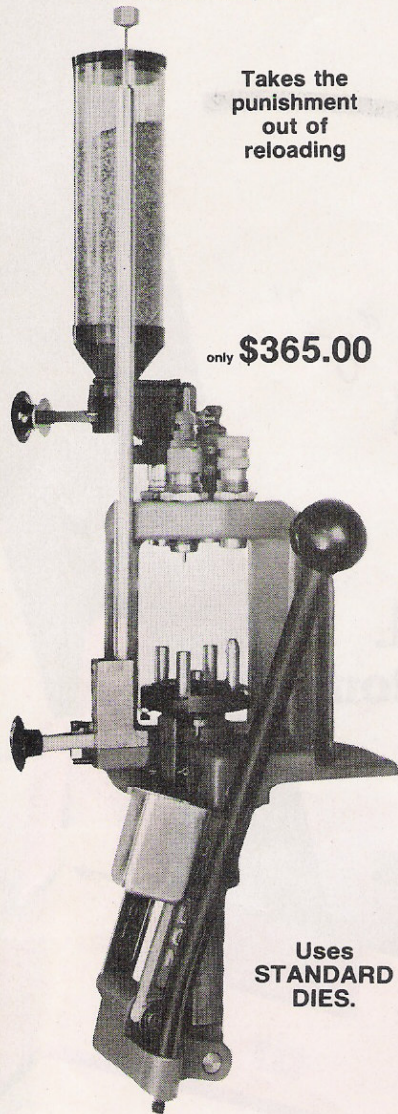


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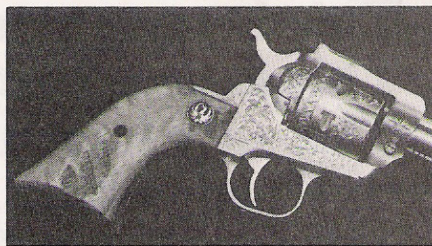


GUN NOTES

By Elmer Keith, Executive Editor

ENGRAVER

John McFadden, 2524 N. 16th, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814, has now arrived as a



quality engraver of fine arms. He works largely with scroll designs—some of the most beautiful scroll I have seen! One fine S&W was scroll-engraved in high relief—that is, scroll left high and the background metal was cut away all around it. I carefully examined five different sixguns he had engraved as well as some fine gold and silver jewelry he made.

His work is beautifully laid out and well executed. Write him for his prices.

TRAJECTORY

Over the years I have received a lot of inquiries about rifle trajectory over a given range. To begin with, the trajectory of the bullet is not a curve but a parabola. That means it is flatter over the first half of the point-blank range and has a much steeper curve down toward the aiming point.

Most rifles of around 1,800 to 2,000 feet per second (fps) velocity are best sighted for about 150 yards maximum, so the extreme height reached by the bullet will not be over four inches at most. In timber shooting, where you may have to shoot under or over limbs, logs, etc., it is often best to sight such rifles for just 100 yards.

Rifles delivering a velocity of 2,500 to 2,700 fps can usually be sighted for 200 yards and not have over a three-inch midway trajectory. When so sighted, the highest point of the bullet's arc will be nearer 125 yards than at 100.

Rifles of 2,800 to over 3,000 fps with long bullets can well be sighted for 275 to 300 yards. I like most big-game long-range rifles to be sighted at least three inches high at 100 yards and often use a setting of 3½ inches high at 100 yards. Then they

will usually be very close at 300 yards, depending on the cartridge and bullet weight for a given caliber.

When such rifles as the various .300 Magnums with 180- to 200-grain bullets and the 7 mm Magnums with 175- or 160-grain bullets are so sighted they will usually carry very close to 300 yards as a point blank. Some companies, including Weaver and Marlin, have trajectory charts that are a great help to tell you just where to sight a rifle at 25 to 35 yards for a given longer range. There is some discrepancy in these charts, however, due to the height of the sights above the bore of the rifle or the axis of the scope sight above the bore.

Rifles sighted for 300 yards will usually have the highest point of their trajectory curve out at about 200 yards, not 150 as some charts put it. It is always well to sight your rifle for a given point-blank that will best take advantage of its velocity. The shoot it on target at 100 and 200 as well as sighted for 300 and you may well find you are about four to 4½ inches high at the 200-yard mark. So, in game shooting, you must judge the range and make allowances

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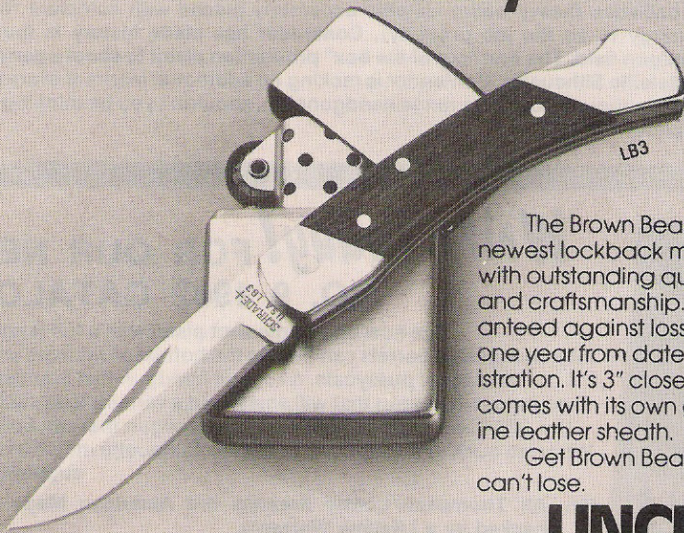
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in moving your rifle's point of aim on the animal proper.

