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GUN NOTES



By Elmer Keith, Executive Editor

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is taken from Elmer's 1965 edition of the now rare and out of print *Guns & Ammo For Big Game*, published by Petersen Publishing Co. This classic work covers the game animals of North America, rifles, handguns and many hunting tips, garnered from Elmer Keith's years as a big-game hunter.

HANDGUNS FOR BIG GAME

■ My personal .357 Magnum Smith & Wesson No. 0139 has dispatched deer and cougar, but I must honestly state it does not compare with a heavy loaded .44 Special, .44 Magnum, or .45 Colt in killing power. The .357 gives excellent penetration but just doesn't come up to a larger caliber at high velocities, firing a heavier slug.

Back in 1927, I designed the first of my bullets in 250-grain .44 Special and later in 235-grain hollow base and hollow point. It proved such a good and accurate game-killing load that I tried for nearly 30 years to get the load in factory production. In the early Thirties Major D.B. Wesson of Smith & Wesson invited me to work with him on a new magnum sixgun cartridge. At that time I wanted the .44, but cast, sized and lubricated my 173-grain .357 bullets and sent them to him for load testing. I worked with him on the .357 Magnum development. Winchester first brought out the new load with a modification of my bullet. Cale Dickey and I carried one of the first .357 Magnum S&W guns up the Pahsimeroi Valley and I killed many jackrabbits testing that gun with various loads over a three-day period. At the same time I also demolished many other jacks with my old Triple Lock Target S&W .44 Special with 235-grain hollow point and heavy

doses of No. 80 powder. I wrote up the results in the November, 1935 issue of *American Rifleman*.

While working with Major Wesson on the .357, I held out for and wanted a .44 Magnum, but did not get it until I spent a week at the Remington plant and another week at the S&W plant with my old friend Carl R. Hellstrom in September of 1953. I had also talked on the project with C.G. Petersen of Remington for a week at Camp Perry that year before going up to Remington. There I took the matter of the .44 heavy load up with Gail Evans, Mike Walker and Henry P. Davis of Remington. The Remington people were afraid of the old S&W Triple Lock, so I suggested making the case $\frac{1}{10}$ of an inch longer and bringing out a new gun for it. Carl Hellstrom later invited the Remington men up to the S&W plant, and he, with Bill Gunn, shop superintendent Fred Miller, and Harold Austin, the sale manager, worked out plans for the .44. Carl Hellstrom sent me the first gun out of the factory, a tool-room job in January 1956. I finally had what I wanted for a big-game sixgun.

Many shooters think the .44 Magnum sixgun is too small for big game and some even consider the cartridge too small when fired from a carbine with an 18½ to 20-inch barrel. While many states still have laws prohibiting the use of a heavy sixgun on big game, I believe all states should legalize its use on big game. I know one outfitter who has taken 13 elk with it without a single loss. Altogether too many people think only a small-bore, high-velocity rifle is capable of killing big game cleanly.

Three years ago I placed seven 220-grain .300 H & H Magnum slugs into one small grizzly and chased her three miles before she retired to an alder thicket. When the guide rode up on her and put a .44 Mag-

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"Your bullet was a lifesaver."

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my gratitude for producing such outstanding bullets. The quality and performance of your product was a LIFESAVER.

On September 18, 1981, while moose hunting west of Anchorage across Cook Inlet, I was charged by a grizzly from about 25 feet. Time allowed only a hip shot which luckily hit the bear between the eyes at about 12 feet. The 7mm 154 grain Spire Point exited below the base of the skull, taking out the spine. The bear dropped like a rock. The exit hole in the hide was clean and about the size of a nickel, which tells me there was maximum expansion without fragmentation. I believe that this excellent penetration was all that saved me from serious injury or death.

I didn't get a moose on that trip, but the following weekend I got a young bull, again with excellent bullet performance from your 7mm 154 grain Spire Point.

