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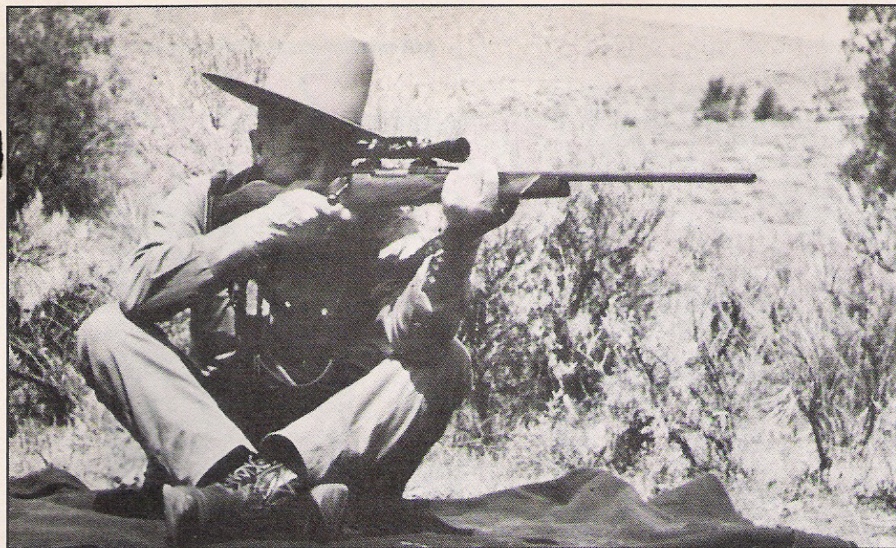
GUN NOTES

By Elmer Keith, Executive Editor

SIGHTING IN HUNTING RIFLES

Before attempting any big-game hunt, the rifle should be correctly sighted and zeroed so that when the chance does come, you can place your shot with precision. Many things must be considered in sight-

ing in the hunting rifle. For instance, the elevation at which you hunt must be considered. First, let's look at the effect of elevation on your rifle's zero. Years ago, three of us, including my friend Judge Martin, zeroed our rifles here at the 2,400 feet ele-



vation, then took them to Alaska and all of our rifles shot six inches low up there at sea level at 200 yards. I missed the first shot at a black bear with my .35 Whelen. I went under him before holding higher on that blackie and then downed him. Then I checked the super-accurate G&H Springfield and found it was six inches low at 200 yards. Earlier, I had found the effect of elevation here in Idaho. My .280 Dubiel Magnum was sighted perfectly for 300 yards at 4,200 feet. However, it shot a good four inches high up at 10,000 feet. I found that rifles sighted here shot to the center all

right in Africa, when fired at about the same elevation. Elevation should always be considered and if possible, a pre-hunt shot or two fired at or in the country you are going to hunt could possibly save your game for you!

The game hunted also has much to do with the range in which you sight your rifle. Mule deer, sheep and goat are often apt to be at long ranges and high-velocity rifles should be sighted to take advantage of their flat trajectory. Rifles of the .30-06 class should be zeroed at 200 yards while

continued on page 13

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GUNNOTES

continued from page 11

the higher velocity magnums can be zeroed at 250 to 300 yards for expert riflemen who will remember to hold around 4½ inches low at 200 yards. For the tyro it is better to sight them for 200 yards to not over 250, as a lot of misses are over the animal if sighted for too long a point blank.

For timber game and elk, moose and big bear, which are much more often timber game than otherwise, I like a rifle set for 150 yards so you can place the bullet where you want it as shooting is most often from 30 yards out to around 150 yards. I carried my .400 Whelen with a 350-grain WTC Co. bullet sighted for 150 yards. I killed 12 elk and forget how many mule deer with it and I have never lost an animal hit with it. Velocity was only around 2,300 feet per second with the heavy bullet.

