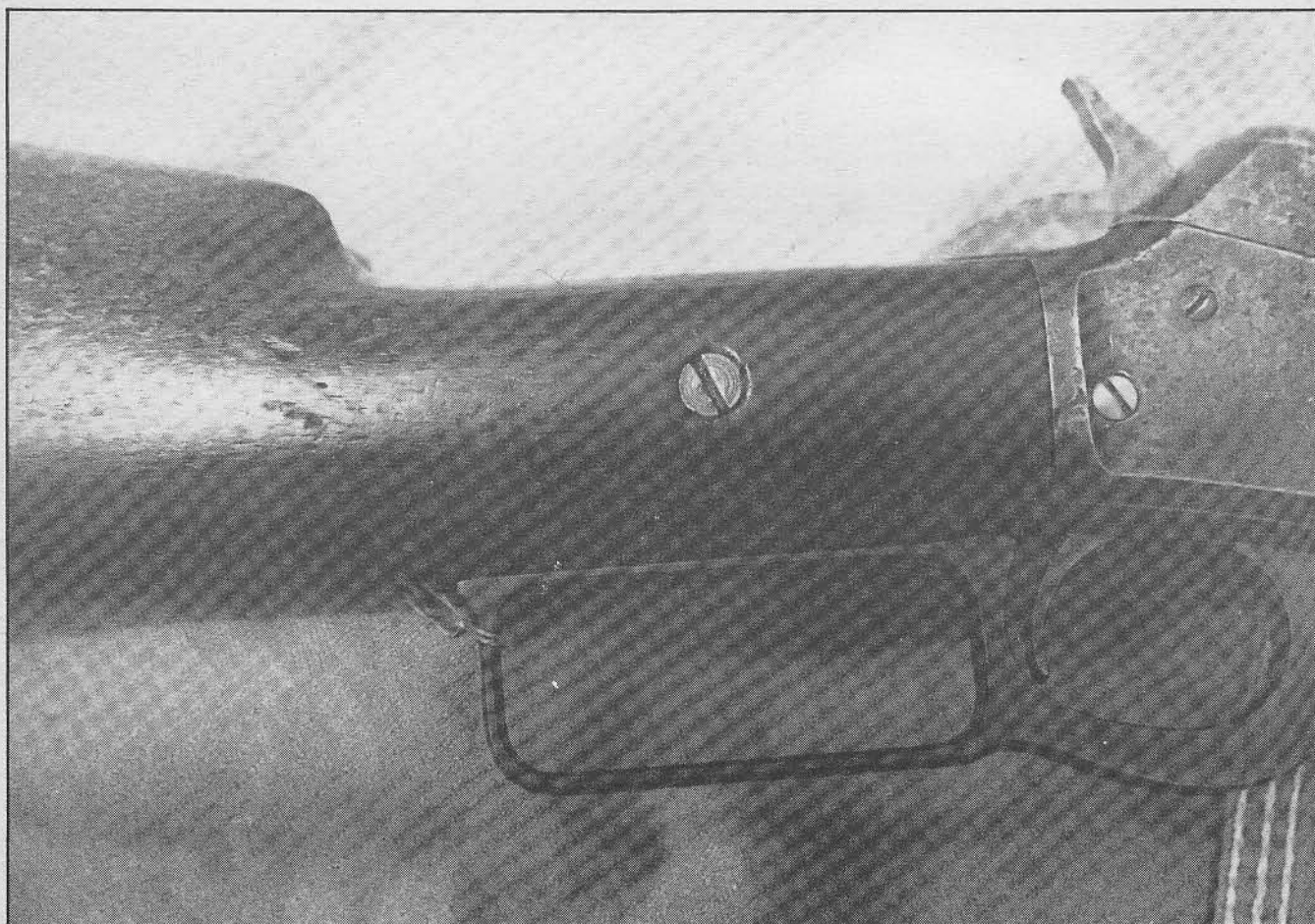


DONT'S FOR THE BEGINNER

*There Is Little Market For Firearms Butchery,
So Approach A Gunsmithing Chore With Proper Caution*



The repair job on this carbine stock smacks of amateurism and the stock probably will fail in a short time. Repair should have been accomplished with strong wood glues or epoxies so that the job would have been neat, invisible.



