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RAISING AUCTION

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AMERICAN RIFLEMAN MAGAZINE,
DATED JANUARY 1984, SHOWING
NO. TWO MILLION ON THE COVER

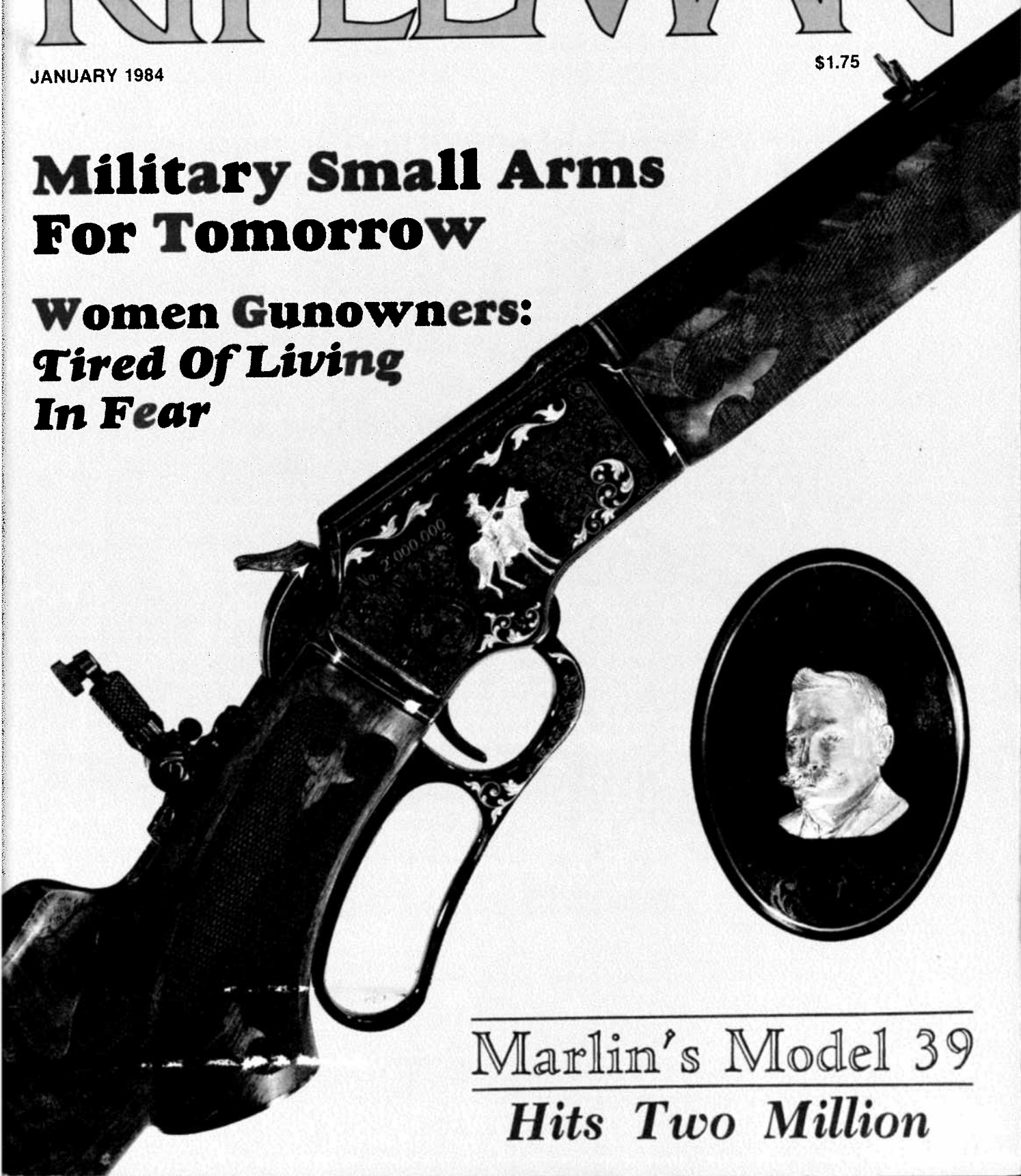
AMERICAN RIFLEMAN

JANUARY 1984

\$1.75

Military Small Arms For Tomorrow

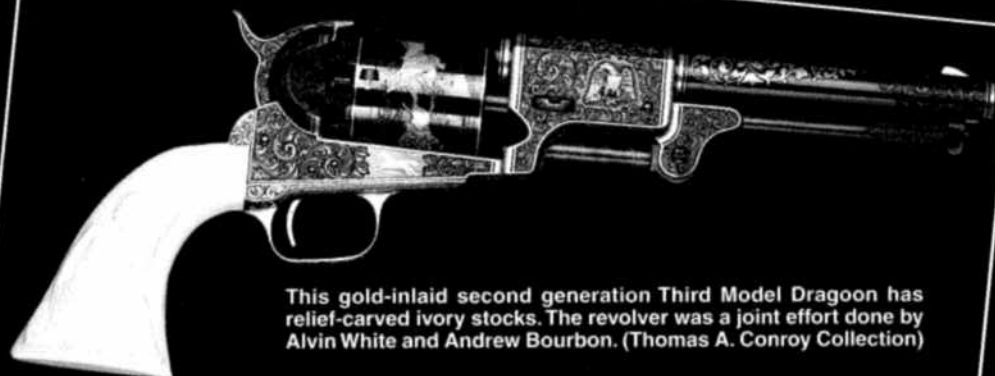
Women Gunowners: Tired Of Living In Fear



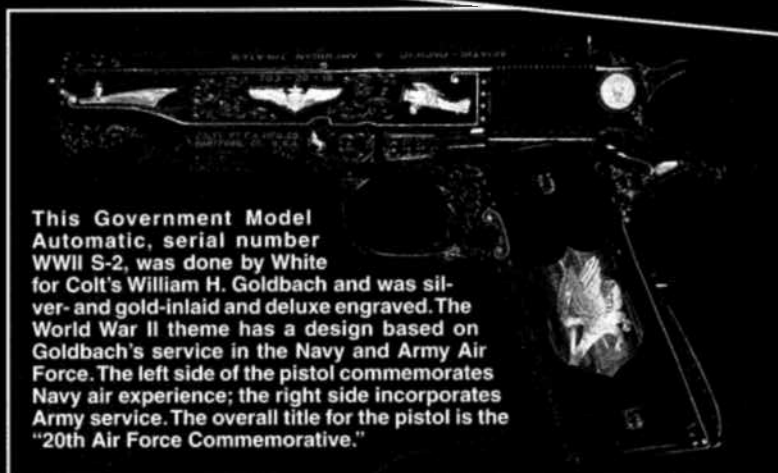
Marlin's Model 39

Hits Two Million

F A.A. WHITE



This gold-inlaid second generation Third Model Dragoon has relief-carved ivory stocks. The revolver was a joint effort done by Alvin White and Andrew Bourbon. (Thomas A. Conroy Collection)



This Government Model Automatic, serial number WWII S-2, was done by White for Colt's William H. Goldbach and was silver- and gold-inlaid and deluxe engraved. The World War II theme has a design based on Goldbach's service in the Navy and Army Air Force. The left side of the pistol commemorates Navy air experience; the right side incorporates Army service. The overall title for the pistol is the "20th Air Force Commemorative."

A strong demand for best quality engraving exists in the contemporary market. But, earlier in the twentieth century, the number of qualified artisans who could satisfy that demand was gradually decreasing. The post-World War II years, slowly but surely saw a renaissance of artistry and craftsmanship, concurrent with a revival of patronage by companies and by collectors and shooters.

