

Chapter 8

USE YOUR IRON

*It Doesn't Require A Gunsmith To Install A
See-Through Scope Mount For Double Aiming Duty*

Tommy Bish checks out the scope that he has mounted on a see-through scope mount. The mount doesn't interfere.



SEVERAL YEARS ago, I was offered an exceptionally fine Brno carbine on a trade I couldn't turn down. This carbine was equipped with a full Mannlicher-type stock and was in a caliber that never seems to grow old or lose its popularity, the 7x57 Mauser.

It was equipped with the original scope mounts, which are quite rare in themselves these days. The outstanding feature of these particular mounts was that they incorporated a sighting tunnel that allowed either the scope or the iron sights to be used at the shooter's will. Should the scope become damaged or fogged, the shooter had only to lower his head slightly to have an unobstructed view of the iron sights.

Much has been written over the years concerning the virtues of a sporting rifle being equipped with both scope and iron sights. It is my personal contention that any sporting rifle minus its iron sights isn't a complete rifle, regardless of the quality of the scope! Too often one hears of hunts that have been blown due to a scope becoming either badly bumped, fogged up or put out of use by any number of unforeseen circumstances. Had sights been mounted on

the rifle, the hunt might have continued successfully.

Until recent years — with few exceptions — it was necessary for one to completely remove a damaged scope from the rifle before he could continue his hunt with open iron sights. That, of course, was provided the rifle was equipped with iron sights.

In the majority of cases, it was necessary not only to remove the scope and rings from the rifle, but the scope mounting base had to come off, too. This was necessary for full and clear vision of the open sights. This can be somewhat disconcerting to a hunter who might be miles from base camp, possibly knee-deep in snow and with a choice bull elk, moose or bear practically within his grasp! The scope might be removed from its base with comparative ease, but when it comes to removing those mount base screws, this can be something else! Especially if the hunter is without tools, except for possibly a hunting knife.

I like to feel that a story I did several years ago concerning the unique scope mounts on that little Brno carbine had something to do with several manufacturers seeing the need for such a mount and producing it for American hunters.

The author adjusts his aim to use the see-through mount that allows him to use his iron sights in close shooting.



Until then, a couple of manufacturers were producing a type of mount that allowed the scope to be tipped to one side, thus allowing full use of the rifle's iron sights. To my knowledge the Pachmayr Lo-Swing mount and the Weaver Pivot mount were the pioneers in this field. Later, manufacturers such as Redfield, Williams and Leupold produced mounts with peep-type sights incorporated into the mounting bases themselves. When correctly mounted, adjusted and collimated, these peeps prove their worth at times of scope damage. However, it still was necessary to remove the scope and rings from the base in order to utilize them.

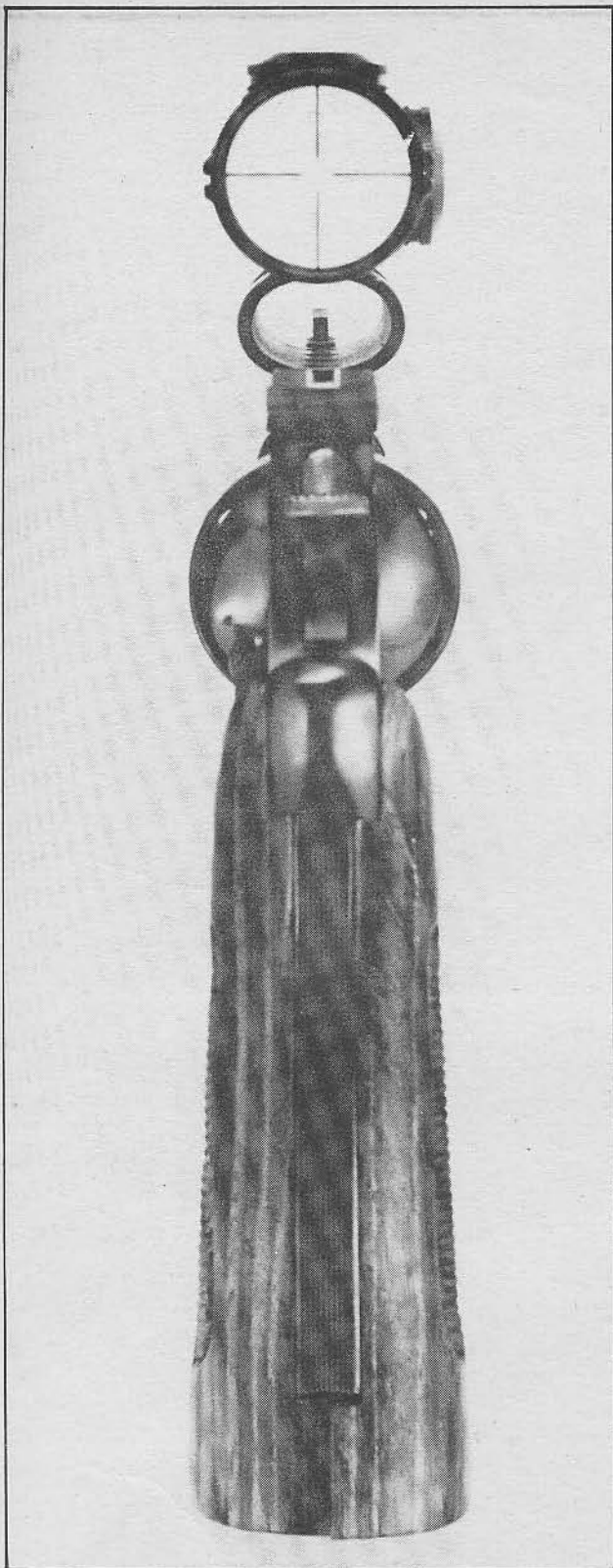
Weaver currently is producing a couple of models of the