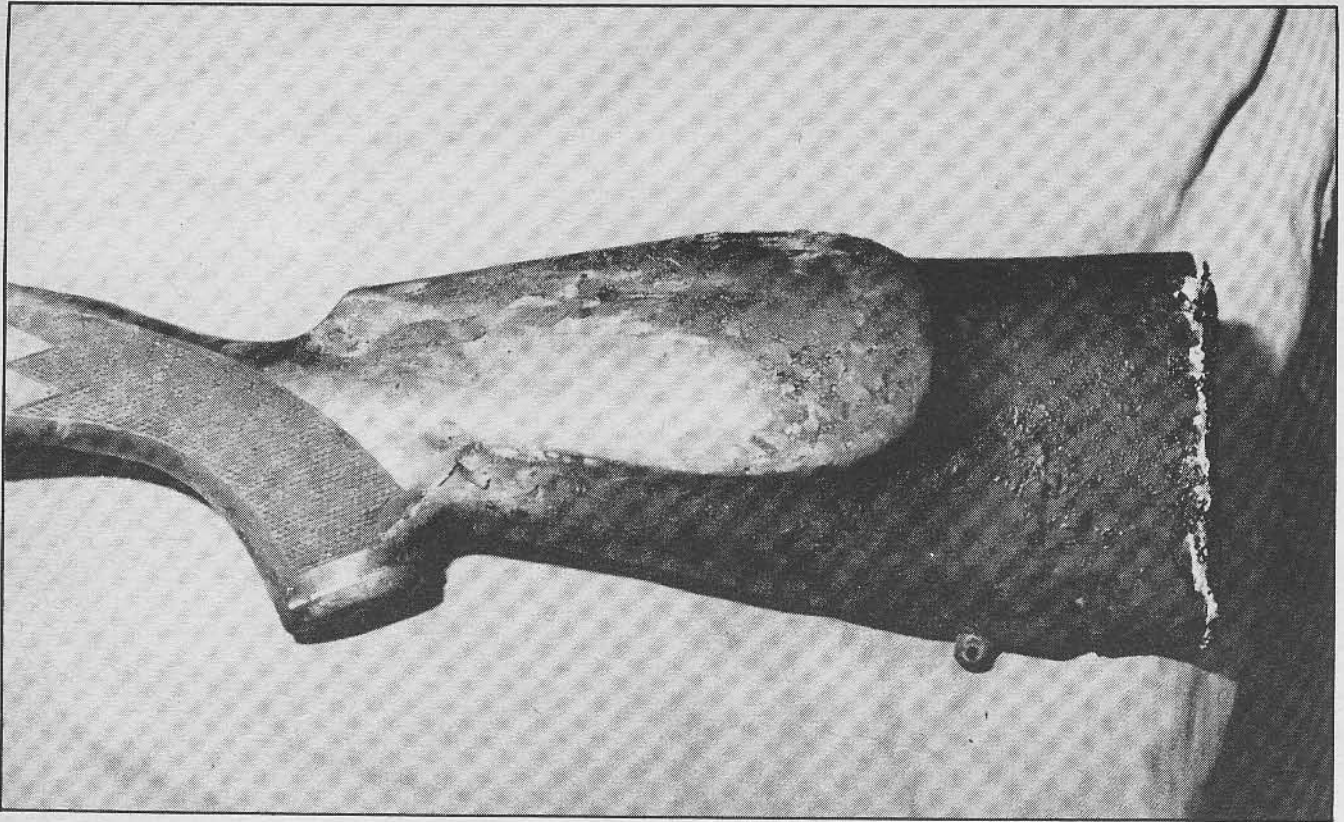
This is another example of what the author considers to be shoddy stock repair work. Nails and brads in the wood only weaken the stock more, while the proper glues or epoxies can strengthen the wood and are unnoticeable.

