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MAY 1984



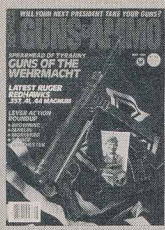
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ON THE COVER: During World War II the German Army employed a wide variety of novel, efficient firearms. For a rundown of this fascinating weaponry turn to page 50. Cover photography by Pat Brollier.



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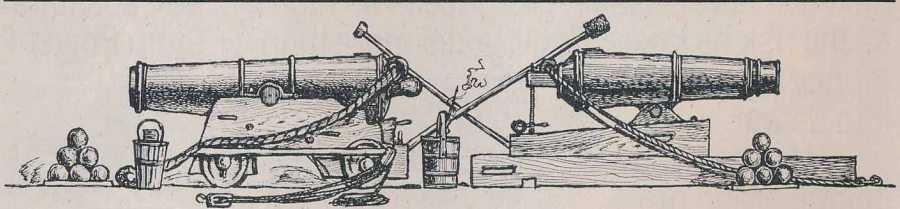
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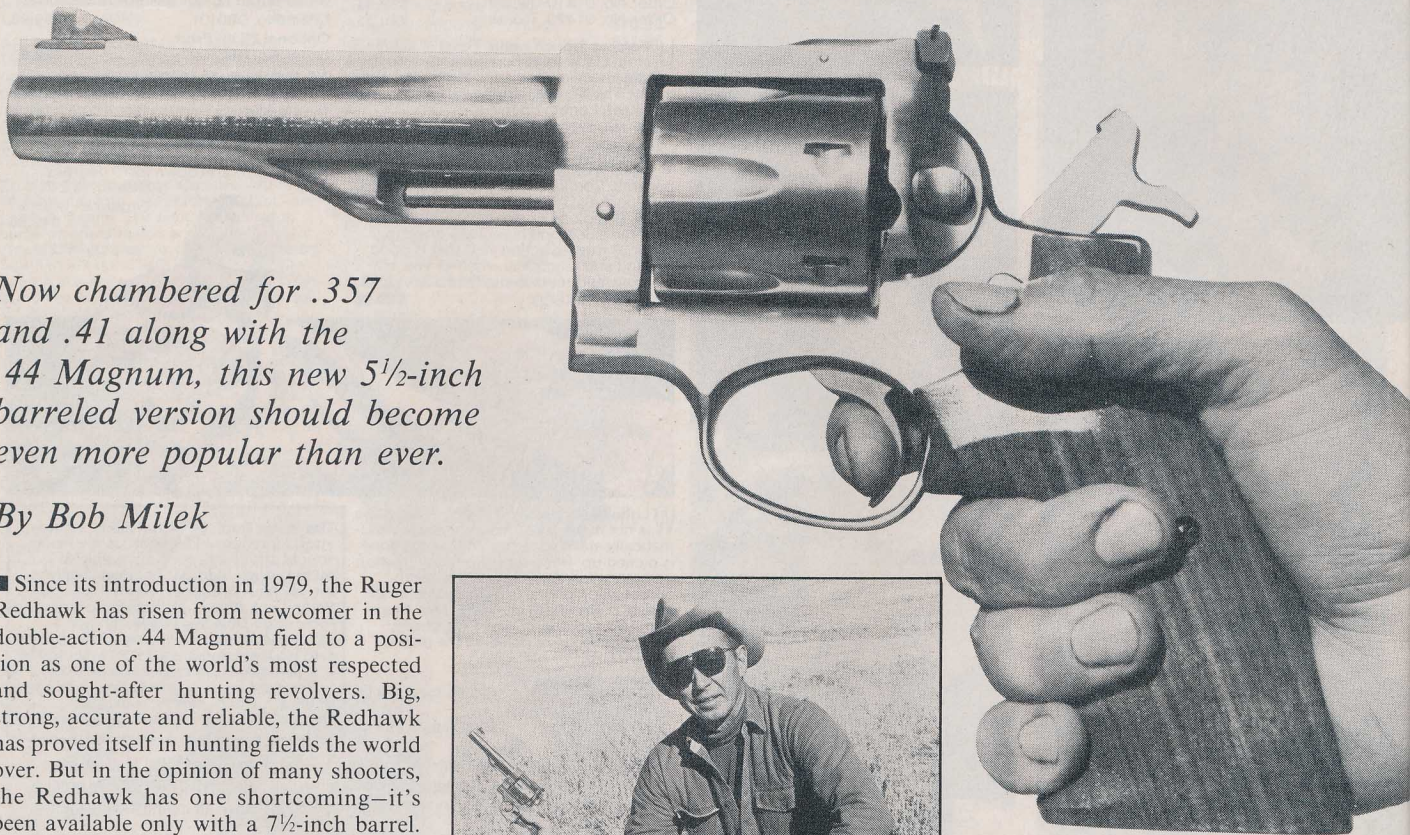
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THE RUGER REDHAWK UPDATE



