

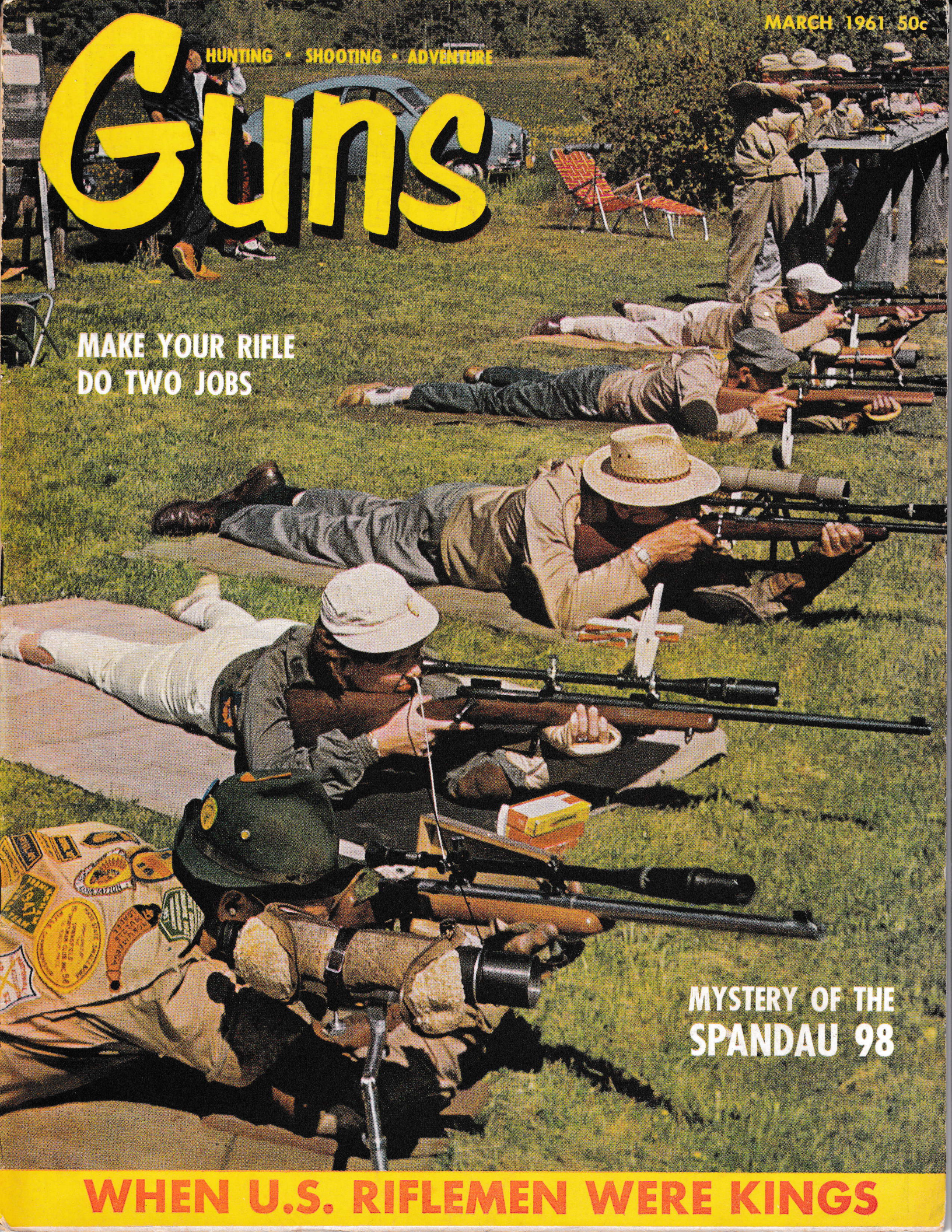
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MYSTERY OF THE
SPANDAU 98

WHEN U.S. RIFLEMEN WERE KINGS



Guns

FINEST IN THE FIREARMS FIELD

MARCH, 1961

Vol. VII, No. 3-75

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THE COVER

The long line—the tense and continuous stress of shoulder to shoulder competition at rifle ranges today, has its genesis in black powder days of 1874. The centerfire bore rifle shoot at Damariscotta, Maine, which FPG photog Dave Witham has captured for our cover, owes its heritage to the lightnings and the thunders of Civil War muskets, and lessons of riflery learned then.

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EDITORIAL OFFICES: E. B. Mann, W. B. Edwards, 8150 N. Central Park, Skokie, Ill., ORchard 5-5602, Elmer Keith, Salmon, Idaho, Kent Bellah, Saint Jo, Texas.