OVER THE years, I have witnessed some pretty atrocious butcherings of good guns by those who “meant well.” The fact that they didn’t know what they were doing didn’t faze these hacksaw artists in the least. They had their ideas of how the job should be done, and that is the way they were going to do it. The end result was all too often a gun damaged beyond repair.

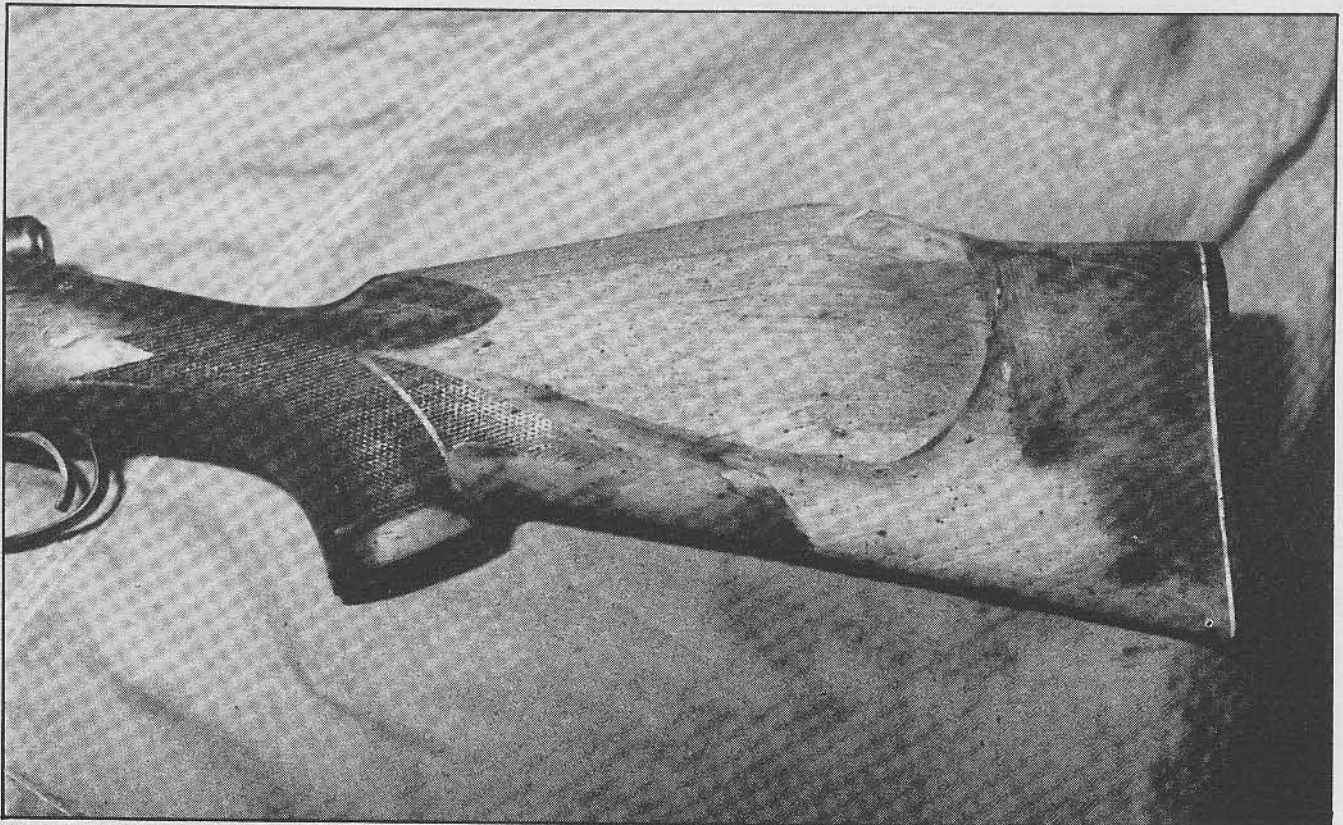
Whether rifle, shotgun or pistol, there are some jobs that should not be attempted by the newcomer to gun work; there are phases of gun work that require years of experi-

ence. The seemingly simple chore of mounting a scope on the pre-drilled receiver of a sporting rifle — and doing it right — requires experience. I have seen and heard of countless scopes that literally fell off the rifles the first time they were fired, or were so far out of zero on that first shot that they were useless. Then there are screwhead slots so burred and chipped by ill-fitting screwdrivers that they were good for little but the scrap box.

