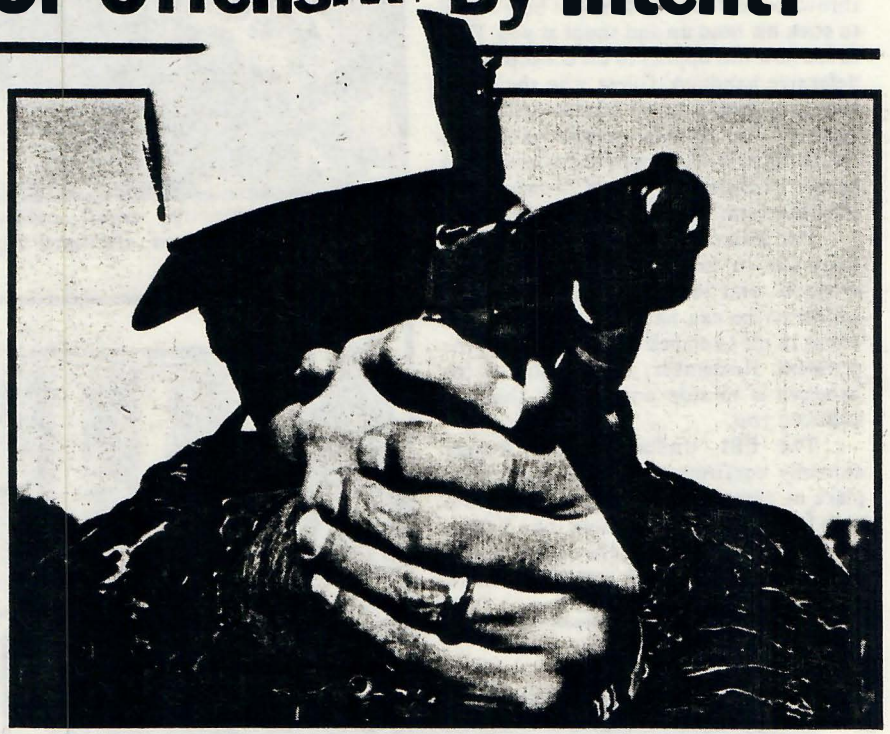
Practice Time: 10 minutes

It should be noted that these are <u>minimum</u> time expenditures to build satisfactory skill levels.

COMBAT CORNER

The .45-9mm Debate - Is A Handgun Defensive Or Offensive By Intent?

If "defensive" then the argument boils down to "stopping power" and the .45 must win. But if "offensive," then the attacker needs "fire-power" and the 9mm, with its large capacity magazine, will rule the day.



By Chuck Taylor

The large-capacity, small caliber pistol has achieved considerable popularity in the last several decades. Naturally, there are reasons for this. We can cite weapon design, quality, and engineering among these with little or no danger of contradiction. We can, however, also cite public relations programs, advertising, and consumer ignorance as well, for the situation involving these weapons is curious indeed.

Among the listed "advantages" of the large-capacity, small-caliber pistol, we find:

1. Lighter recoil—the smaller cartridge "kicks" less.
2. Increased ammunition quantity—one can carry more small-caliber ammo.

Let's examine these two factors a bit, shall we?

There is an overriding Law of Nature, discovered by Newton. He stated, to wit: "For every *action*—there is an equal, but opposite *re*action." This, naturally, applies to handguns as equally as it does to everything else. Certainly the small cartridge recoils less—it propells a lighter, smaller bullet. *But is this really an advantage?* I don't think so, because there is another critical factor involved here: the mission of the combat handgun.

The only reason for the existence of the fighting handgun is *defensive*. It is here to provide effective response against unforseen attack by others, no more—no less. In order to successfully accomplish this mission, it must possess sufficient force to satisfactorily *stop* or neutralize the actions of the assailant, preferably with one torso hit. Historically, the smaller calibers have performed dismally in this category, and no amount of rhetoric can alter the fact. Even the hollow-point or soft-point concept is suspect, insofar as it can be applied to the claim of enhancing the stopping power of the small caliber, because actual expansion of the HP/SP bullet in humanoid targets is very, very poor. So poor, in fact, that they only expand about half of the time! 50% is not a very good prognosis in my book, and I simply cannot condone willingly going into combat with such odds, especially when there is a *choice*.

Regardless of what you see in so-called "studies" conducted by the government and ammunition companies, you must remember that what actually occurs when people shoot *people*, not wet telephone books, clay, duxseal, water, sand, or gelatin, is what matters. It is my

opinion that this somewhat obvious fact has been either ignored or forgotten more often than not. Unfortunately, those who have found themselves in a position to realize that their caliber has failed them are usually unavailable for comment!

