

ly, but if the top strap is too tight, keeping the shoulder pad too tight across the shoulder doesn't allow a pocket for the buttplate to be formed. The second strap now is a good deal tighter than in the past. I can get a little extra

support from this area of the coat now that my position doesn't have as much back bend. The third strap is still very loose, and this is done simply because it rests across the diaphragm; getting it too tight restricts breathing freedom

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHIN GUN

There are many who will take credit for the Silhouette chin gun, but I like to think that I brought it to its ultimate form and put it to best use. I won the Silhouette Rifle nationals seven years in a row, six years with a chin gun. At the time I began experimenting with this new rifle shape, Silhouette was wide open in design possibilities. There were weight limits on the rifles, but not a lot else to hold back the creative process. The whole idea of this rifle sprang from the want to have the best possible shooting position and then overcome the problem inherent in all other rifle designs of being able to get the sight in front of the eye when the shooter was holding in that ideal position (or position ideal). The benefit from the peculiar means of setting one's head on the stock was not a primary issue, although there's no doubt that pressure placed downward as strongly as is possible there helps to stabilize the rifle. Of course, that's how the chin gun got its name. The chin pad and holding method came about as a solution to an otherwise insurmountable problem: how to operate the rifle. The elements of rifle design that were necessary to allow us to attain the position we wanted didn't allow a conventional cheekpiece. The stocks were also custom molded to fit me (following a pattern I liked after much experimentation on modifying wooded stocks). They also featured twist and cast off on the stock contour to really mold the rifle around, again, what I considered the ultimately most effective offhand position. On a dead calm day I have experienced absence of perceptible movement in the crosshairs, and that's a 33X scope on a 10-pound gun. The chin gun was banned from competition but stands still today as one of shooting's incomparable — and uncompromising — rifle designs.

Here's how a chin gun looked from the back end. It's easy to see from this perspective how the shooter essentially steps into the rifle. The adjustable sight mounts were moveable on all planes, and scope position was the last thing to be fitted. Troy Lawton shot his using his left eye from a right-handed stance. I know of no other rifle that would have been possible with.



My approach to the Sportsmens Team Challenge rifle event came primarily from Silhouette Rifle. Not only is the rifle design a chin gun, but my shooting tactics are virtually the same. We're firing so quickly that there's no time for npa adjustment or dressing up a sight picture: a good shot is a good shot, take it right then.



and that's something no amount of body support is worth. The fourth strap is pretty snug. It's pulled down at least an inch more now than in years past. The fifth strap is now not only still on the coat but adjusted down very snugly. I do not get any measure of body or position support from this strap, which is the reason I had removed it entirely earlier on. However, I have found that it helps greatly in securing the coat from rotating as I go through the sequence I use to mount the gun. This sequence is vigorous and positive and if the coat rotates around on my hips its effectiveness is diminished. It holds that area up a little bit better and may also possibly allow my diaphragm a little more room. Again, the extra tension in the straps is an offshoot of the additional padding in the coat; it's necessary to get the feel I want in the coat consistent with the past and lasting elements in my off-

hand position. That's the only reason.

I see no difference in pulse transmission between the thinner and thicker coats in offhand. With what I think is a proper position there shouldn't be much influence from pulse in the standing position. Experiencing pulse-induced symptoms in offhand, which are essentially rifle movements, frequently is a sign of the shooter's conditioning as well as wearing the coat too tightly, especially around the diaphragm area.

The coat I wear has a zippered section along the inside sleeve in the left elbow area. Opening the zipper for offhand prevents the material from bunching up. If your coat isn't so equipped, take it to a shoe repair shop and them install a zipper. Finally, I habitually loosen my belt one notch to give some more room to accommodate the twist and backbend of my offhand position.