On no few occasions I have had fine, high-quality revolvers brought to me with actions that couldn’t be believed. When questioned as to who had worked the piece



This mangled stock resulted when a welding torch was used too close. The stock had just been given a new coat of stock oil, which was highly flammable. (Below) The same stock was salvaged by splicing a section from another less damaged stock into the burned area. If splicing is done properly, the area should be nearly invisible and probably will be the strongest section of the wood. A good deal of work remained to be done in reconstruction.



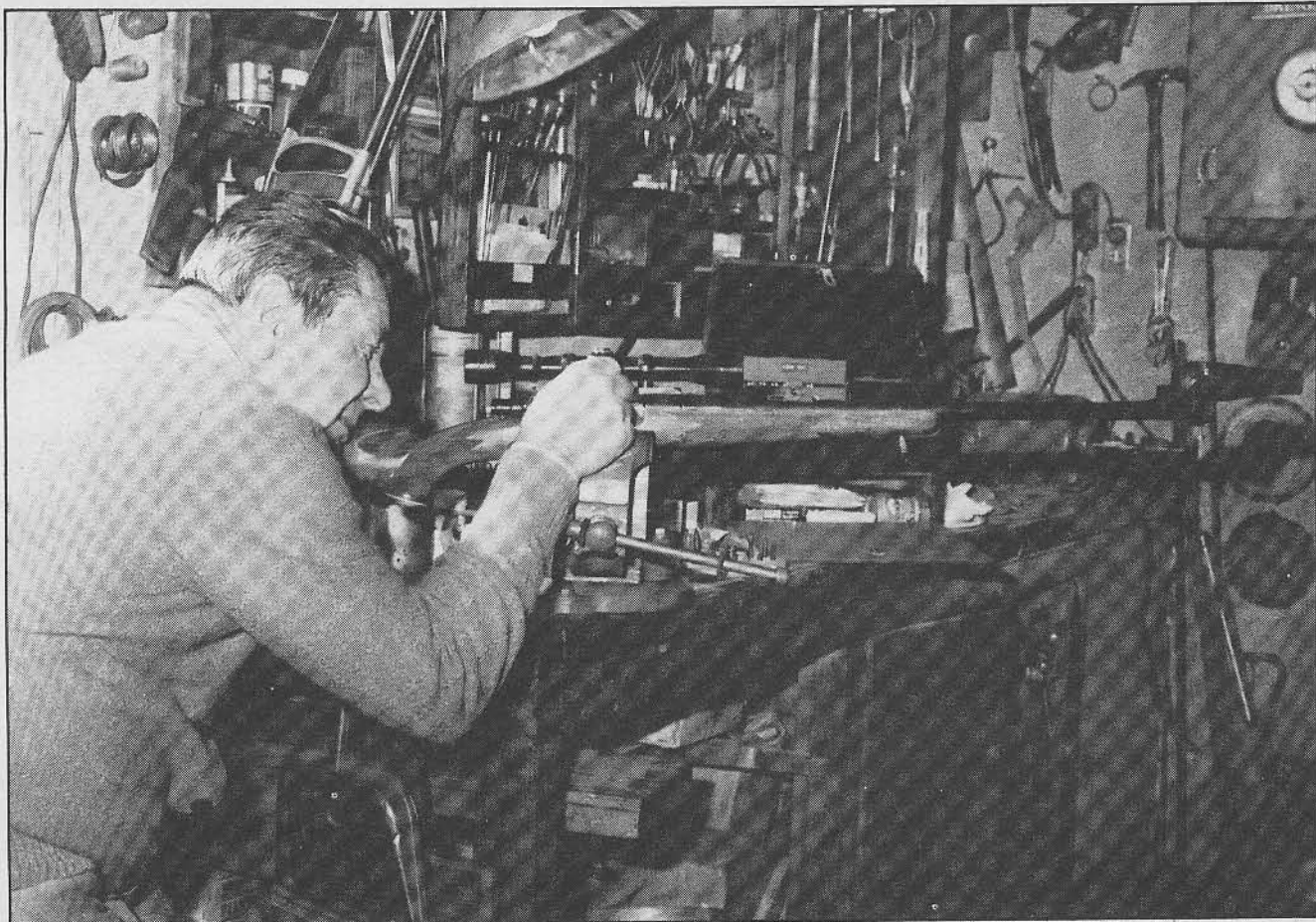
over, the client almost invariably offered a variation of, "Oh, Joe Doaks over in Hacktown. He works in his garage. He tuned it up for me."