see-through mount. One is designed to fit Weaver bases, the other to fit rifles with dovetails milled in the receivers. Too, Redfield and Burris have see-through scope mounts to fit most popular sporting rifles. This selection gives a choice and are all based on the Brno mount.

The first of these see-through mounts came to my attention several years ago. The Ironsighter scope mount is a product of J.B. Holden Company of Plymouth, Michigan. These mounts are the two-piece type and are available for all popular rifle models and even shotguns. Of tough, lightweight aircraft-type alloy, these mounts are guaranteed fully against defects in materials and workmanship. Installation is accomplished with Allen-head screws in

Scopes have become standard on most rifles and this bear was downed with a rifle mounted with one, but, in heavy timber such as that seen in background, close shots often are necessary and iron sights make the chore much easier.





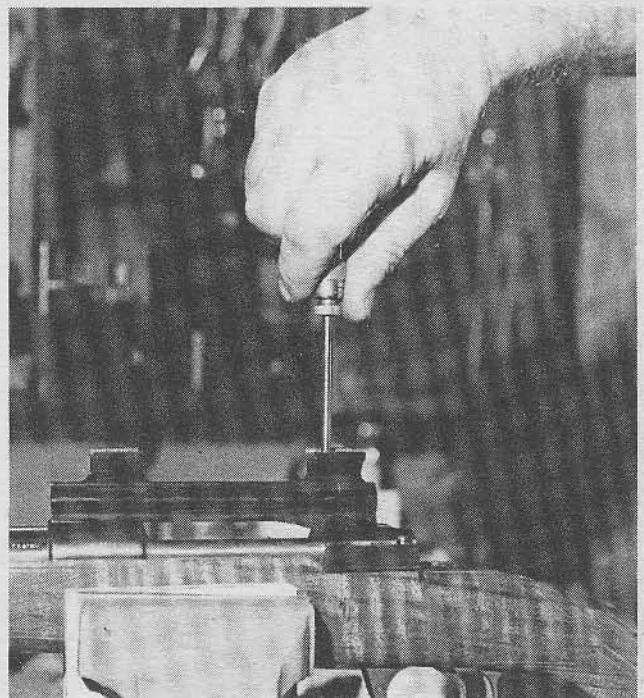
Until now, pistol shooters have been neglected, but J.B. Holden has introduced a tunnel-type see-through mount to fit Colt, Ruger, Smith & Wesson, Dan Wesson and the T/C Contender. New wide-angle mount shown is mounted on the Smith & Wesson Model 29 .44 magnum.