This tends to complicate the matter, because the proponents of the small-caliber are loud and vociferous. They normally lack one thing, however, *actual combat experience.*

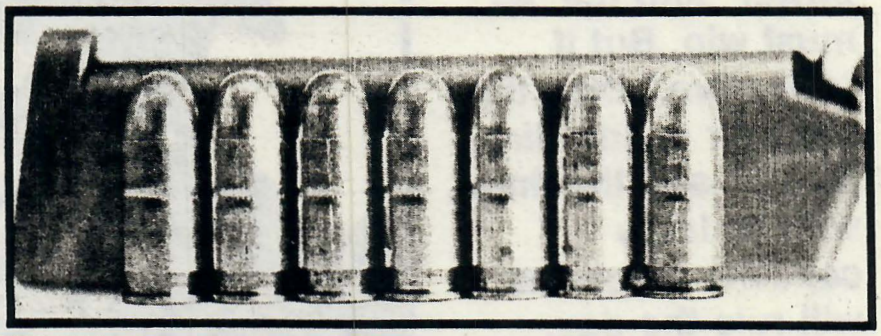
The second "advantage" of the small caliber is that one can carry more ammunition, thus obtain "firepower" that was heretofore unobtainable with larger caliber, smaller capacity arms. To more fully understand the problem, let us understand the word *firepower.* Firepower is a definitive term used to describe "suppression of an enemy through fire-superiority."

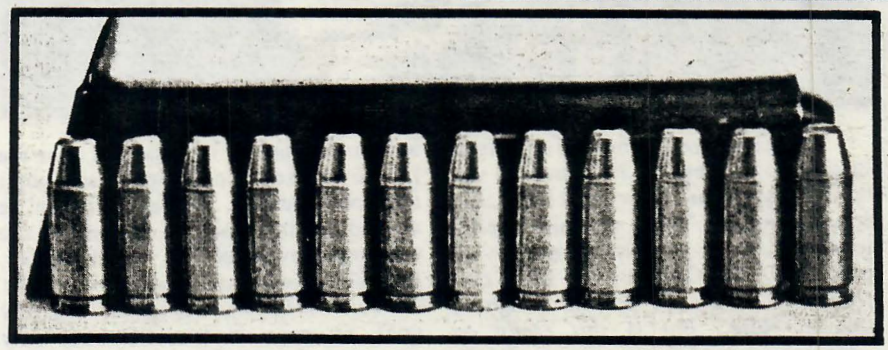
This means quite literally that you throw so much lead at him that he is afraid to stick his head up and shoot at you. I fail to see how this applies to the concept of the defensive handgun. Guess who the guy is who is supposed to be afraid to stick his head up? The *defender*—that's who! Since the handgun is used not by the attacker, but by the defender, how does firepower, an offensive term by definition, apply?

One man cannot produce enough true firepower to matter, particularly with a handgun, and the idea of using a small caliber so he can have a bigger magazine seems to me to smack of losing sight of the problem. Remember, the mission of the handgun is to stop an assailant that has attacked *you.*

The FBI Uniform Crime Report annually confirms that pistol-fights take place at extremely close range, in minute time frames, with rarely more than 3 shots fired in total! This being the case, it would appear that having 18 rounds of small caliber ammo would be a waste of space and weight better spent on having an adequate number of more powerful cartridges.

Most large-capacity, small caliber pistols are fully as large and, often, weigh even more than, standard bigbore versions. Yet, they possess inferior stopping power.





Old standby .45 ACP, is unquestionably the "winner and still undefeated Champion," of fighting handgun cartridges. Historic and observed reality confirms this.

Recent contender for acceptance (again) is the 9mm parabellum. Typical of the small-caliber, large-magazine capacity concept, weapons chambered for this cartridge sacrifice crucial stopping power for unnecessarily large quantity of ammunition.

The most glaring offender of the mission of the handgun is the 9mm parabellum. Those who claim superiority of the "9-para" usually claim that more people have died from wounds sustained from the 9mm than from any other caliber. In view of the widespread proliferation of the 9mm parabellum cartridge, this is certainly not difficult to accept. To those who expound this opinion, it can be said that *lethality* of a given caliber or cartridge is not the issue, at least as far as handguns are concerned.

Even .22 Shorts can be lethal. *Stopping Power* is the issue here, and the two terms are only vaguely related inasmuch as one may both *stop* an assailant and *kill* him at the same time—*but not necessarily.* In fact, about half of those shot and successfully stopped do *not* succumb to their wound(s). Furthermore, *the lethality record of the 9mm was largely obtained through its employment in submachine guns,* not handguns, and the effect of the cartridge as used in a SMG is more pronounced than when fired from a handgun.

