

20 Ahern Under the Gun: Century's

By Jerry Ahern, Photos by Sharon Ahern

A few issues back, I mentioned the late Robert Culp and his liking for guns. He was a champion shotgunner, too. Subsequent to that installment of "Ahern Under the Gun," thanks to the courtesy of Wayne Novak, I was able to share with readers a photo of two of Culp's Devel 9mms, handguns Robert Culp used as FBI Special Agent "Bill Maxwell" in television's "The Greatest American Hero." Not long afterward,

I was contacted by a retired police officer turned gunsmith, who, as a boy, lived on the same street as Culp's mother and, in fact, used to deliver the newspaper to her home. My correspondent would bump into Robert Culp when the actor would return home at the holidays to see his mom; they'd exchange pleasantries. My correspondent was also a fan of Bill Cosby, at the time, Culp and Cosby working together on television's "I Spy."

Knowing that the paperboy was a Cosby fan, Culp got my correspondent and my correspondent's mother tickets to a live Cosby performance and backstage passes to meet the popular actor/comedian. Gunny guys tend to be nice guys, and the late Robert Culp seems to have scored on both counts.

Today, of course, Smith & Wesson's M&P series semiautos are extremely popular and seem to be going from strength to strength. Culp's Devels were based on Smith & Wesson Model 39s, the Model 39 being the first Smith & Wesson entry into the field of police and military semi-automatic pistols. The last handguns in the series of models begun with the Model 39 were the four-digit, third-generation autos. The fixed sights found on third-generation S&W autos are from Novak (www.novak-sights.com), Novak sights having passed the two-million-sold mark. If you go to the Novak Sights website, you can see photos of quite a number of interesting Devels.

I had never been an enthusiast for Smith & Wesson autos until quite recently, when I acquired a solid shooting, accurate and very nice looking used third-generation S&W auto, a Model 5906. As this is written, my friends at Century International Arms (www.centuryarms.com) have a good supply of used 5906s available. What their stocking situation will be by the time you read this is anyone's guess.

If you can get one, I'd say go for it. An all-stainless-steel "sixteen shooter" with a bargain price tag, you can't go wrong. I've been shooting mine with Atlanta Arms & Ammo (www.atlantaarmsandammo.com) 115-grain JHP 9x19mm ammunition and have had perfect functioning. I was surprised at the truly excellent double-action and single-action pulls. The re-curve of the grip frame back-strap coupled with the width of the grip combines

to give me an excellent and quite comfortable hold. Trigger reach is just about perfect with the pistol properly seated in the hand. The Novak sights, of course, are easy to pick up and ruggedly built. With a steel frame and 16 rounds loaded, this Model 5906 weighs in at two pounds, 13 ounces. A good friend, who carried one of these as a uniformed police officer, complained to me that the gun was too heavy for comfortable wear. I can see his point. By the same token, I like all-steel handguns. If the weight factor

won't dissuade you, check out the Smith & Wesson 5906 police turn-in guns.

Something else that seems to function perfectly for me is my Swiss+Tech (www.swisstechtools.com) Micro-Tech 6-in-1 key ring tool. There's a #2 flat head screwdriver, a #2 Phillips, pliers, a wire cutter, a wire stripper, a sheet sheer and there are one-eighth-inch markings for basic measuring. Actually, the Micro-Tech on my key ring is a new one, in stainless steel. My old one, that wasn't stainless, is gone.

The old Micro-Tech tool was tool steel, but never rusted. When we had our holster making business years back, I'd use the Micro-Tech to tighten down screws on the clicker (die press) head. The way the Micro-Tech can be used by leaving the screwdriver at a right angle to the body of the tool is a real plus in close quarters. Our daughter-in-law, Tracy, used my Micro-Tech when she was connecting a new clothes dryer. That tool was always with me. The pliers close around your key ring and lock closed until you fold open the screwdrivers in order to open the pliers. When Sharon and I went to India in March of 2011, the Micro-Tech was on my key ring. We landed in Delhi, but shortly afterward flew on to Dehra Dun, to see the hand forging and manufacturing operation for Windlass Steelcrafts' (www.windlass.com). Among other interests, the Windlass brothers own Atlanta Cutlery Corpora-



Ahern's Century International Arms police turn-in S&W 5906, shown with two spare magazines (not included with pistol purchase) and Atlanta Arms & Ammo 115-grain JHP 9x19mm ammunition.



The Swiss+Tech Micro-Tech tool with pliers open and screwdrivers out, shown with the Photon Freedom.