Firearms engravers are active today, and more than three hundred belong to the Gun Engravers Guild. Within this increasing phalanx of active engravers is a core group of craftsmen at the very top of their craft. All of them, from the journeymen up to the absolute masters, are continuing the noble tradition of fine embellished fire-arms, with roots dating back to the Renaissance in Europe.

The "Charter Oak Commemorative" pair of unique New Frontier Sheriffs Model Single Action Army revolvers, numbers 1ACP and 2ACP, are gold inlaid and engraved by A.A. White, who also made the gold-mounted Charter Oak stocks and screwdriver. (John Snodgrass Collection)

THE COLTS OF A.A. WHITE



Early examples of scroll and border engraving by A.A. White are shown on Detective Specials numbers 526368 and 536383 built for S. Lewis Hutcheson, a friend of White. Factory records show 526368 was blued and chambered in .32 New Police. (Tom Burns Collection)

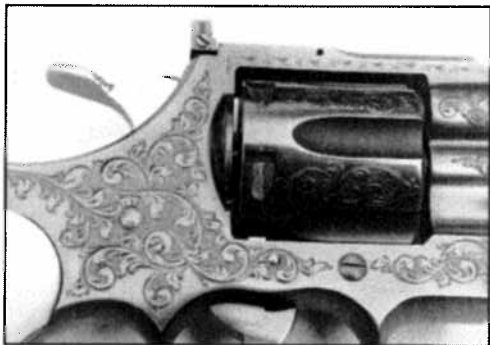
A towering figure in this renaissance of arms engraving in America—and Europe—is the dean of American arms engravers, Alvin A. White. White is the only pre-World War II arms engraver still active in the U.S., and he began his engraving career in the late 1920s. The creator of the “theme” handgun—through a series of exquisite Single Action Army revolvers and others that tell a

story—White set a standard of design and execution that places him in the top rank not only of arms engravers of the 20th Century, but for all time.