Old Joe Doaks in Hacktown had tuned the gun almost beyond reclamation. First, he had taken files to the intricate inner parts, then had smoothed these up with a coarse oil stone. When finished, the revolver wouldn't stand on full cock, the cylinder would not index correctly and the cylinder crane was inoperative. The damage was so extensive that the revolver had to be sent to the factory for all new parts and a major overhaul. It cost my client over two

brought a semi-auto .22 rifle of good make into this man's shop. The owner complained that the rifle wouldn't feed the cartridges properly into the chamber and it jammed on about every other shot.

What did my acquaintance do? After working the action a few times, he removed the barreled action from the stock to check the rear section of the magazine housing. It seemed that the factory had left out the all-important cartridge stop spring that is supposed to be located on the underside of the tubular magazine. The instant expert proceeded to drill and tap a hole into the tubular magazine, then installed

Mounting rifle or pistol scopes requires more expertise than simply screwing the components to the frame or the receiver. The scope must be collimated to the exact axis of the bore if required accuracy is to be achieved.



hundred bucks to return the gun to safe shooting condition because of a slip-shod \$5 tune-up job by the Hacktown expert!

Another atrocity came to light soon after an acquaintance bought a copy of the First Edition of *Home Gunsmithing Digest*. He read it from cover to cover, then proceeded to open his own gun repair shop. Over the years this fellow had done a little gun work in his home as a hobby; this, and the fact that he had read the first edition of the *Home Gunsmithing Digest*, supposedly qualified him as an instant journeyman gun mechanic.

It was a nice, sunshiny day when an innocent customer

came in with a rifle. The owner complained that the rifle wouldn't feed the cartridges, "with a slight hook in the end to stop the cartridges," as it was explained to me later.

The newly installed brainchild of this man completely jammed the feeding of the cartridges through the magazine tube. It also prevented the barreled action from seating fully in the stock.

To remedy that problem, he proceeded to chisel out that area of the stock where the newly installed screw and spring contacted to prevent the action to seat fully. Now the action did seat fully into the stock, but the rifle still wouldn't work.

In desperation he called me, asking what might be wrong.



Bish selects the proper size screwdriver from his own collection for use in mounting a rifle scope. He says the proper tools are a necessity for each individual job if one is to achieve status among professional gunsmiths.

When he told me of his innovations to the rifle's action, I was ready to throw up my hands and give him a piece of my mind. Instead, I drove to his shop, examined the rifle, removed the newly installed screw and spring, carefully plugged the threaded hole then completely cleaned the rifle's action before oiling it lightly. We then loaded the tubular magazine with .22 long rifle cartridges, went to the range and found that the rifle functioned perfectly.

Few people seem to realize that simple cleaning of a rifle can make all the difference in the world in its shooting qualities. This is especially true of semi-auto .22 rifles. If they become crudded up with powder residue, dust and

dirt, they are going to give you trouble. The moral of this story is: If you are not sure of the problem, *don't* start drilling and tapping holes that weren't meant to be there in the first place! And never add a part of your own manufacture to a gun's mechanism just because you think it might work.

