

20 Ahern Under the Gun: Sig Sauer

By Jerry Ahern, Photos by Sharon Ahern

As was dramatically brought home to even the most financially well-set shooters during late 2008 and much of 2009, in order to properly exercise our Second Amendment Right to Keep and Bear Arms, we need ammunition. And, if it's 100 percent truly not available, it doesn't matter whether you have a lot of money or you don't – you still won't be able to get your hands on the ammunition you need.

There are, of course, three remedies to this problem. First, you can store more ammunition than you could possibly ever need during times when ammunition is abundant. That's great to do, but you'll require a considerable amount of well-suited storage space and a lot of money. The next thing you can do is what we're getting started at after all these years. That's reloading. Sharon and I have a Dillon RL 550B, which we and our son-in-law, Danny Akers, are learning to use. Look for more on how someone with 10 thumbs can get into reloading coming up in a future installment. The third thing you can do is really something you can do in conjunction with either of the first two solutions. And that is shooting up a lot of .22 Long Rifle. The only problem there is that the best shooting practice – when it comes to defensive shooting – is with the gun or guns you'd actually use.

The idea of finding the means for economical practice with the weapons one might use in a real-life confrontation is nothing new. Indeed, in the field of handguns alone, there have been various approaches. The simplest of these – albeit the most time-consuming in actual use – is the barrel insert. Over the decades I've been involved with guns and shooting, I've encountered and used such inserts in a number of handguns. I

had a .38 Special derringer, for example, for which I had .22 LR barrel inserts. That was very convenient. Barrel inserts that drop in to the barrel for a semi-automatic pistol, for example, are neat to have; but, after a few shots, having to manually work the slide and remove the cap which goes over the case head, thus allowing a rimfire to be fired with a centerfire firing pin, then plucking out the brass, only to do the same process in reverse to reload – well, it becomes tedious.

Of course, you can buy another firearm in rimfire identical to your centerfire. But, that becomes expensive, assuming such guns are available. Years ago, I had a Colt Service Ace in .22 LR, this rimfire 1911A1 a fine handgun, but a nightmare to re-assemble – at least for me. Carry a Walther PP? Even when they were readily available, the LR version was very expensive.

How about a conversion kit for your existing firearm? In theory, that was always a great idea. In practice, well, not always. The Colt .22 Conversion Kit for the 1911 was just like the upper portion of the Ace and would be

challenging in the extreme to my 10-thumbed-ness. Yet, a rimfire version of a favorite handgun could be terrific in certain applications. I remember years ago driving our nephew down to the induction center (he'd proudly volunteered for

the Air Force and served with distinction for over six years). Induction centers open up early, of course, and it was an hour-and-a-half drive each way. Apparently, when he and I took off in the pre-dawn hours, an adult red squirrel slipped through the doorway. Sharon dis-

covered him sometime later.

When I returned home, Sharon informed me that we had a big squirrel in the house. But, not to



Ahern with his SIG 229 fitted with the SIG .22 Conversion Kit. Since it's a cold day, Ahern is wearing his Woolrich Elite Series Tactical Parka.



Above: At left, the standard slide with .40 S&W barrel in place, loaded magazine and loose round. The 229's frame with .22 Conversion Kit fitted and loaded magazine in place, loose round of Federal .22 LR with it. Right: The SIG 229 .40 with the .22 Conversion Kit as housed in its handy carrying and storage case.