In conclusion, it is advisable that one carefully consider reality in preference to data obtained from either inconclusive or unrealistic sources. The price for error is entirely too high.

Transcript of Action Report

Legend:

a. Offense---Deadly Assault On a Peace Officer.
b. Time---1:48 AM.
c. Weapon Used---Butcher Knife.
d. Number of Officers Involved---2, one regular, one reserve.
e. How Reported---Police Mobile Radio.
f. Suspect Data---White, Male, age 23.
g. Police Weapon---S&W M-19 .357 Magnum, 4 inch bbl.
h. Ammunition---Remington .357 Magnum, 125 gr. JHP.

i. Participants---Police officer #1, Police Officer #2, Police Dispatcher, Police Sergeant, Suspect, & Suspect's wife.

Sequence of Action:

1:44AM, Dispatcher receives telephone call from unidentified female who states, "Hello, can you send a police car to my residence (gives address)?"

Dispatcher asks, "What is the problem?"

Female replies, "I think my husband has had a nervous breakdown."

Dispatcher asks, "What is he doing?"

Female responds, "I don't know!"---then screams, "Honey, don't!" She then drops the telephone receiver and was heard to be running away screaming. At this time telephone contact was lost.

Dispatcher sends patrol unit, occupied by Officer #1 and Reserve Officer #2, working beat #303, on a signal 15, domestic disturbance call, to address given by female. Police Sergeant, unit patrol unit 302, was dispatched to assist at 1:45AM.

While the two patrol units were enroute to the scene, dispatcher cross checked address given by female in city directory and obtained the name listed with the telephone number for the address given by female. He then telephoned that number and the suspect answered. Dispatcher asks if female (suspects wife) is there. Suspect answers, "She's not here. Can I help you?" Dispatcher asks suspect if he is suspect by name, at which time suspect advises, "yes." Dispatcher attempts to confirm the address, to which suspect responds, "You must have the wrong number," and hangs up.

Dispatcher notifies responding patrol units of telephone conversation with suspect via radio. (Suspect's wife later told officers that suspect was present in the kitchen when she told him, "I'm going to call the police." To which suspect responded, "Go ahead a call." Thus suspect was present when she made the original call.)

1:48AM, Officers #1 and 2 arrive at the address provided earlier by dispatcher. They observe a white male dressed only in white underwear shorts standing near a small tree in the dark, located in the front yeard of the residence. Suspect was observed to be holding an unidentified object in hand.

Officer #1 dismounts from vehicle and approaches curb at suspect's residence. He orders suspect to step out. Suspect starts to move towards officer. He is observed at this time to be holding a large refrigerator drawer full of potatos and a large butcher knife. Officer #1 orders suspect to stop, at which time suspect throws drawer full of said potatos at Officer #1, and, armed with butcher knife, lunges at him, stabbing him in the abdomen. Officer #1 draws his service revolver, a .357 Magnum S&W revolver, loaded with Remington 125 gr. JHP .357 ammunition, and orders suspect, "Stop, man!" Suspect continues to stab Officer #1 with the knife. Officer #1 was backpeddling as this action continued. At the point which both Officer #1 and suspect reached the street, Officer #1 fired his service weapon in self-defense, striking Suspect twice in the center of the chest.

At this time, Officer #2, a reserve officer (unarmed), notifies dispatcher via radio, "Officer needs assistance, shots fired!" Suspect, after being shot twice in the chest, continues attacking Officer #1, with no visible letup. Officer #1 received a total of 9 wounds, and collapsed in the driveway of suspect's residence aproximately 5 feet from the street curb. Suspect was standing over Officer #1 when Officer #2 (unarmed reserve officer) went towards suspect attempting to strike him (unsuccessfully) with his fists. Suspect then stood up and turned towards Officer #2, who is now under the impression that suspect has possession of Officer #1's service revolver, and begins backing away. Officer #2 lures suspect into chasing him down the street to get him away from Officer #1 who is by now seriously wounded. The chase covers a distance of about 100 yards during which Officer #2 eludes Suspect.

1:49AM, Sergeant arrives on the scene and observes Officer #1 seriously wounded at the suspects address, bleeding copiously from his wounds, crouched in the front yard. Sergeant places the officer in the back seat of his patrol unit and instructs the still-conscious officer to apply pressure to the wounds as best he can.

Sergeant then notices suspect laying in the street aproximately 4 ft. from the street curb adjacent to the empty lot next door to suspects residence, in a large pool of blood. Two gunshot wounds are observed in suspects chest.

Sergeant notifies dispatcher via radio to send an ambulance to suspects residence. He also advises dispatcher that he will be enroute to hospital with injured officer #1.at 1:52AM.