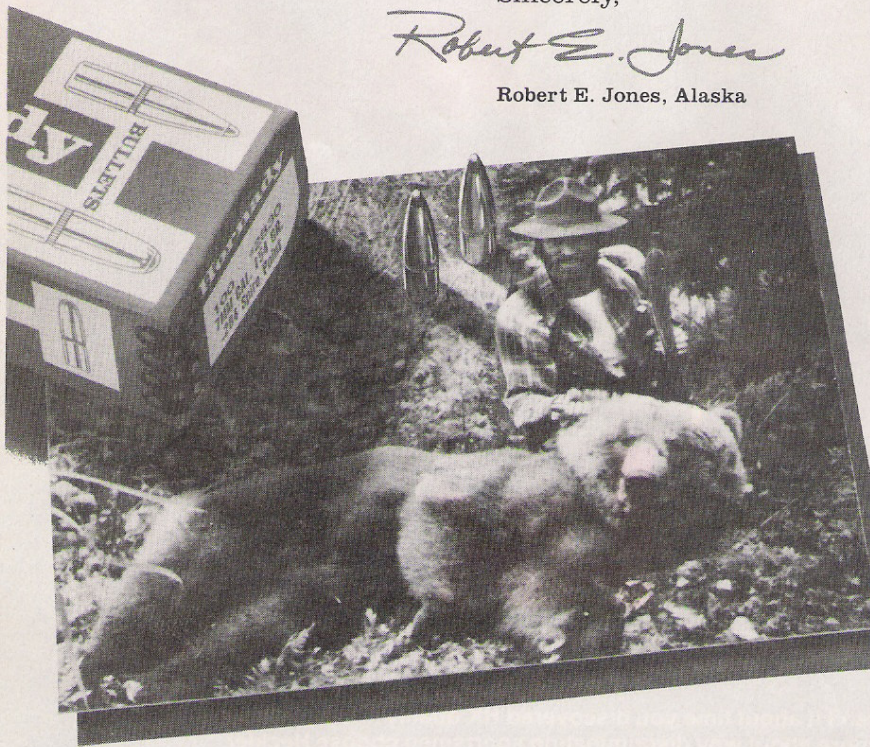
I have been reloading my Rem. 7mm Mag for several years and have only tried one other manufacturer's bullet. I was not satisfied with its performance, even on paper. I have always gotten good groups with your bullets and I doubt if I'll ever switch again.



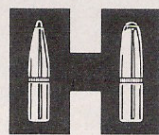
Sincerely,

Robert E. Jones

Robert E. Jones, Alaska



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GUNNOTES

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num into the middle of that ball of fur she unraveled herself and charged him, bawling. The guide, Don DeHart, calmly planted the next slug from his 6½-inch .44 Magnum S&W under her chin and the bawling stopped instantly, and the bear as well. We found that slug clear back near a kidney when we skinned her out.

Like its .44 Special "little brother," the .44 Magnum is one of the finest sixgun cartridges ever produced for the handloader. One-tenth inch longer than the .44 Special or, if you prefer, about the same length as the .357 Magnum, the case has a solid head. The .44 Magnum is of thicker material, however, and has the thickest side walls of any revolver cartridge we have ever reloaded. The .44 Special case sizing die will reform the big magnum case back nicely so the magnum can be loaded with .44 Special dies. Since .44 Magnum brass is so much thicker than .44 Special, the expanding plugs should be turned down to about .423 to prevent expanding of the case after resizing. Exact groove diameter is important in sizing bullets. The factory slug measures .430 and I have heard of some going .431, but I did not measure them.

Remington now has the fine 240-grain soft point jacketed .44 Magnum; I have given them a thorough test and can honestly report it is the best and most accurate .44 Magnum ammunition I have tested to date. Velocity from an 18½-inch carbine is 1,850 fps so I would expect around 1,470 to 1,500 fps from a long-barreled sixgun. These loads work fine in both, and while the jacketed bullets will wear barrels faster than hard lead alloy, still the average hunter will not shoot the big gun on game enough to worry about barrel wear as compared to the cost of ammunition, for it will take a lot of money in ammunition to wear out a barrel. There are no leading or fouling troubles with this new Remington load.

Gas checks are useless for revolvers because they will not upset to fill chamber mouths when fired. Penetration tests have demonstrated that the .44 Magnum with a factory load or our heavy handload of 22 grains of 2400 and a Keith 250-grain bullet will definitely penetrate the skull of any bear, elk or moose. It is my belief that the .44 Magnum is the greatest handgun development in half a century.