The major gun companies in this country employ fine, qualified engineers for design of firearms. The arm is thoroughly tested at the factory and, with rare exceptions, when offered to the general public for sale, these guns are about as perfect as they can be.

For the beginner in gun work, as well as to those who

have been doing such work for some time as a hobby, it would be well to bear in mind the rule: If you are not sure, don't do it! Do not attempt any type of gun work that ordinary horse sense says you are not qualified to do. Limit yourself to your own capabilities and I can assure you that in time you will catch on to many of the tricks-of-the-trade that are valued highly by professional gun craftsmen.

For the beginner, I recommend a set of books published by Brownell's of Montezuma, Iowa. These two volumes are highly prized by working gunsmiths the world over.

Gunsmith Kinks, published by Bob Brownell with data furnished by journeymen gunsmiths the world over, in-

cludes thousands of tips on doing all phases of gunwork — and doing it easier. It has taken many years of hard work to compile all of this information into these two volumes and can save the beginning gunsmith endless sweat and tears in determining how a certain gun job might be accomplished.

As mentioned elsewhere in this volume, building various gun kits is an excellent training aid for the beginner. He soon will discover the mistakes made in constructing these gun kits. It is from these mistakes that one should learn the right way to do gun work. Cash in on this knowledge by not making the same mistakes again. It is learning the hard way, but is unexcelled for experience in correct handling of

One never should pound or even tap the surface of any firearm with steel hammers. Instead, use hammer with a nylon face to protect metal surfaces.



tools, learning which tool is best for a specific job and, when the kit is completed satisfactorily, the satisfaction of knowing that you did it all yourself.

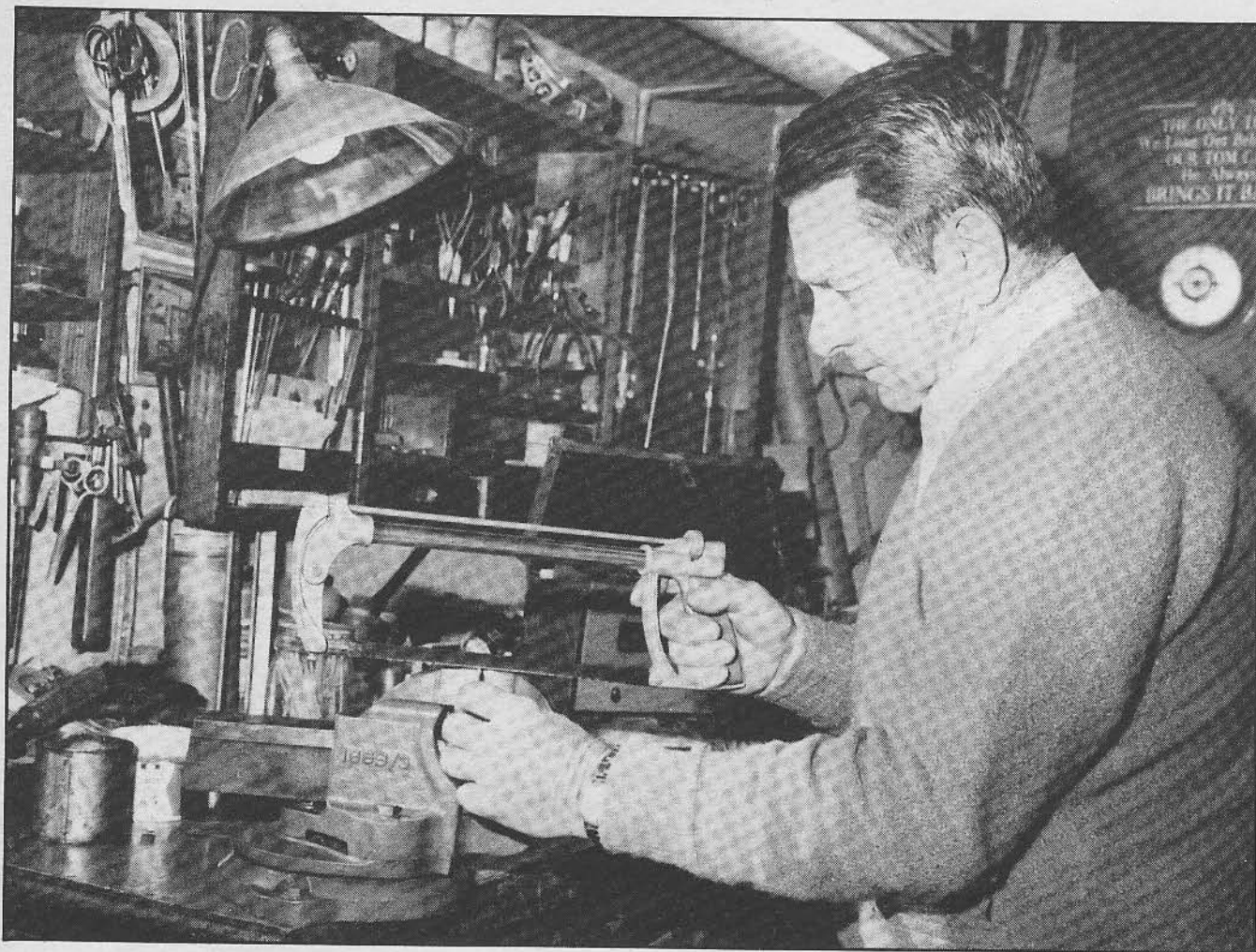
Do sloppy and haphazard work and you will end up with a pile of expensive junk. Some gun kits are quite expensive.