Officer #3, in unit #305, arrives at suspects residence at 1:53AM, discovering that suspect was now gone from pool of blood in street and begins a search for him. It was unknown at this time if suspect was still armed. Officer #3 observes suspect standing in the front yard of adjacent residence and orders him to lie down. Suspect refuses to do so. Officer #3 forcibly takes him down after finding him to be unarmed.

Suspect continues to struggle, striking Officer #3 with his hands and feet. Officer #3 handcuffs suspect to assist in controlling him. A fire department ambulance attendant, who had heard shots and come to the scene in his private vehicle arrives and assists Officer #3 in controlling suspect until ambulance arrives at 2:06AM.

Suspect is then transported to hospital.

Subsequent investigation determined that suspect was still strugglingupon arrival at the hospital, whereupon he was placed in critical condition listing and admitted. He died two weeks later of his wounds.

Officer #1 recovered from his wounds and eventually returned to duty.

Suspects butcher knife was recovered from pool of blood in street.

Investigation was continued and brought to a close in the normal manner, by Officer #2 who had returned to the crime scene, with assistance from Sergeant, who had returned to the crime scene.

MENTAL COLOR CODE

1. GREEN	2. YELLOW	3. ORANGE	4. RED
Unaware of Surrounding Environment	Relaxed Alert (Unspecified)	Specific Alert (Tactical & Legal Decisions Made)	Fight Imminent! (Mental Trigger)

1. GREEN: A condition of complete unawareness. You will most likely die if confronted by a deadly-force situation because of the lack of available time for you to diagnose and solve the technical and tactical problem before you.

2. YELLOW: Relaxed alert, but with no specified focus. You are merely aware that the world is not necessarily a universally friendly place and that at any time something could happen to you.

3. ORANGE: A specific alert condition. You have detected a particular person or thing that is potentially a threat. You will begin to consider tactical and legal ramifications at this point.

4. RED: Fight imminent! Gun may or may not be in hand, but you are ready to employ deadly force if "triggered" to do so by the actions of your source of alert.

   The mental trigger may be varied depending upon the circumstances, but common "triggers" are:

   a. A gun held by the source of alert.
   b. A gun pointed at me!
   c. A weapon of any type.
   d. Aggressive action by the source of alert.

Chuck Taylor's

SURVIVAL TACTICS

1. USE YOUR EYES & EARS: Most people listen but don't hear and look but don't see, because they are shutting the rest of the world out from their own sphere of existence. This is common with those who live in large urban areas. Watch the hands of a potential attacker. If he is going to act, the first thing that will happen must take place with his hands. When searching an area, either indoors or out, scan systematically using the "in-line" method. Don't miss anything---what you don't see can kill you! Listen for out-of-the-ordinary sounds as well.

2. STAY AWAY FROM CORNERS: Don't play "Starsky & Hutch," and be caught leaping around a corner. At such close range you are totally at the mercy of an assailant who may be lurking on the other side, even if he has an edged or blunt weapon. Instead, play the "angles" and when you must expose yourself to danger from the corner, you will be ready for it and at a maximum distance from it. This way, your assailant must react to you instead of the burden being placed upon you.

3. MAXIMIZE THE RANGE BETWEEN YOU AND A POTENTIAL DANGER AREA AS MUCH AS THE TERRAIN OR STRUCTURE ALLOWS: Remember that the closer you are to your attacker, the easier it is for him to get you. If you must negotiate two opposite corners, then split the difference between them until you can place yourself in a position to clear one of them and use it as a base to engage the other.

4. NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON ANYTHING YOU HAVEN'T CHECKED OUT FIRST: If you must search a structure or dwelling, be certain that you have seen the right, left, and rear walls of each room before continuing your search. In areas such as closets and bathrooms, it is also advisable to check the ceilings and cupboards that might be large enough to conceal a human. You cannot be too careful when your life is at stake! For this reason you must be thorough and systematic in your search. Take your time and do it right!

5. KEEP YOUR BALANCE: Don't be caught leaping around! You cannot bring accurate fire upon your attacker unless your body is balanced properly due to metaphysical factors. Move in a sideways shuffle and never cross your legs. Resist the tendency to scrape your back along a wall and to drag your feet. These create noise that can give you away to an unseen attacker.

6. WATCH YOUR FRONT SIGHT: Your mind will be directing your eyes to focus on the source of trauma or excitement. Don't do it! If you watch your front sight, let the target "fuzz out" in the background, and control the trigger, you will hit him. If you do not...care to gamble with your life?