Most big rifles chambered for the .338 Magnum, the .340 Weatherby, .375 H&H and my .338-74 Keith can be safely sighted for 250 yards and run little chance of over-shooting. I carry my .338-74 Keith rifles set for 300 yards and expect a 4½-inch raise at 200 and the same for the .340 Weatherby, which is our old .334 O.K.H. with a larger diameter bullet. The longest ranged of them all are the .338-378 K.T. with a 250-grain bullet at just over 3,000 fps velocity and the 275-grain Speer at 2,600 fps. I have found that long, heavy bullets in proportion to caliber do not shed velocity as fast as the light, ultra-high-velocity slugs, and for this reason are much flatter in trajectory at long range than most people would suspect. I can get by nicely for all big-game hunting with velocities from 2,000 to 2,300 fps for the heavy stuff—elk, moose, big bear and the Big Five or Big Six of Africa. For long-range hunting, I have done all right with velocities of just 2,600 fps to 2,700 fps with long, heavy bullets, for ranges out to 500 and on a rare occasion or two at 600 yards.

Range estimation is something every hunter should practice constantly when hunting. Estimate the distance to a rock, tree or some other object, then pace it off. Do this at every opportunity and you will be a far better game shot. If you know your rifle and its drop at various ranges, it's very easy to hold up, or over, distance game and make killing hits.

Remember at low altitudes the distance always looks greater than it actually is and at high elevations the range appears much closer than it actually is and for this reason you may be more apt to overshoot at low elevations and undershoot at higher elevations. All these conditions must be carefully considered if you are to become a good big-game shot.

PENETRATION OF SOLIDS

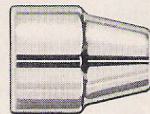
Right after World War II, Kynoch turned out some solids or full-patched bullets for most of the big double rifle calibers

continued on page 14

IPSC Champions Win With Hornady

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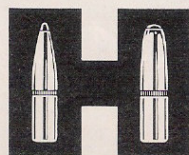
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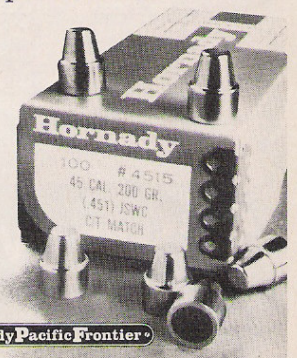
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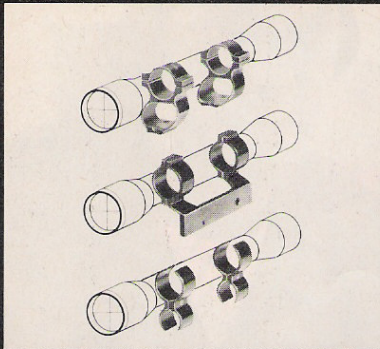
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GUNNOTES

continued from page 13

that had very brittle steel jackets. These tended to blow up and rupture on the land cuts and gave very poor penetration. A .600 double Nitro Express failed to penetrate to the brain of a wounded elephant with six side shots well placed. The bull had been stopped with a spine shot just over the tail, but those steel-jacketed solids would not penetrate even from the heaviest modern double rifle. After a lot of kicks, Kynoch then turned out some very fine solids with steel jackets and in many different calibers. The .416 has long been noted for its tremendous penetration. A rhino took me on in Africa at just 18 paces and I could not get a shot at his shoulder to break it and aimed at his chest for a heart shot when he turned and faced me, but just as I started the trigger squeeze, he ducked his head and charged. Heavy tree boles covered both shoulders, so I hit him in the end of the nose right under the front horn at ten paces. The 520-grain cupro nickel solid from my .476 Westley Richards shattered all the upper jaw teeth on the right side and he went down on his chin with front feet folded back, but continued to kick toward me. I was well caught in wait-a-bit thorn, so waited for him to regain his feet for my second shot. When he came up on all fours I shot for his right shoulder but just as I fired he fell on his nose again with his hind quarters still erect from the effects of the first slug. My second slug went in over the shoulder in the ribs and penetrated through to the right hind quarter. The bull continued to kick himself toward me at a few feet-range as I was reloading the big double, so I yelled at John Lawrence, my white hunter, to take him on. John did so instantly, giving him a slug from his