More years ago than I care to admit, when I first began gun work, a friend in the combustible rubbish business had salvaged an old, rusty Colt Single Action from someone's trash. In due time, I traded him a new Daisy BB gun for this relic. The Colt had no grips and the missing cylinder pin had been replaced with a rusty nail.

With a dull saw and even more dull pocketknife I fashioned a set of grips for this old gun, solid rust though it was. The grips, as I recall, were made from a section of an old apple box I found in the backyard. Not being familiar with the mode in which these grips were attached to the pistol's straps, I nailed each of the two grips to the gun's frame with wire brads. Then I stained them with some brown shoe polish. For the cylinder pin — after removing the bent rusty nail — I found a hinge pin in my dad's parts box that fit the hole perfectly.

Despite the fact that the gun was in very ill repair, the trigger frozen in rust, as was the hammer, I was the proud-

For precision cutting chores, Bish insists on edged tools that are sharp. From experience, he long ago learned that a dull file, chisel or even a less-than-sharp hacksaw blade will result in shoddy work, often beyond repair.



est kid in the area with that restoration job. I was about 5 or 6 years old at the time.

In the many years since, I have learned that pistol grips should not be nailed to a gun frame and that hinge pins are not suitable as cylinder pins. However, I never have forgotten that first restoration effort, crude though it was. It was still experience and I learned from it.

I know a great number of gun hobbyists who do fine work. For the most part, these men are gun collectors who came to realize that to keep their valuable gun collections in top condition, they must learn to do some repair work themselves. Because the guns in their collections are both

valuable and rare, they only undertake the work they know they can do correctly. For the more complicated work, such as making rare replacement parts or extensive stock repair, they take the work to one they know is fully qualified and capable of doing it right. This is smart thinking!

As elaborated on in another chapter, one of the basic secrets to good workmanship involves the tools used. Keep edged tools sharp, use the correct screwdrivers, pin punches and files for each job.

Next to tools, the next prerequisite for good work is untold amounts of patience and plain, old horse sense: If you don't know how to do it, take it to one who does!

The author says one never should use unfamiliar chemicals in gun work. Some can be dangers to eye and skin if used improperly. Read the directions.