Additional Hints

1. Doorways---

   a. Ascertain which way the door opens before attempting to actually open it. If the hinges show on the outside, then the door opens outward. If not, then it opens inward. If the hinges are on the right side, the door moves from left to right, if they are on the left side, then it opens from right to left. The location of the doorknob or handle is often an indicator as well.

   b. When you move through the door, give it a sufficient push to move it all the way against the wall. This will force any hidden assailant to take action prematurely.

   c. Get through the doorway and get to one side or the other quickly. Don't silhouette yourself. Always be at the ready. If you are not surprised, you will almost always win the fight.

2. Windows---

   a. Resist the impulse to peek through windows. Treat them the same as corners---DANGER!

   b. Keep maximum distance from them at all times.

   c. Remember that just because you are inside, your assailant can be anywhere, including outside. Don't limit the use of your eyes and ears to indoors only.

3. Reloading---

   a. Don't drop your magazines or speed-loaders on the deck unless the need to reload comes in the middle of an exchange of fire.

   b. Even if you only shoot once and down your attacker, reload! You don't know what might happen next and it is better to have a fully loaded weapon at the ready.

   c. Don't shoot your weapon empty unless the tactic situation demands it. It will take longer to reload that way.

4. Malfunctions---

   a. If you have a stoppage, take cover to clear it. Don't stand there like a target and diddle around with your gun.

   b. Rehearse the stoppage-clearance drills until you are completely familiar with them. It could save your life!

COMBAT CORNER

MALFUNCTION!

You're Dead Unless You Know These Quick Steps

By Chuck Taylor

It is popular in some circles to criticize the self-loading pistol as being "inferior" to the revolver because of its dependency upon its magazine and reliability of its ammunition. While both of these observations are certainly true, the magnitude of the auto's dependency upon these two elements, upon actual examination, appears to be considerably less than its critics would have us believe.

This is so because *almost all common auto-pistol malfunctions are quickly and easily cleared,* and the likelihood of their occurrence in the first place is quite low and becoming even lower as ammunition technology and firearms sophistication increases. The ease of operation and use of the auto more than offsets the fact that it occasionally malfunctions.

Let us objectively examine the possibilities. First, the magazine. In my experience, *75% of auto-pistol failures are due to damaged or sub-standard quality magazines.* In this age of rampant inflation, a dollar doesn't buy much, true, but the common practice of purchasing cheap magazines for a weapon upon which one is literally betting his life seems oddly paradoxical; after all, how much is your life worth to you? 'Nuff said on this.

The issue of *damaged* magazines is more complex, but is nonetheless detectable and therefore can be controlled with a little vigilance. Bent followers, weak springs, cracked or deformed feed lips, dents in the magazine body, and rust or corrosion are open invitations to disaster, but—note that *all of these maladies are visually or manually detectable.* Hence, all we need to do is just occasionally look for them and discard

suspect magazines from the lot upon which we must depend for serious business. This is a small thing, sure, but *when was the last time you checked yours?*

Defective ammunition is usually more easily remedied than you might at first think too. A quick visual inspection of each and every round of ammo that you intend to carry for serious business will obviate the occasional bad factory cartridge that slips through the manufacturer's quality control people. Most common in this category is the bulged case mouth, which will, if fed into the chamber of the gun, quite effectively cause a serious and time consuming stoppage during either the feeding or extraction stage of the weapon's operational cycle.

Inspection will also allow you to detect burred cartridge rims, high primers, cracked cases, and will disclose any corrosion of cartridge brass. Ammunition possessing any of the foregoing symptoms should quickly be discarded for obvious reasons.

Care should be taken in the selection of the specific bullet shape and, to some degree, bullet composition of your ammunition. Remember that the auto-pistol was originally designed to function with full metal jacket round nose ammunition, not semi-wadcutters (SWC), soft-points (JSP), or hollow-points (JHP). Polishing and slightly reshaping the feed ramp and chamber mouth of the weapon can do much to enhance the feeding reliability of any auto, but remember that it still will not function as well as it would with "hardball." In the case of the sub-powered cartridges, the .25 ACP (6.35mm), .32 ACP (7.65mm), 7.63mm Mauser (7.62 x 25mm Tokarev), 7.65mm parabellum, 9mm Kutz (.380 ACP), and 9mm parabellum, bullet shape and composition is of more interest than it would be with the big-bores because the smaller cartridges need all the help they can get in the stopping power department, while the larger calibers, because of their superior projectile weight and larger diameter, can still perform quite satisfactorily even with the poorly shaped (for stopping power purposes) jacketed round nose (JRN) bullet. A sobering thought!