Now chambered for .357 and .41 along with the .44 Magnum, this new 5½-inch barreled version should become even more popular than ever.

By Bob Milek

■ Since its introduction in 1979, the Ruger Redhawk has risen from newcomer in the double-action .44 Magnum field to a position as one of the world's most respected and sought-after hunting revolvers. Big, strong, accurate and reliable, the Redhawk has proved itself in hunting fields the world over. But in the opinion of many shooters, the Redhawk has one shortcoming—it's been available only with a 7½-inch barrel. When used as a primary hunting handgun, this posed no problem. But when you wanted to carry a Redhawk on your hip as a backup on a rifle hunt, as protection in the field, or as a sidearm for law enforcement work, that 7½-inch barrel was just too much.

Well, if you're one of those who's longed for a Redhawk with a shorter barrel, your dream has come true. Ruger is now offering the Redhawk with a 5½-inch barrel. But in the usual Bill Ruger style, there's just a little bit more—or a lot more depending on your preference in cartridges. Now you can have a Redhawk in .44 Magnum—and .41 Magnum and .357 Magnum! That's right, the Redhawk double action is now chambered for all three of our most popular magnum handgun cartridges with your choice of a 5½- or a 7½-inch barrel.

The new line of Ruger Redhawk revolvers are mechanically unchanged from the Redhawk that's been with us since 1979.

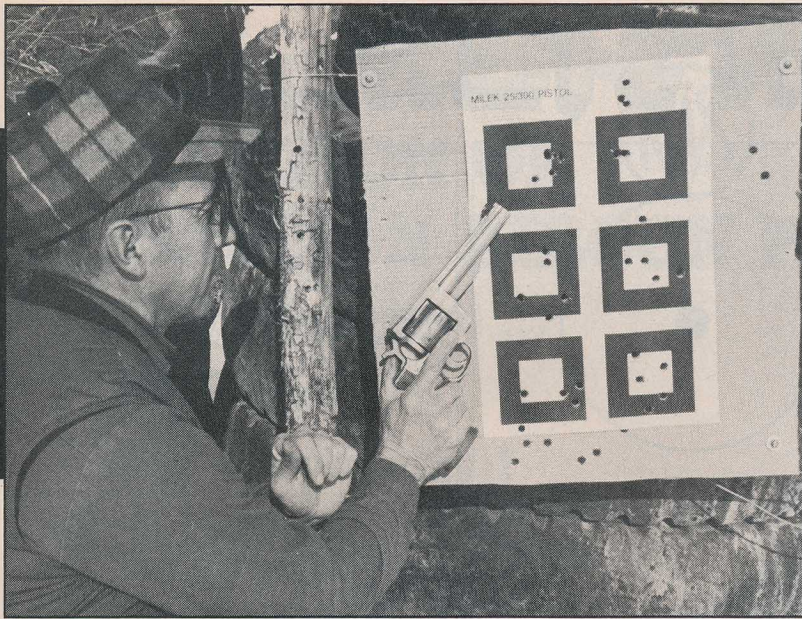


The 5½-inch barreled test Redhawk, chambered in .44 Magnum and fitted with Herrett stocks, proved highly accurate.