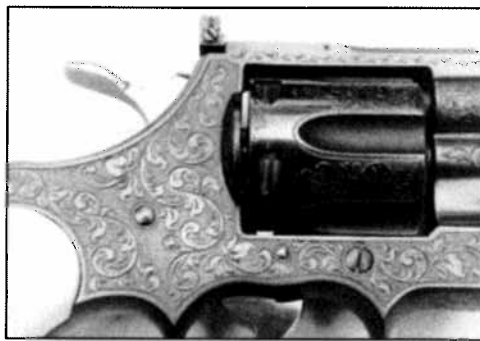
Among his masterpieces is The Metropolitan Museum of Art Single Action Army, created for the 1985 Christie's-New York benefit auction, a donation of Colt Industries. The .45 cal. revolver demonstrates the artistic strength of White's work, at the same time clearly revealing his technical mastery of materials. Revolvers like this have been instrumental in inspiring the revival of the art of arms engraving in the second half of the 20th Century—creating the second “Golden Age of American Arms Engraving.”

White's own work has appeared in color on more than 50 magazine covers—a record in the arms field—and he has been featured in articles appearing in *American Rifleman*, *American Hunter*, *Arms Gazette*, *Gun Digest*, *Guns*, *Guns & Ammo*, *Man at Arms*, *Shooting Times* and *Sports Afield*. White has also been featured in a number of this author's books, as well as in works by E.C. Prudhomme and others.

A brief but cogent portrait of White appeared in these pages (January 1967, p. 15), in the “America's Leading Gunsmiths” column. “A worker in precious metals, fine woods, ivory, and pearl is a rather rare breed of firearms craftsman today. Yet Alvin A. White of Sandwich, Mass., has been a professional firearms engraver for years, his active interest in this precise skill extending back to his boyhood. Today White is a master engraver for Colt... White's ornamentation has included gold and silver inlaid handguns, the Samuel Colt Sesquicentennial guns in both deluxe and custom models, and Colt's three standard grades of engraving.

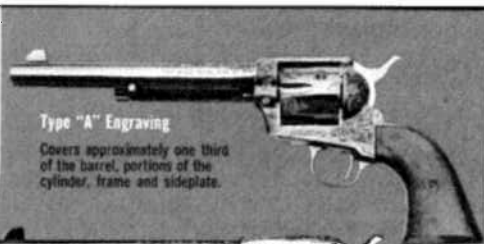


Two Colt Officers Model Match revolvers, serial No. 902791 (l.) and serial No. 903068 (r.) are scarce early examples of White's work for the Colt factory. Both were sent to White for engraving in 1953. The guns were originally to be sent to the Egyptian government to be given as special awards to political leaders. This fell through and the guns were instead sent to Canada. (Douglas S. Smith Collection)



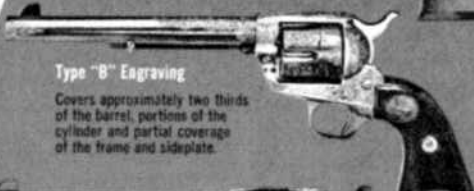
Custom Engraving

The masterful craft of handgun decoration is fortunately not a lost art at Colt's. The custom engraving done by Colt's master engravers enhances the value of any gun... provides the perfect individualizing touch for presentation purposes. Designs furnished include choice of State or National seals, scrolls, hunting or other scenes such as famed “stagecoach holdup,” with gold or silver inlays or plating, or enameled initials and emblems. Submit specifications to Colt's Products Service Department for a prompt estimate on custom engraving. Custom engraving prices available upon request after evaluation of purchaser's specifications.



Type “A” Engraving

Covers approximately one third of the barrel, portions of the cylinder, frame and sideplate.



Type “B” Engraving

Covers approximately two thirds of the barrel, portions of the cylinder and partial coverage of the frame and sideplate.



Type “C” Engraving

Covers approximately the entire weapon, including sides, the backstrap down to the stock, the butt and the trigger guard.