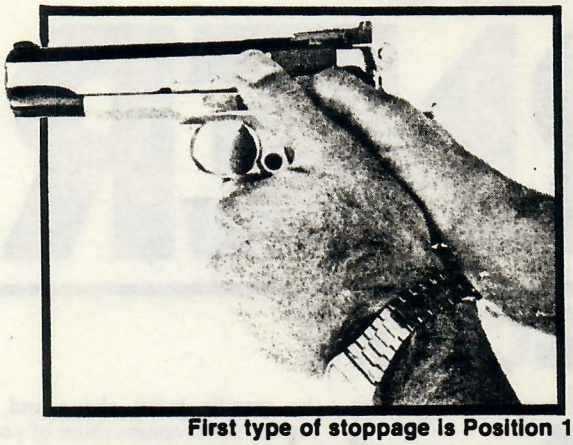
So, with the preliminary issues disclosed, we can continue into the actual clearance drills to bring your auto-pistol back to life after an unforeseen and therefore unavoidable stoppage occurs.

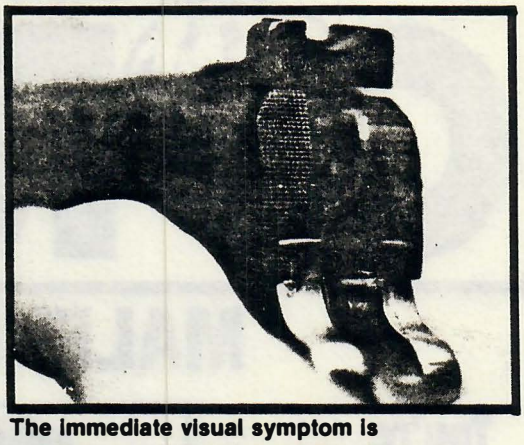
Failure to Fire

The first typical stoppage is a simple *failure fire.* It can be caused by a number of things, a "dud" primer, no flash hole drilled between the primer pocket and the flash chamber of the cartridge, a broken firing pin, *or*—normally the cause of 8 out of 10 stoppages of this type—*a magazine that has not been fully seated into the weapon during loading.* Bear in mind that in a firefight, there is no need to decide *exactly* what caused the stoppage—there just isn't enough time—but, you *can diagnose the symptom* and act accordingly.

A failure to fire is characterized by the hammer falling when the trigger is pressed with no apparent effect, i.e., the gun doesn't fire. 9 times out of 10, this stoppage (which is termed a "*Position One*" malfunction) can be cleared by briskly *tapping the magazine* once with the weak hand to

FAILURE TO FIRE





First type of stoppage is Position 1. The immediate visual symptom is experienced any time the hammer falls and the weapon does not fire. Any one of several problems can be the cause, but you do not have time to diagnose them further. If the hammer falls, and the weapon does not fire, execute the Position 1 clearance drill immediately.

Keeping the weapon at eye or at least shoulder level, sharply tap the magazine, insuring proper seating, with the weak hand.

Briskly cycle the action once to clear a possible dud cartridge from the chamber and allow a new round to feed. Take care to keep your hand clear of the ejection port. Note overhand position of weak hand. This is faster and more positive than grasping slide by grooves at rear.

Regain proper firing position, watch the front sight, control the trigger, and get on with the war!

insure that it is fully seated, *racking the action* to eject any dud round of ammunition, and getting on with business in the normal manner, that is, *fire!*

The only stoppage in the Position One category that cannot be rectified by this drill involves a broken firing pin which effectively precludes the use of any firearm. If the above drill does not return your piece to functional status, a quick repeat drill may do the trick. If that doesn't do it—a quick retrograde operation is suggested because your firing pin is probably broken! Remember that the slide must be fully retracted to insure both the proper ejection of the cartridge in the chamber *and the feeding of the next cartridge in the magazine into it.*

If the slide is *not* fully retracted, you will succeed only in cocking the gun on an *empty* chamber, which does you no good at all, eh? Also remember to *keep the weapon at eye level* to avoid wasting time by bringing the weapon *down* to work on clearing it and then raising it back *up* to eye level. By actual timing with a stopwatch, I have determined that doing so takes .6 to 1.0 seconds—too long when bullets are zinging around your ears!

Stovepipe

The second typical malfunction is known as a "Position Two"—the classic "stovepipe." It is usually caused by sub-powered ammunition, a defective magazine, a broken extractor, or a combination of any of the three ills.

While formidable in appearance (*a loaded or spent round sticking up out of the ejection port*), the stovepipe is the most easily cleared of all of the typical stoppages. One need only to *diagnose the problem*—seen readily as the cartridge case as described above—and *bring the weak hand up overhand, grasp the slide forward of the ejection port with the leading edge of the index finger held against the protruding cartridge, then briskly rack the slide to the rear,* knocking the cartridge clear of the weapon. This one movement clears the

obstruction (in this case a loaded or spent cartridge) from the weapon, allows the next round of ammunition in the magazine to feed, and recocks the weapon, thus bringing you back into action.

