

THE ARSENAL

A close and definitive look at the Executioner's weaponry.

The first major breakthrough in auto pistol engineering in this century occurred in the late sixties when West Coast designer Harry Sanford unveiled "the most powerful hunting hand gun in the world." This was, of course, the fabulous .44 AutoMag. AutoMag is a brand name, arrived at through a contraction of "autoloading magnum." For many years other designers had tried and failed to produce an autoloading version of the awesomely powerful .44 magnum revolver, which took the gun world by storm in the mid-fifties. Sanford did it with inspiration, ingenuity, doggedness, and special steel alloys which did not become available until the technologies of the space age.

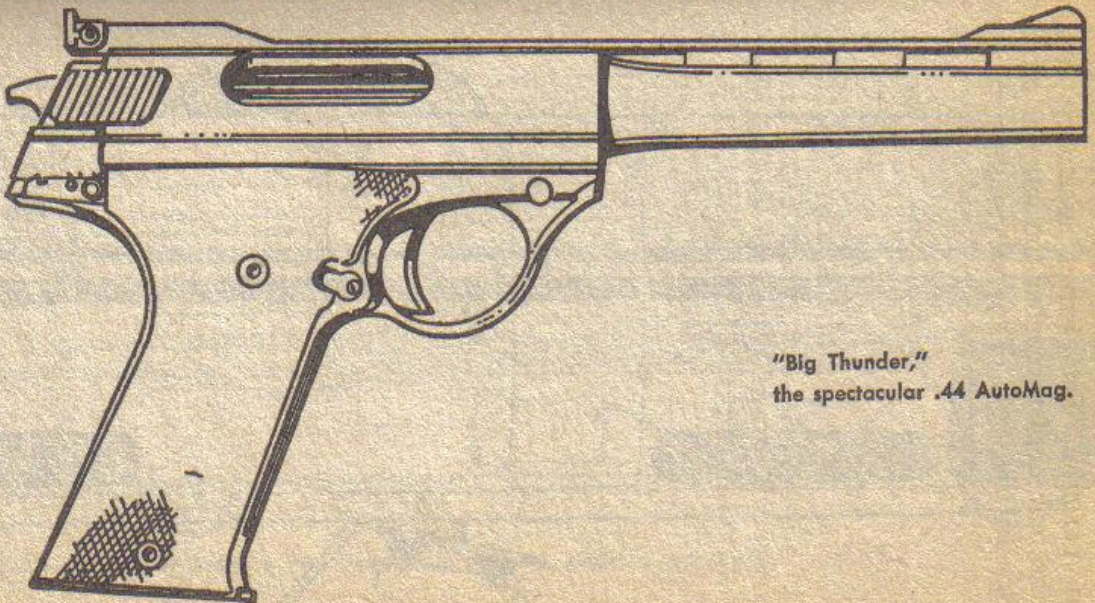
It is a big, heavy gun—too much, really, to handle except by the most ambitious (and the strongest) of gun buffs. The accuracy of the piece is comparable to that of the heavy, bolt-action rifles (so are the firing pressures applied to its innards, a major problem which frustrated autoloader designers in the past). It is also more accurate and faster in sustained firing than a revolver. Little wonder, then, that a guy like Mack Bolan would undertake to tame the big silver gun and

adopt it as his head weapon—his first line of offense and first break to defense.

Here are the vitals: weight, 56 ounces (3½ pounds!), unloaded; overall length, 11½ inches; construction mostly of stainless steel with a touch of titanium at crucial points; adjustable trigger; with one round in the chamber, carries eight big .44 Magnum cartridges (AMP); barrel length, 6½ inches (muzzle to face of locked breech bolt); rifled with eight lands and grooves; left-hand twist; bore diameter, .422; groove diameter .430 inches. Operational system fires from a locked breech with short recoil; the bolt is a rotary with six locking lugs. Ballistic data depends on the choice of loads. Bolan uses a 240-grain bullet (quite heavy) and gets a muzzle velocity of about 1500 feet per second, dropping only to about 1300 fps at 100 yards. Compare this with the .45 Colt ACP, which develops but 850 fps at the muzzle.

For those who have never realized that an automatic pistol is an intricately functioning machine, consider an explanation of how the AutoMag works. Assuming that we are starting with the weapon loaded and ready, we pull the trigger and the piece fires; we keep pulling the trigger and it continues firing with each pull until the magazine is empty. What is happening inside during all this firing? Quite a lot. When we pull the trigger, the hammer falls and drives the firing pin into the chambered cartridge. The powder within the cartridge begins to burn (much quicker than we can talk about it) and the expansion of gases from that burning propels the bullet from the cartridge case and through the barrel. Those same gases have immediately begun to exert a backward pressure (recoil) which bears upon the entire barrel assembly to force it rearward. The bolt does not unlock, however, until the bullet has cleared the muzzle and the pressures are already dropping off (we're talking about a microsecond of time). A movement of the barrel assembly just a few hundredths of an inch rearward produces an action from a small, rotating pin in the helical camming cut to fully

unlock the bolt, the bottom of the accelerator strikes a frame lug, the top of the accelerator moves against a heavy lug on the bolt, and the bolt is thrown to the full rearward position. The barrel assembly continues toward the rear until it reaches the integral projection, which houses the bolt. The bolt-rotating pin works with the greatly compressed recoil-rod springs to bring the bolt to full stop. The expended cartridge case is ejected as its mouth clears the ejection port at the right of the barrel assembly. Meanwhile, the barrel assembly is at full rearward travel and is now beginning to line up the feed ramps for the return trip. Tensile action within the recoil springs begins to work on the bolt to throw it forward again. As the bolt returns, another round is lifted from the magazine and carried along to be fed into the firing chamber. In that same motion, the barrel assembly returns forward until it makes contact with the barrel latch. The bolt rotates into the locked position. And all this has occurred quicker than we can move a finger into another pull of the trigger. A machine, yeah. One hell of a machine!



"Big Thunder,"
the spectacular .44 AutoMag.

E the Executioner

This is his book... his operating manual, his history and scrapbook, his rogues gallery, his dictionary and index, his catalog of weapons and strategies... the indispensable guide and source book for the millions of readers who've made Mack Bolan the most exciting hero of the decade!