“White got his first professional training in his home city of Attleboro during the depression when a jewelry trade school was opened. ‘I had worked as a die cutter previously and, as a hobby, had done a great deal of hand work,’ White says.

“Although the school did not give us formal training, it provided tools and materials and we were allowed to make whatever we wanted... I also took courses at the Rhode Island School of Design at Providence in design and in shaping or modeling. I would recommend what might be termed general specialty work. That would be mastery of work in the several materials which can be used to produce a decorated firearm. I feel this places greater

The page at left illustrates engraving options from Colt's custom engraving service, and it was pictured in the firm's catalogs of 1968-1972. The grade A and B revolvers and the gold inlaid Detective special are all by White. (Author's Collection)

demands on the ingenuity and creativity of the artisan.”

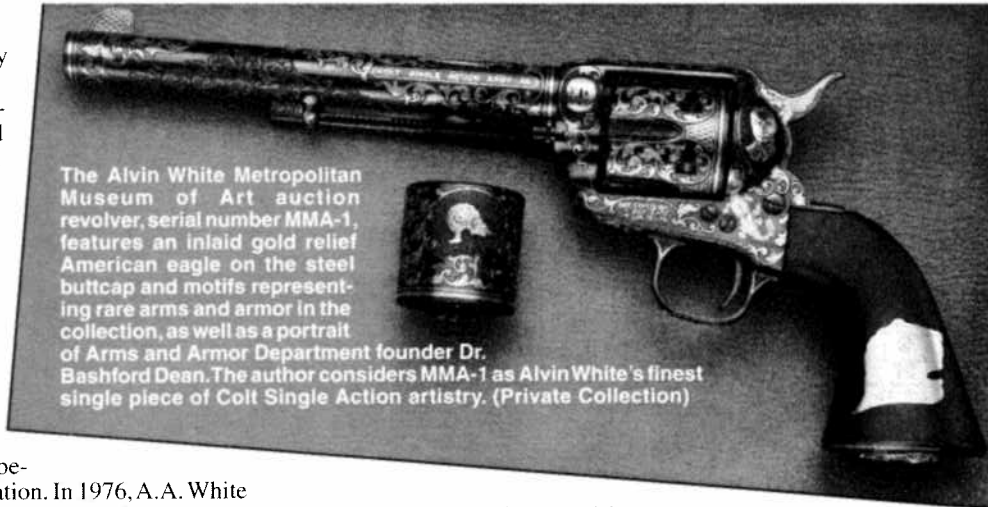
A.A. White Engravers, Inc., was created in 1961 by antique arms dealer and sportsman Herb Glass to satisfy a need just then being attended to by the Colt's Patent Fire Arms Mfg. Co. Colt's requirement was for volume engraving and gold inlaying of deluxe firearms, and the company's intent was a vigorous promotion of them.

From 1961, when the new engraving operation was manned by a single manager (the author) and by engraver Alvin White, A.A. White Engravers expanded to a staff of several qualified master engravers, each of them specialists in various aspects of arms decoration. In 1976, A.A. White Engravers was disbanded after having become the largest company in America devoted exclusively to hand engraving.

Contracts and work orders came from Colt's and a half-dozen other gunmaking firms. The balance of orders were from private clients. Projects included presentation pistols for: Presidents Nixon, Ford, Johnson, Kennedy and Reagan; J. Edgar Hoover; Soviet Premier Leonid I. Brezhnev; Blake Edwards; Chuck Connors; William E. Simon; Hank Williams, Jr.; members of the Ford and Mellon families; and Prince Abdol Reza of Iran. Among large orders for White Engravers, Inc., from Colt's were engraved commemoratives and special issues, grades A, B and C (and later D) scrollwork, and more than 500 sets of bullet traps and triggerguards for the Sharps Single Shot Rifle program.

Alvin White's style of scrollwork is influenced by British taste of the late flintlock period and, in most instances, does not include punched dot or stippled backgrounds. His standard scroll is of a medium size, and is finely shaded, often with lined background cuts. Gold inlaid subjects are invariably done in 18 karat, which he feels allows for extra detail and greater wear and durability in comparison to softer 22 to 24 karat gold. The author has seen this point demonstrated by watching White beat a relief inlaid 18 karat gold elk with a solid hunk of walnut—the gold remained undamaged. A collector of Oriental art, White is an ardent admirer of Japanese metal work—the influence of which can be seen in the style of his finely chiseled and engraved bird and animal motifs on firearms.