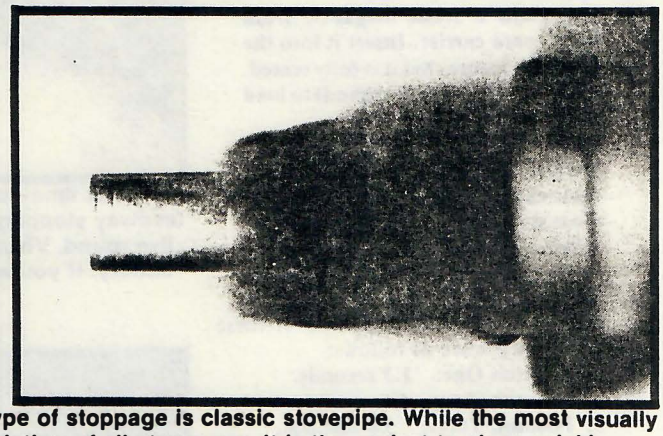
If the slide is not fully retracted to the rear, the next round of ammunition cannot feed, leaving Position One situation—empty chamber, so be careful when executing this maneuver to avoid the problem. This drill will also serve to alert you to all of the sharp edges that may exist on your particular weapon, but as I tell my students, "you can recover from cutting your hand—you cannot recover from getting your head blown off!"

Double Feed

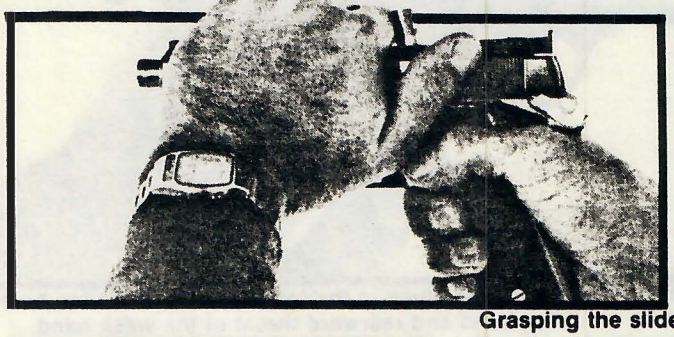
The third (and most complex) typical auto-pistol malfunction is a *feedway stoppage* and is characterized by a "double-feed," of several rounds of ammunition at the same time (defective magazine), or a combination of a failure to extract or eject the spent round and resultant interference of the feeding of the next loaded round—also known as a hell of a mess!

The symptom that should trigger your clearance drill is when the *slide is considerably to the rear of being in battery,* which a quick glance at the rear of the weapon will disclose, but the firing pin stop is in its proper position, that is, it has *not* slipped

STOVEPIPE



Second type of stoppage is classic stovepipe. While the most visually intimidating of all stoppages, it is the easiest to clear quickly.



Grasping the slide overhand, ahead of the ejection port, and with the index finger contacting the stuck case, briskly draw the slide to the rear, knocking the spent case from the ejection port. If this is not accomplished briskly, case will fall back into ejection port and create a Position 3 stoppage!

Once case is clear, continue rearward motion with the slide allowing it to move enough to rear to pick up and chamber fresh cartridge from magazine. Good rule of thumb is to pull to the rear hard enough to bounce your weak hand off of your strong side shoulder.

As with a Position 1 stoppage, always pick up the front sight visually, control the trigger, and continue the action.

downward, catching on the hammer. When this symptom occurs you must:

1. **Lock the slide to the rear.**
2. **Eject the magazine from the weapon, using the little finger of the weak hand. (Often the top round of ammunition has begun to feed, thereby causing sometimes considerable resistance to your efforts.)**
3. **Grasping the slide forward of the ejection port overhand with the weak hand, work the action two or three times to insure clearing of all loaded or spent cartridges from the action.**
4. **Obtain a fresh magazine from your spare carrier. Insert it into the weapon. Insure that it is fully seated.**
5. **Cycle the slide (overhand) to load the chamber of the piece.**
6. **Get back into the fight. WATCH YOUR FRONT SIGHT! The normal tendency after clearing a complex stoppage is to shoot without adherence to the proper fundamentals because of the time lost during the clearance procedure.**

The time frames for clearance of these three stoppages are as follows:

1. **Position One: 1.3 seconds.**
2. **Position Two: 1.0 seconds.**
3. **Position Three: 5.0 seconds.**