By shooting the rifle to longer ranges you will learn how much to hold over a given-size animal at each longer range. Here the range-finder reticle scopes and the variables with the old Thomson's two-dot reticle or a double cross wire with six-inch spacing come into their own and are very useful.

Another question that often comes up is where to hold on game up a steep grade or down a steep grade. Remember, Old Man Gravity works only on the horizontal plane with relation to the earth's surface. So, if you are shooting at a buck up a very steep mountain and you know he is 300 yards away, you should aim the same as for about a 200-yard shot or you will go over him. When shooting downhill on a steep slope, the same thing occurs. If said buck is 300 yards down a steep slope, aim low enough for a 200-yard shot and you will connect.

To better understand this, sketch-in a steep slope and draw a line from shooter to deer, then draw a horizontal line across the picture. Note that the earth parallel where gravity pulls downward on the bullet is much less than the actual range involved. This, of course, is all elementary to the old rifleman but many newcomers to the shooting game find it out the hard way.

Only experienced riflemen can take full advantage of a fairly high midway trajectory, and only then if they are a good judge of distance and really know their rifle and its load.

An important thing to consider in all long-range game shooting is the prevailing wind. And the wind blows a lot in some places. If you are shooting 200 to 400 yards in a strong crosswind, then always hold into the wind on the game. If the wind is directly behind you and strong, it may raise the bullet from normal and if directly in your face and strong or gusty, it may well make your shot go a bit lower.

Judging wind can best be done on a good rifle range with a service rifle or your favorite sporting rifle. It doesn't take much of a wind to drift a rifle bullet some, even at 200 yards. Out at 400, a strong wind can drift you clear off the animal. Many times I have had to hold clear off a game animal out at long range in a strong wind in order to make a hit.

Usually on hot or clear days a rifle will shoot to normal or a trifle high, especially if you are shooting alongside a high cliff or bluff where the air is lifting. By the same token, on damp, rainy or snowy days a rifle usually shoots a trifle lower. Temperature also has a great deal to do with normal zero of any rifle. I remember at Camp Perry when it had been hot the day before and we suddenly had a great drop in temperature down to just a little above freezing.

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GUNNOTES

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The first relay on the firing line set their sights for their normal 200-yard elevation and proceeded to get low fours and even some threes directly below the bull. It was a constant condition all up and down the firing line, except for a few old pros who knew what to expect.

The same was true at the 600- and 1,000-yard ranges and a lot of 173-grain boattails plowed into the target butts below the target at 1,000 yards, down the long firing line. Most riflemen had to come up two or three minutes from their normal warm-weather elevations that morning.

In sighting rifles with scopes, most reticles are plainly marked up or down or "R" and "L" for right and left; but I, like many others, often turn them the wrong way. If the adjustment is in the mounts, then raising the front mount will make the rifle shoot lower, and raising the rear mount will make it shoot higher. The same applies to the axis of the scope tube.

In iron sights, move the rear sight to right or left as you want the point of impact to center the target. If the front sight must be moved, then move it in just the opposite direction. Raising the front sight will make the rifle shoot lower and lowering the front sight heights will make it shoot higher. The reverse is true of the rifle's rear sight.

KEEP INFORMED: WASHINGTON REPORT

Before going on any pest or big-game hunt, always zero your rifle for what you think will be your normal range. Remember, it's better to shoot a box of ammunition sighting in and knowing your rifle even though you have only eight or ten hulls left, than to go into the hills with several boxes of ammunition and a rifle whose point blank or trajectory you do not know. Practice before you hunt, until you know your rifle, then you can do all your hunting before you shoot.

TRIGGER SHOES

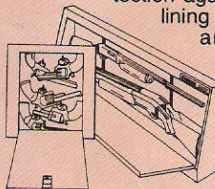
I have heard of three separate accidental discharges of double-action revolvers, equipped with trigger shoes, when they were pushed into holsters. One was on a belt holster worn on a hip. The other two instances involved shoulder holsters. The edge of the wide trigger projecting past the width of the narrow triggerguard caught on the holster and double actioned the guns as they were pushed hard into their holsters. Fortunately, no injuries resulted except to the holsters, but the three individuals promptly removed the wide trigger shoes. These adaptations were not designed for carry-type handguns, so if you use them, it is advisable to put them on a gun you don't intend on carrying on you.

Elmer Keith's illness still precludes his answering any correspondence.



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