Signatures appear on nearly all work done personally by White. His most distinctive markings are gold



The Alvin White Metropolitan Museum of Art auction revolver, serial number MMA-1, features an inlaid gold relief American eagle on the steel buttcap and motifs representing rare arms and armor in the collection, as well as a portrait of Arms and Armor Department founder Dr. Bashford Dean. The author considers MMA-1 as Alvin White's finest single piece of Colt Single Action artistry. (Private Collection)

inlaid rectangles, relief stamped from dies of his own manufacture. The two major variations are “AA WHITE/ENG,” and “COLT'S/A.A. WHITE ENG.” The same stamps are also used for marking silver and gold buckles, and appear on other non-firearms items made by White personally. On some occasions his signature is engraved. In a few instances two or more signatures have appeared on extra-fancy commissions. The usual location of his signature is on the left side of the triggerguard strap or receiver, beneath the stocks. White's quality and style are distinctive, and, like the work of any expert craftsman, cannot be duplicated exactly.

Inspector stamps were sometimes used by A.A. White Engravers, and these were AW or WE, in tiny letters. The AW



The second Autry Museum Gala revolver was done by White in tribute to the artistry of Gustave Young. Engraving is based on original western art in the museum's collection. The frame, barrel and grip straps are silver-plated, while the ejector assembly, cylinder, trigger, hammer, screws and cylinder pins are gold-plated. (Michal Kokin Spirit of America Collection)

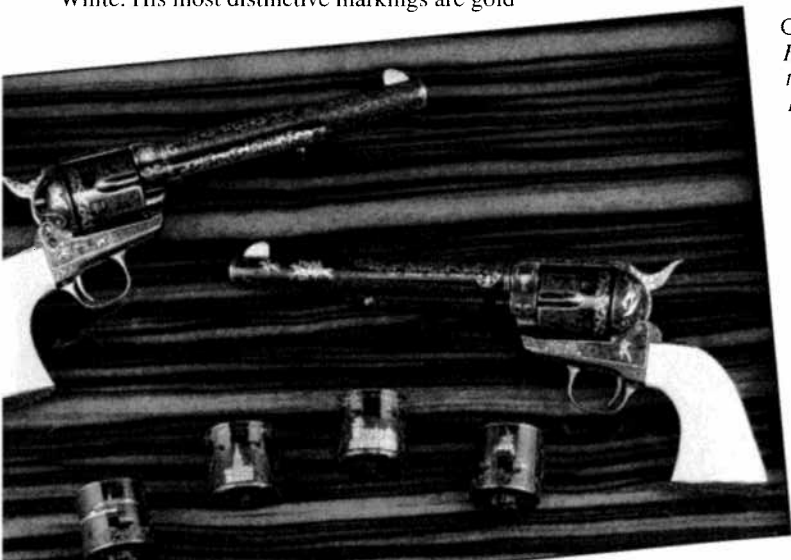
and WE markings did not often appear on work done by White personally, but usually represented engraving by other members of the firm.

