

34 21st Century Big Bore Continued from Page 22

The .45 ACP's larger primer would over-ignite the .45 G.A.P. powder charges listed in loading manuals, thereby increasing pressures. Also note that cases used in early lots of Speer .45 G.A.P. ammo were primed with large-pistol primers and were headstamped ".45 GLOCK," rather than the more current ".45 G.A.P." While this ammo is perfectly safe to fire, don't reload it. The large-pistol primer will over-ignite powder charges listed in current loading data which are intended to be ignited by standard small-pistol primers.

The .45 G.A.P. operates at considerably lower pressures than most recently designed auto pistol cartridges intended for personal defense and police service. Mean average pressure (MAP) for the .45 G.A.P. is 23,000 psi; the same as for .45 ACP +P ammo and only 2,000 psi more than standard .45 ACP ammo. In contrast, the MAP for the .40 S&W is 35,000 psi, while the MAP for the .357 SIG is an even more intense 40,000 psi. Lower pressures are easier on machinery, contribute to longer case life, and generate recoil that takes the form of a push rather than a sudden slap.

I originally had little interest in the .45 G.A.P., as the first factory loads that came out in this caliber were loaded with bullets no heavier than 200 grains. Winchester made the caliber a lot more interesting to me when they offered 230-grain JHP loads that produced high-end .45 ACP velocities (I chronographed ten rounds of Winchester .45 G.A.P. 230-grain JHP USA ammo Lot #05VD202Z from my Glock 37 that averaged 881 fps at 15 feet, with an extreme spread of only 24 fps and a standard deviation of 8 fps!). Other makers are also producing or planning to produce .45 G.A.P. ammo loaded with 230-grain bullets.

Pistol bullet technology has greatly improved over the last two decades, and there are a number of makers (including Winchester) that produce handgun bullets that reliably expand well in soft tissue at velocities in the 800 fps bracket. Slower, heavier pistol bullets that expand properly are superior for personal defense or the taking of large animals to lighter, faster projectiles because they use a higher percentage of their limited energy in making permanent cavities (holes) and lesser amounts of their limited energy in generating temporary stretch cavities. Large diameter holes **of adequate depth** are what one really needs on large animals and human assailants for dependable results.

At first glance, the .45 G.A.P. cartridge looks bit peculiar with its stubby, bean-can-like case and give many the intuitive impression of being much weaker than the .45 ACP. Shooting the round instantly cures one of this misconception. Like the .45 ACP, the .45 G.A.P.'s recoil is noteworthy, but controllable, and gives the shooter the satisfaction that significant events are taking place. Factory ammo varies greatly with respect to recoil impulse (e.g., 175- to 185-grain loads at 1,000 fps kick less than 185-grain loads at 1,090 fps. and 230-grainers at 880 fps). The accuracy

I've gotten from factory ammo made by Winchester, Speer, and Federal has been quite good, and have shot quite a few five-shot groups in the 1" - 2" range from a sandbag rest at 25 yards from my completely stock G37. This caliber definitely has potential! Because the Glock has a bore center-line axis that is very close to the top of the firing hand, different bullet weights group to similar points of impact at 25 yards.

Dillon die sets intended for the .45 ACP work equally well for reloading .45 G.A.P. ammo. Even though I already own a Dillon .45 ACP die set, I decided to get a new set of dies, powder measure, toolhead, and toolhead stand for my .45 G.A.P. set-up. In this way, I can still rapidly go from loading .45 ACP to .45 G.A.P., thereby taking full advantage of the handy quick caliber changing feature of my Dillon RL 550B.

My new .45 G.A.P. die set-up works perfectly (a not-at-all surprising characteristic of Dillon products!), but what really impresses me is the new style Dillon seating die featuring a quickly removable and reversible seating stem. Although this die has been available for several years, I have never had the opportunity to use one, as my older dies have worked perfectly under constant use (another characteristic of Dillon products!). Bullet seating is accomplished by simply rotating the entire die body. This die is an elegant masterpiece of engineering that greatly simplifies and speeds up switching to different bullet types.

Loading data for the .45 G.A.P. is available online from Winchester and Hodgdon. *Lyman's Third Edition Pistol & Revolver Handbook* also has .45 G.A.P. data. I've obtained pretty good results using Hodgdon's UNIVERSAL® powder, Winchester WSP standard small pistol primers, and various 185-grain bullets for target work. I have not gotten around to loading heavier bullets yet, but plan to do so in the near future.

While some of the .45 G.A.P. loading data I've mentioned lists loads with cast lead bullets, these are **not** to be used in Glock pistols with their polygon bores, as lead will tend to heavily smear onto bore surfaces and may suddenly and unexpectedly cause pressures to jump to dangerously high levels. These lead loads are fine to use in other makes of firearms with conventional rifling. For Glocks, use only jacketed bullets or bullets with heavy copper plating which acts as a jacket.

The .45 G.A.P. is an accurate, extremely compact cartridge that duplicates the performance of the proven and venerable .45 ACP, but is adaptable for use in guns with 9mm Luger-size receivers. With the proper loads, it should prove to be excellent for various types of action pistol competition, personal defense, and perform well on 100-300 pound game animals such as deer and wild pigs at close range. The cartridge is a true 21st Century big-bore round whose compact dimensions, coupled with formidable terminal performance should inspire firearms designers for decades to come.