REPRESENTATIVES: NEW YORK, Eugene L. Pollock, 60 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y., YUkon 4-9280, MIDWEST ADV. OFFICES, 8150 N. Central Park Ave., Skokie, Ill., ORchard 5-6967, CALIFORNIA, The Ren Averill Co., Ren Averill, 232 N. Lake Ave., Pasadena, Calif. MUrray 1-7123, SOUTHERN, Hal Moore, 279 NE 79th St., Miami 38, Fla. PLaza 8-5516.

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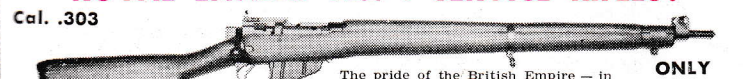


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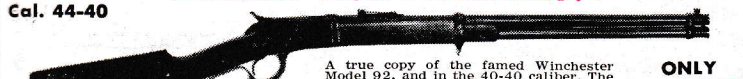


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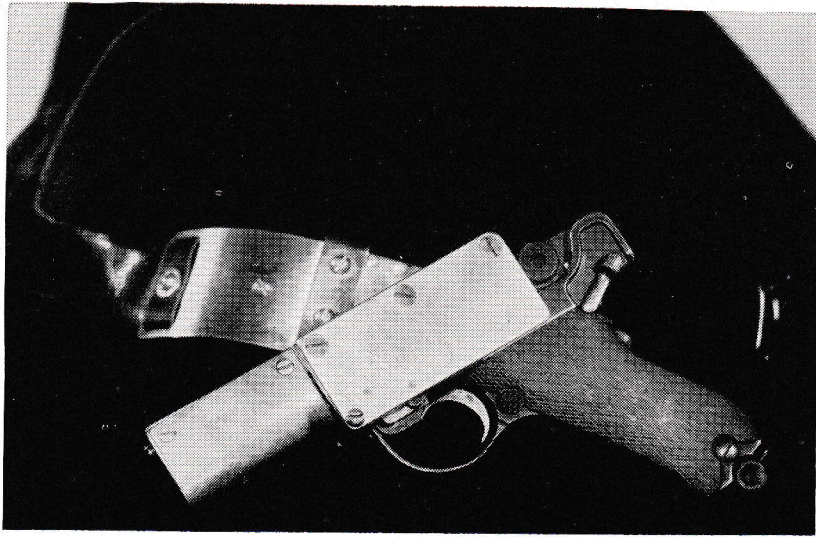
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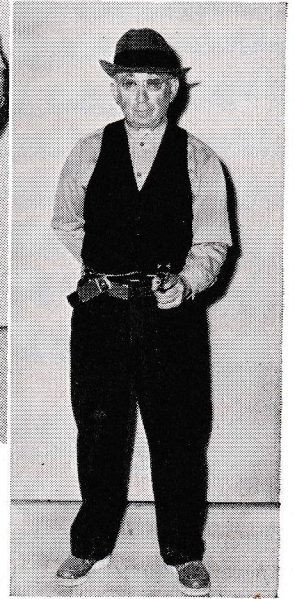
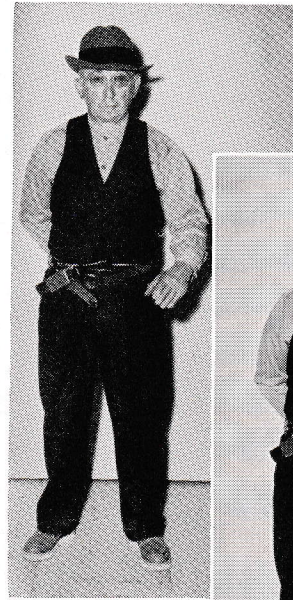
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Belt plate holds machined aluminum and brass holster for Luger which the author can cross-draw and fire in very satisfactory time of .45 second.

By E. F. HARTWELL



The Luger— For Fast Draw

I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT that an automatic pistol (or a semi-automatic, if you insist) is much more of a “natural” for fast draw than any revolver. Yet nearly everybody insists that fast draw is strictly a revolver game.