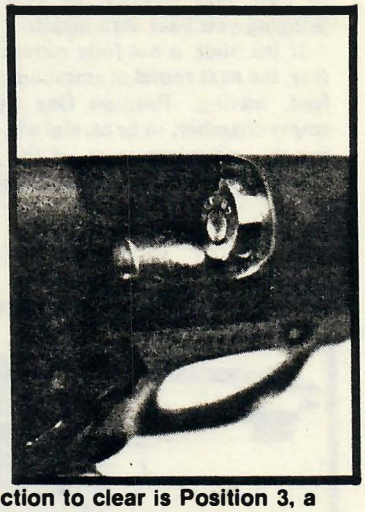
One must work diligently with inert ammunition to perfect these clearance drills until satisfactory proficiency is obtained. My own feeling on the matter is this: *you can't practice these drills too much!* Naturally, time spent to attain proficiency will vary from individual to individual but usually if one practices 30 minutes a day for a week or two, he will be in good stead.

Bushing Failure

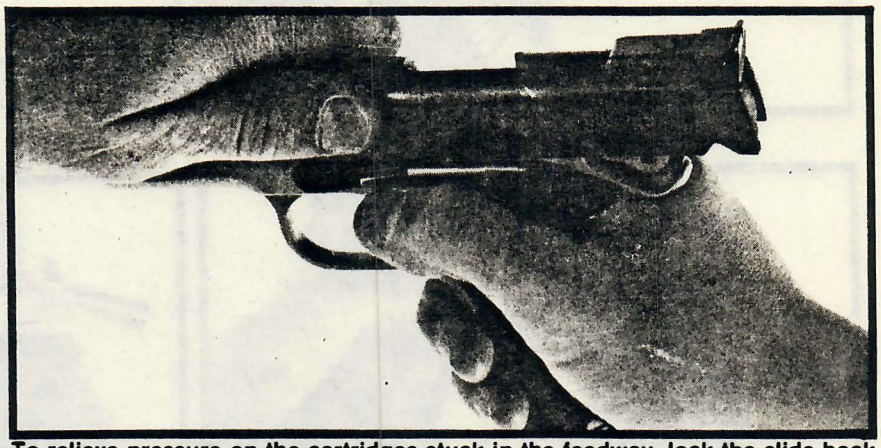
There are, of course, other miscellaneous stoppages, such as a failure to go all the way into battery. This is termed a Position Four stoppage and is caused by a muzzle bushing that is too tight for reliable functioning. Most often the collet or "finger" bushings as found on commercial Colt automatics are the culprit, but target shooting type "match" bushings can also be the cause. If you have one of these, my recommendation is to "can it," because any auto in good shape will shoot better, especially when you are under stress, than you are capable of shooting it. Reliability of functioning is much more important than academic accuracy potential because the *average pistol fight range is 7 feet!* Over 75% of handgun fights take place at ranges of less than 7 meters—so, *how much accuracy do you need in relation to functioning reliability?*

To clear a Position Four stoppage, you need only to press hard with both thumbs on the rear of the slide to each side of the hammer channel. If the cause was a too tight bushing, then the slide will immediately slip home. If a "fat cartridge" is the culprit, then some vigorous Position One activity should solve the problem.

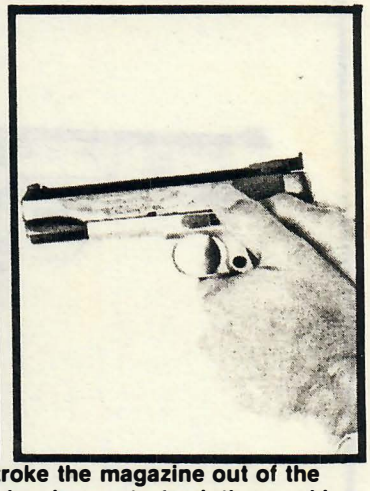
FEEDWAY-STOPPAGE



Most time-consuming and difficult misfunction to clear is Position 3, a feedway stoppage, as shown here. Round in chamber could be either spent or live round. Visual stimulus to begin clearance drill is slide locked well out of battery. If you see this, immediately look into ejection port. If you see brass, you have a Position 3 stoppage.



To relieve pressure on the cartridges stuck in the feedway, lock the slide back with the thumb of the firing hand and rearward thrust of the weak hand.



With the little finger of the weak hand, stroke the magazine out of the weapon. Often, the top cartridge in the mag has begun to feed, thus making removal of the mag strenuous, but it can be "stroked" out of the weapon quite easily under normal circumstances. Action should then be cycled overhand with weak hand several times to completely clear the weapon, a fresh magazine inserted, the slide withdrawn once to load it, and you're back in action. Remember to watch your front sight!!!