The .44 Magnum has now taken all American game, including elk, moose, grizzly, Alaskan brown bear and even buffalo. Quite recently, two men killed two African elephant with the .44 Magnum dragoon Ruger with a 7½-inch barrel. I have worked 30 years to get this cartridge and guns to handle it. Today it does all of my sixgun shooting because I like it better for all purposes than any cartridge I have previously used.

Today, archery clubs all over the country have special seasons for hunting big

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ECONOPOWER CAMS... PERFORMANCE IS BACK!

New Crane EconoPower cams increase horsepower, torque, throttle response and driving fun for your V-8 powered car, truck, 4x4 or van. What's more, installing an EconoPower cam won't hurt your fuel economy either!*

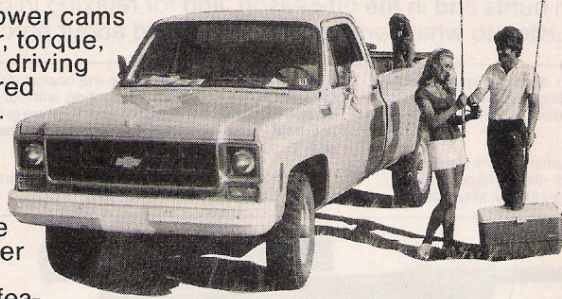
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EconoPower cams feature unique, non-symmetrical lobe designs (most are dual pattern!) that increase low and mid-range torque as well as boost RPM, even with stock, low-compression engines! And they're engineered using the same ultra-sophisticated computer science that goes into our drag racing, oval track and marine racing cams.

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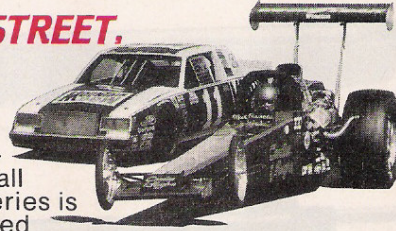
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VEHICLE	SUMMARIZED TEST RESULTS*				
	ECONOPOWER M.P.G.	HIGH ENERGY M.P.G.	CRANE 0-50 MPH	HIGH ENERGY 0-50 MPH	CRANE 40-60 MPH
'79 Monte Carlo SS V-8 4041 Throttlemaster HE-288-2-NC	21.92	WINNER	12.53 sec.	WINNER	7.15 sec.
High Energy CR-2814			21.73		13.28 sec.
'78 Chevy C-30 Crew Cab 411 1/2 4 Wheel Grippler HI-288-2-NC	11.96	WINNER	11.39 sec.	WINNER	5.50 sec.
High Energy CR-2801-10			11.34		11.37 sec.
'77 Dodge Van 180 V-8 804 Throttlemaster Plus HP-284-2-NC	15.71	WINNER	10.54 sec.	WINNER	5.76 sec.
High Energy CRS-322H-12			14.18		10.63 sec.
'81 Camaro 350 V-8 4 bbl Blazer 288H	13.91	WINNER	8.31 sec.	WINNER	4.77 sec.
High Energy CR-2814 #			12.30		8.73 sec.
					5.22 sec.

*Complete test data available free upon request!

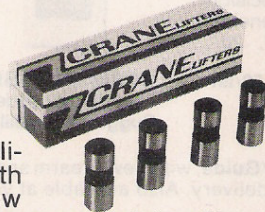
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GUNNOTES

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game, usually a week or two prior to any gun hunter being allowed in the forest. I have never been able to figure out why game commissions should allow people to hunt with bows and arrows to the exclusion of anything else, and still prohibit six-gunners from hunting at the same time. The sixgun gives the game a much more merciful death, and is far more deadly in the hands of a good pistol shot than a bow.

Game commissioners have little conception of the power of the modern handgun in .41 or .44 Magnum caliber. Few of them have ever used one, or seen one used on big game. They don't know how effective it is. I don't object to the archer who wants to use this primitive weapon on big game. I have killed five head of beef cattle with a bow. It proved to be the slowest, most painful death you can inflict on an animal with any type of weapon. For that reason I hung up my bows. They're still hanging in the attic. I can do more with a good six-gun at 100 yards than I can at 50 yards with the best bow.