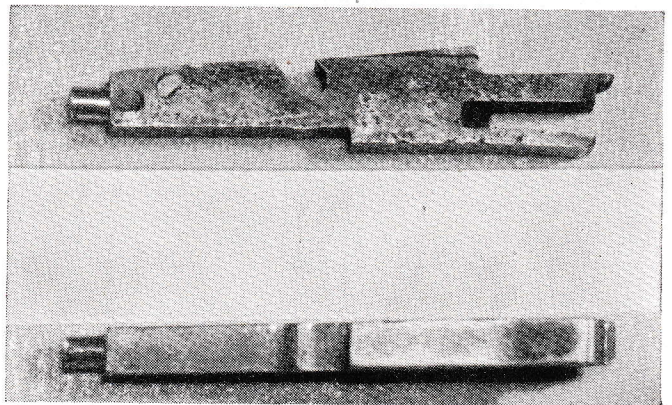
My arguments are these: with a double action revolver, fired double action, there is the awkwardness of long trigger pull and the difficulty of timing the hammer fall (in the midst of hard muscular effort) so that it occurs at the exact instant when the gun comes into firing position. A lighter, single-action-type trigger pull is much better for the purpose.

Yet the single action revolver has its drawbacks, too. It requires cocking. You have to get that hammer back to a full and perfect cock, either by striking it or by thumb action, while you draw. This takes a lot of practice, is rough on the hand (at least for a novice like me), and can be dangerous if the full cock position is not achieved.

The automatic offers the single action trigger pull, without the necessity of single action cocking; and at least some automatics seem to me to “point” more naturally than either single or double action revolvers. The question is, how can you carry an automatic cocked, ready for that single action pull, without violating the rules of safety? (You could, of course, use a Walther-type double action automatic; but then you come right back to the objection of long, hard trigger pull.)

The Luger has always been my favorite handgun, so

that’s what I used. It was obvious from the beginning that I would need to alter the safety in such a way that, with a special holster, the gun would be on “safe” in the holster and ready to fire as soon as drawn. This would require a rigid holster. Accordingly, the entire holster was made out of metal—part aluminum and part brass. It also contains a retaining spring; the gun snaps into place and stays there unless drawn. *(Continued on page 61)*



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LUGER FOR FAST DRAW
 (Continued from page 37)

Another thing that didn't appeal to me was the conventional hip-mounted holster. Others like it; I like a cross-draw position better. Accordingly, my holster is mounted directly in front, on the right-hand side with the butt to the left because I am left handed.

I also built a separate swivel device that I could fasten the gun into and then swing it onto target, sighting "from the hip." It really is a low forward position, sighting the way you point your finger. All quick draw shooters use something very similar. With this device, it became possible to swing the gun on target, let the swivel mount hold it as positioned, and then kneel down, use the conventional sights, and see how I was doing. This is one way to learn to shoot from "the hip" without wasting a lot of ammunition.

As the act of quick drawing progressed, several things became apparent. One was that the trigger guard was too small. Accordingly, it was opened up. Again, I kept banging my thumb and breaking the nail. The finger from an old kid glove worn on my thumb fixed that. The trigger pull was altered, the lanyard loop and rifle stock holding lug removed, a few corners knocked off, and everything seems to be about right.

Of course, it was necessary to make a drastic alteration to the safety. This was done by making one new part and discarding the old one. As it now stands, the safety is normal for standard use, and also special for use in the special holster.

After considerable practice, I've found that I can draw, aim, and fire in the neighborhood of .45 second. This is not startling time by comparison with that of some of the experts, but it can be improved. I am getting along in years, my reactions are comparatively slow, and I have no interest in competition, nor anything to sell. This all comes under the heading of fun and possibly self-defense.

In recapitulation, the advantages of this method are: (1) Shorter, more convenient distance of draw. (2) Greater safety. At no time is the gun pointed toward any part of the shooter, provided that the non-shooting arm is folded behind the back. (3) Better ability to concentrate on the target. All the shooter has to do is yank, aim, and pull the trigger. (4) The second, third, and subsequent shots are all fired much more efficiently from an automatic than from any revolver. (5) If you are wearing a coat, it is much easier to flip it open just at the front than to sweep it clear back to the hip. (6) In cases where it's against the law to carry a concealed gun, the gun in this position is much more visible than the conventional hip carry.

The disadvantages are: (1) Weight of holster. My holster weighs about the same as my Luger, but I wear it all the time in the woods and while fishing, and never notice it. This weight problem can be considerably remedied by using Dowmetal construction. (2) Position of holster. If the shooter is slim or of medium build, there's nothing to worry about. If you are a stout person—forget it! It's not recommended. (3) It is often claimed that a Luger will jam. I wouldn't worry much about a Luger in good condition jamming, provided that ammunition is not underloaded.

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