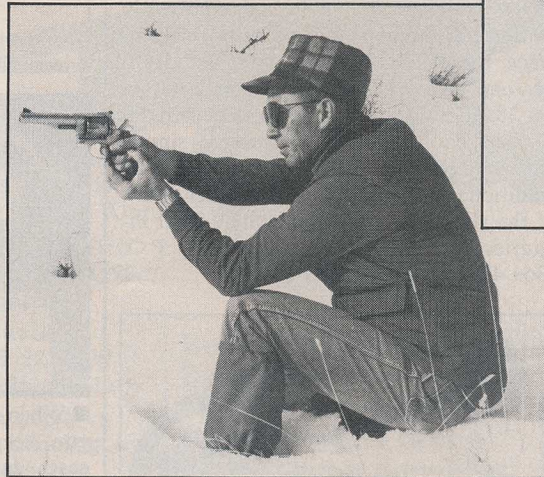
Milek found that the new Redhawk is a fine hunting arm, taking this badger with a 240-gr. Hornady JTC-SIL handload.

RUGER REDHAWK .44 MAGNUM VELOCITIES

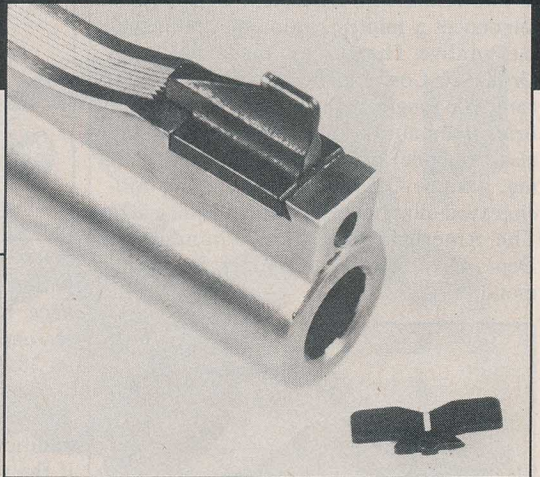
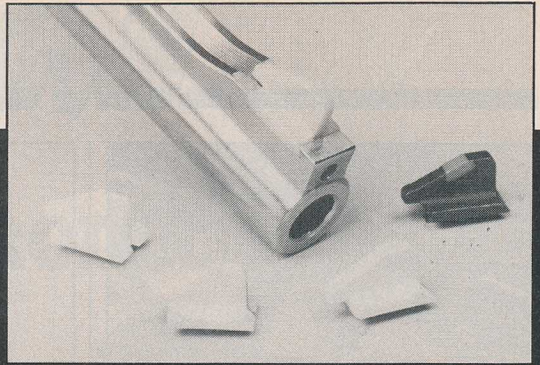
BULLET	POWDER		PRIMER	VELOCITY (FPS)	
	TYPE	WEIGHT (GRAINS)		5½-INCH BARREL	7½-INCH BARREL
Remington 180-gr. JHP F.L.	—	—	R-P*	1,565	1,623
Remington 240-gr. JSP F.L.	—	—	R-P	1,345	1,368
Federal 220-gr. Sil. F.L.	—	—	Fed.	1,282	1,300
Hornady 240-gr. JTC-SIL	296	24.5	CCI 350	1,348	1,366



Accuracy was good, quite close between the 5½-inch barreled Redhawk (targets on left) and the 7½-inch model. A handload tailored for the 5½-inch gun produced the tightest group. Center and bottom targets were fired with 240- and 180-gr. Remington factory loads, respectively.



The powerful new Ruger Redhawk revolver is ideal for general field use, or as a sidearm for law enforcement personnel.



The tapered front blade on the Redhawk is blued steel with a red insert, and can be interchanged with red, white, light blue or yellow nylon blades, sold separately as accessories (top). A gold bead front sight (above) and V-notch rear blade are also available, which are excellent for hunting.