.416 just back of the bone in the right shoulder that we found later. It had penetrated clear through to the left flank, which we measured as a full 60 inches of penetration from this 410-grain, steel-jacketed solid. That rhino bull took it but jumped to his feet and swapped ends and departed from the heavy thorn. Had not John hit him when he did, he would have been on me in another second, and before I could possibly have reloaded. The bull then barged out in the open and John hit him again through the top of the withers, and I found an opening and tore myself out of the wait-a-bit thorn and gave him one square in the shoulder that broke both shoulder and spine, but the 520-grain bullet shattered in the spine to tiny fragments. It killed the bull, however, and I then poured the other barrel down into the brain between the ears at close range when he fell on his side with the top of his head toward me. John's .416 showed much better penetration than my .476 Westley with cupro-nickel, jacketed solids.

The best penetration on elephant I have heard of has been from the .416, the .458 and the .460 Weatherby, the latter doing best of all with real heavy-steel, jacketed solids from bolt-action rifles. The best penetration from double rifles I have had accurate reports on comes from George Neary. He shot a bull elephant in the seat of the pants with his old Rigby .577-100-750 with steel jacket solids and the bullet came out of the huge bull's chest and badly nicked one of his tusks. Russ Douglas also reported shooting a big bull that turned on them after his lady client had given him a slug in the stomach at a few yards range. Russ shot him in the chest and the slug went clear through the elephant and exited after breaking the left hip. Lyle Corcoran shot a big bull running broadside through the

continued on page 17



GUNNOTES

continued from page 17

rain with my H&H .577 with the same pad and the slug went through the big Congo bull's head and then through a small tree on the other side. Another bull he shot through the shoulders with my rifle went clear through and exited. So for the man who can handle them, there is little doubt but that the .577-100-750 with steel-jacket solids is the best medicine of all where extreme penetration is needed on elephant, rhino or buff.

KEITH .44 MAGNUM BULLET

Gregg Harrison, Rt. 3, Box 81H, Pleasant Hill Church Rd., Blountville, TN 37617, sent me a batch of 270-grain Keith bullets he had cast from his mould. These fine bullets are very accurate and a charge of 21 grains of 2400 seems to be the right medicine for them with normal primers. They should give maximum penetration on big game and in this respect beat my old original 250-grain due to the extra 20 grains of weight. The base band is a trifle wider, the nose a trifle longer, and the grease groove is square and deep but narrower than my original design. However, there was no sign of leading and unlike a 280-grain bullet I designed for Belding & Mull back in 1925, these 270-grainers are as accurate at long range as any I have ever tried.

My Belding & Mull 280-grain slug had a nose patterned after the old .41 Long Colt—very blunt and I now believe it had too much weight forward, for finest long-range accuracy. It also had a narrower front band. The .44 Mag has now killed everything from polar bear, moose, elk and elephant to Cape buffalo, and I believe this Harrison variation on my original design may well prove the best of all for deep penetration on big game. A recent letter from Harrison says the moulds were made by Northwest Industrial Co. in El Paso, TX. Ken Lomont also found these bullets very accurate from his machine rest. Ken chronographed the loads with 21 grains of 2400 from an eight-inch barrel at 1,425 feet per second. Eighteen shots at 60 yards went into a three-inch group from his machine rest. Remington No. 2½ standard primers were used. White's lab test showed my 250-grain bullet with 22 grains of 2,400 and a normal primer produced around 1,400 feet with 34,000 PSI from a 6½-inch barrel. For the silhouette shooters using .44 Magnum guns, this Keith 270-grain bullet should prove the ultimate for knocking over the iron silhouette targets. It will also prove ideal for stopping cars—either by busting up the motor block, or penetration of the tires or the gas tank—over any To right bullet/high velocity combination possible from the .44 Magnum.

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

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