I believe all states with big game on their list should permit sixgun hunting. Calibers might be limited to .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .44 Special, and .45 Colt. The .357 Magnum has killed about all game on this continent at one time or another but it is still on the light side as a big game cartridge. I see no reason to recommend it when the .41 Magnum and the .44 Magnum are so much better.

I put in most of 1963 working on specifications for the .41 Magnum, for police departments and sheriffs' offices. This .41 Magnum is also a very good big-game cartridge, far better than the .357 Magnum.

While running a small cow ranch at Durkee, Oregon, in 1927, I spent much time in testing all manner of sixguns and loads to extreme ranges of 700 yards. One man out in the coastal section of Oregon sent me samples of a .41 cartridge he had developed from the .401 Winchester case and a special bullet of 200 grains he had designed and worked out in Colt Single Action revolvers. The bullet went .403 inch in diameter and I still have some of the original loads he sent me. With No. 80 powder he was getting far better results than was possible with the 180-grain in the .38-40 Colt, the latter of which was so hard to reload on account of the excessive resizing of cases that was necessary.

Later, Pop Eimer, of Joplin, Missouri, made up many Colt Single Actions for the .41 round made from .401 Winchester cases. Other gunsmiths also made up several. Later, Gordon Boser also made up several guns in Colt single action for this round and worked out a near copy of my bullet design with Lyman for this cartridge. He also wrote several articles on it.

Personally, I never pushed the .41 Magnum idea until many years later. Many po-

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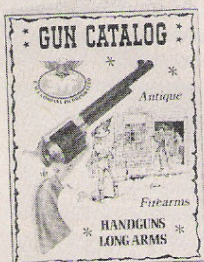
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GUNNOTES

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lice chiefs, police commissioners, police judges, etc., were against arming their men with the .44 Special or .44 Magnum, as well as the time-tried .45 Colt and .45 Auto. I thought that a .41 caliber cartridge, throwing a 210- to 220-grain bullet at around 1,000 fps from a lead alloy bullet load, and a heavy load of the same bullet weight at 1,400 to 1,500 fps would be the ideal police and peace officer cartridge. After urging by many fine officers all over this country, I decided to do something about it. I teamed up with Bill Jordan and we talked it over with Doug Hellstrom and by phone with Freddie Miller and Bill Gunn of S&W, Bill Ruger, and also with Herb Glass and others working for Colt. We then went to Earl Larson and E.S. McCawley of Remington and later I contacted Wayne Leek of that company. We also contacted Nils Kvale of Norma and Jim Baker of Winchester along with Bill Kely and Jim Rikhoff. I also contacted Bill Horn of Federal and we urged them one and all to bring out a new police cartridge in .41 caliber and guns to go with it.

My original specifications, later to be modified and changed, were for a 210-grain bullet of .403 diameter in a straight case of the same length as the .357 and .44 Magnums. The heavy load was to go to 1,400 to 1,500 fps with a fully jacketed, overbearing surface, soft point bullet. The lead alloy bullet was to go 1,000 to 1,100 fps for lighter police use. Doug Hellstrom wisely held out for a full .410-inch bullet to which we all agreed as being better than these misnamed calibers. Nils Kvale also held out for a 220-grain bullet at 1,400 fps with 34,000 pounds, and both Jordan and I agreed with this thinking.

Now the .41 Magnum gun and cartridge are a reality. Doug Hellstrom, Bill Gunn and Freddie Miller of S&W, having no ammunition to work with, started out by turning cases on a lathe, making up moulds and loading their own ammunition and came out with the first guns. I was sent the first pair of four-inch .41 Magnum S&W guns. Remington again pioneered the load with a 210-grain soft point. It is the same length as the .357 and .44 Mags, with a velocity of 1,500 fps from a sixgun and around 1,800 from carbine and test barrels of longer length. Earl Larson also told me that he had the lead bullet now well worked out at 1,035 fps. The big load gives an average of 34,000 pounds pressure. Smith & Wesson used their standard .44 Magnum frame and barrel for the new cartridge. The new Remington ammunition is stamped R-P .41 Magnum. Chamber walls and barrel throat, being much thicker when bored for the .41 instead of the .44 Magnum cartridge, give ample strength to the new guns. Recoil is considerably lighter than that of the .44 Magnum, and double action fire is much faster on that account.

Continued Next Month