The strong, 5½-inch barreled Redhawk is constructed of stainless steel and weighs 3 pounds, 2 ounces unloaded.

the muzzle releases the front sight so it can be lifted up and out. It can then be replaced by any of four colored nylon blades—red, white, light blue or yellow—sold separately as an accessory kit. There's also a gold bead front sight with a V-notch rear blade available that are excellent for hunting.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the Redhawk's features, we'll touch briefly on some of the more interesting ones. The most unusual is the use of a single, horizontally deployed mainspring that affords both hammer power and trigger return power. Linked to both the hammer and trigger by a simple yet intricate system, the spring compresses toward its center from both ends as the hammer is cocked, then decompresses at the rear to

propel the hammer forward, then in front to return the trigger.

Equally important is the strong locking system on the Redhawk. Up front a heavy latch locks the crane to the frame while in the standing breech. Depressing the cylinder latch release, located on the left side of the frame behind the recoil shield, releases both the rear and front latches.

The Redhawk is a massive, heavy revolver. The .44 Magnum with a 7½-inch barrel weighs three pounds, five ounces while the new 5½-inch version weighs three pounds, two ounces unloaded. Because the diameter of the cylinder is the same in all three calibers, the weight increases slightly in .41 Magnum and considerably in .357 Magnum. My test gun is a .44 Magnum, so I don't have exact figures on the weights of Redhawks in the other two calibers.

My tests indicate that you can expect excellent performance from the 5½-inch barreled .44 Magnum. The accuracy of my test gun is right up there with what I get from my 7½-inch Redhawk .44 Magnum. Shooting at 25 yards, both Remington and Federal factory loads held five shots in

continued on page 77

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RUGER REDHAWK

continued from page 37

close to three inches. A handload tailored especially for my 5 1/2-inch model groups five shots in 1 1/2 inches at 25 yards. In comparison tests with my 7 1/2-inch barreled Redhawk, the 5 1/2-inch model was every bit as accurate. However, I must confess that the comparison wasn't exactly fair because I used the issue blade sights on the 5 1/2 inch and the bead/V-notch arrangement on the 7 1/2 inch. This put the 7 1/2-inch gun at a disadvantage because the bead is much more difficult to use on targets and you tend to get vertical stringing of the shots on a target due to an inability to get a precise sight picture time after time.

I was a little concerned over velocity loss in the 5 1/2-inch barrel, but my apprehension proved to be unfounded. The load I quoted above, using CCI 350 primers, gives the 240-grain bullet a muzzle velocity of 1,348 feet per second (fps). The velocity of this same load from a 7 1/2-inch Redhawk is 1,366 fps—only 18 fps more! This held true for factory-loaded ammunition as well. Certain powders may show a more marked difference in velocity between the 5 1/2- and 7 1/2-inch barrels, but it will take some experimenting to find out which ones are most affected by two inches less barrel.

Ruger's selection of the 5 1/2-inch barrel length for their expanded Redhawk line

appears to be a good compromise. While it's not as compact as a four-inch barrel, it can certainly be carried comfortably in a holster on your hip—even when you're seated in a car. On the other hand, this barrel length is much more efficient than a four-inch when it comes to shooting magnum loads. More complete burning of the powder, thus reduced muzzle flash and blast and better velocity are but three advantages the 5 1/2-inch barrel has over the four-inch in .44 Magnum caliber. The same will be true for the .41 Magnum, but to a lesser degree for the .357 Magnum whose powder capacity has proved to be compatible with a four-inch barrel. For the most part it would appear that a longer sight radius and a little better balance are the major advantages the 7 1/2-inch barrel has over the 5 1/2-inch.

In any caliber I expect the 7 1/2-inch barreled Redhawk to remain most popular with serious handgun hunters while the 5 1/2-inch barreled version will be welcomed by law enforcement personnel and anyone wanting a powerful double-action revolver for general field use. The Redhawk's new barrel length and the additional calibers available will do a lot to hasten the revolver's rise to a position as the most popular double-action centerfire revolver on the American market.

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