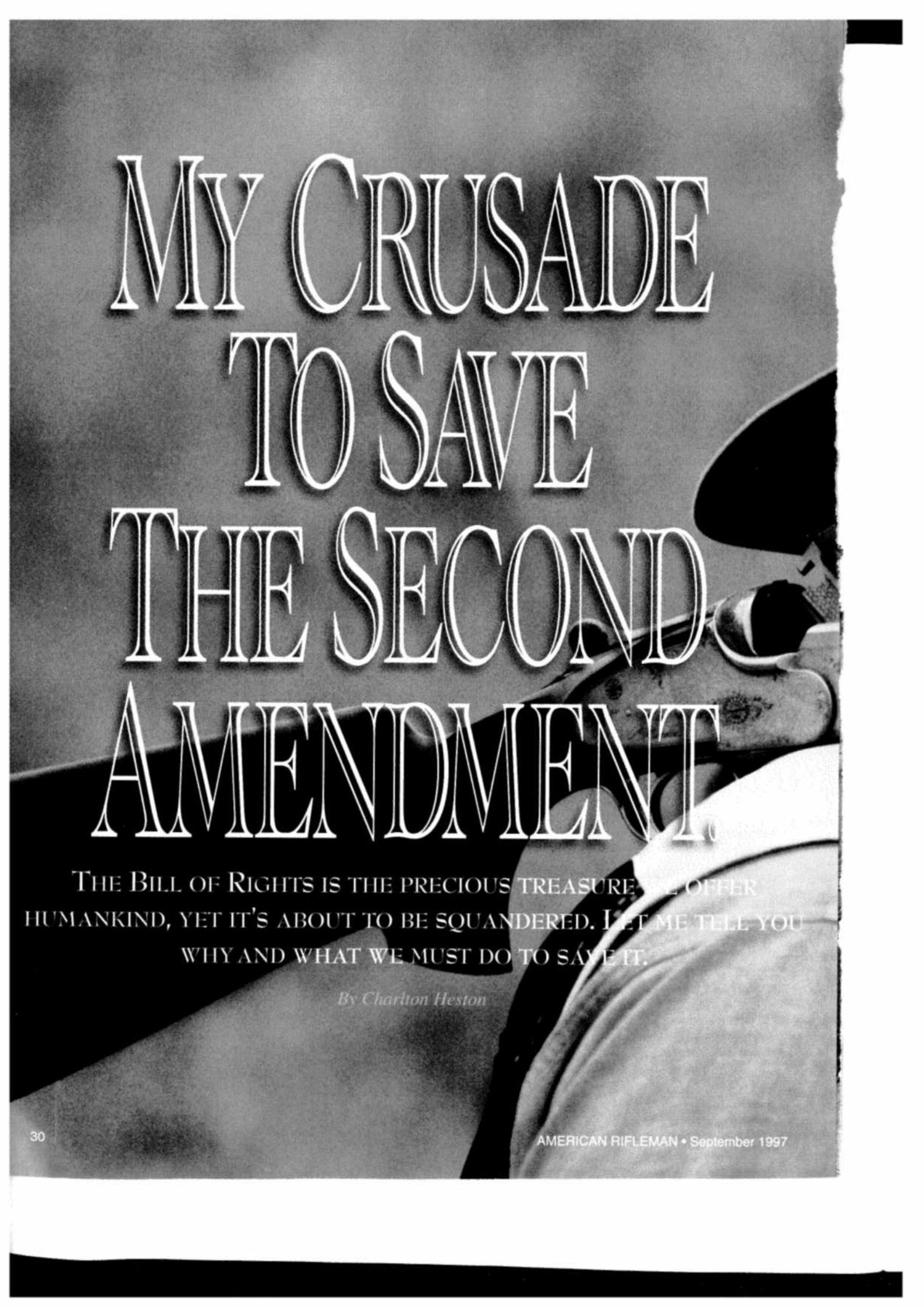


THE BOOK OF COLT ENGRAVING

R.L. Wilson is the author of *Ruger & His Guns*, *Steel Canvas*, *The Peacemakers* and more than 30 other books. His latest work is *The Book of Colt Engraving*, from which this article is excerpted. The new work, published by Blue Book Publications, will be available in late 1997. The 11"x8 1/2" format book contains a wealth of previously unpublished material and has more than 450 pages and more than 1,000 images. The author is graciously donating a portion of the proceeds from books sold through the source listed below to support The NRA Foundation's worthy educational goals. The price is expected to be \$89.95 plus shipping. To reserve a copy, call (800) 228-1717.

This is the most complex and detailed pair of SAA revolvers built in White's career and was done jointly with Andrew Bourbon. Buttcaps are of steel, relief-engraved with portraits of Theodore Roosevelt and Sitting Bull. The ebony casing has ivory-mounted accessories. Cylinders feature the Monitor and Merrimac, Independence Hall, Armsmear and cavalry charge motifs. (Private Collection)





MY CRUSADE TO SAVE THE SECOND AMENDMENT

THE BILL OF RIGHTS IS THE PRECIOUS TREASURE WE OFFER
HUMANKIND, YET IT'S ABOUT TO BE SQUANDERED. LET ME TELL YOU
WHY AND WHAT WE MUST DO TO SAVE IT.

By Charlton Heston

THE COLTS O



Alvin A. White (above) did all the work on the pictured range of engraved items, and it demonstrates his extraordinary creativity and talents. The Richard M. Nixon presentation revolver is magnificently engraved and has an 18 karat gold buttcap. The miniature Single Action Army revolver is based on the Nimschke-engraved serial No. 114.

**CALLED THE DEAN OF
AMERICAN 20TH CENTURY
ARMS ENGRAVERS, A.A.
WHITE BEGAN ENGRAVING IN
THE 1920S AND HIS WORK
RANKS HIM AMONG THE BEST
OF ALL TIME. BY R.L. WILSON**

1984 MARLIN FIREARMS CATALOG,
SHOWING NO. TWO MILLION
ON THE COVER



Marlin Sporting Firearms 1984