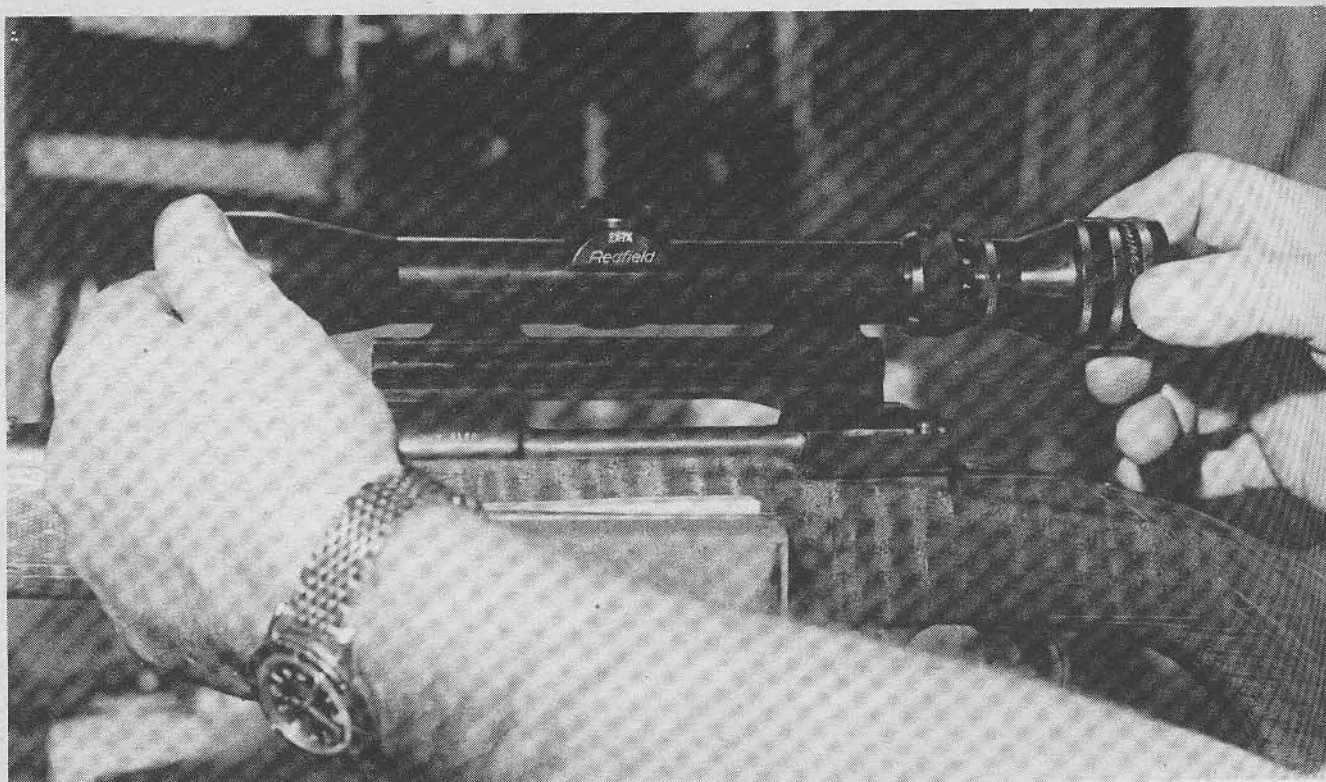
lieu of the conventional slotted screws furnished with most scope mounts. An Allen wrench is furnished with each mount.

Mounting the Holden Ironsighter is accomplished in much the same manner as for most other scope mounts. However, as this mount does not include provisions for windage adjustment in the mount itself, it sometimes is necessary to use thin steel shims to compensate for variations in the contour of a rifle's receiver. The best method in this type of mounting is to leave the windage and elevation adjustments on the scope strictly alone until the mount is shimmed properly and tightened in place on the receiver. From this point on, only minor corrections should be made with the turret adjustments on the scope itself.

For more years than I'll ever admit, I have used many products produced by the Marble Arms Company of Gladstone, Michigan. Some years ago, while attending a gun show in Las Vegas, Nevada, I chatted with Dennis J. Hoegh, Marble's sales manager at that time. That was when he introduced me to the Marble Gamegetter scope mount. It, too, incorporated a sighting tunnel through the length of the base. However, I understand that in recent years Marble has undergone a series of management changes and many items once produced by them have been discontinued from the line. A recent phone call to their plant

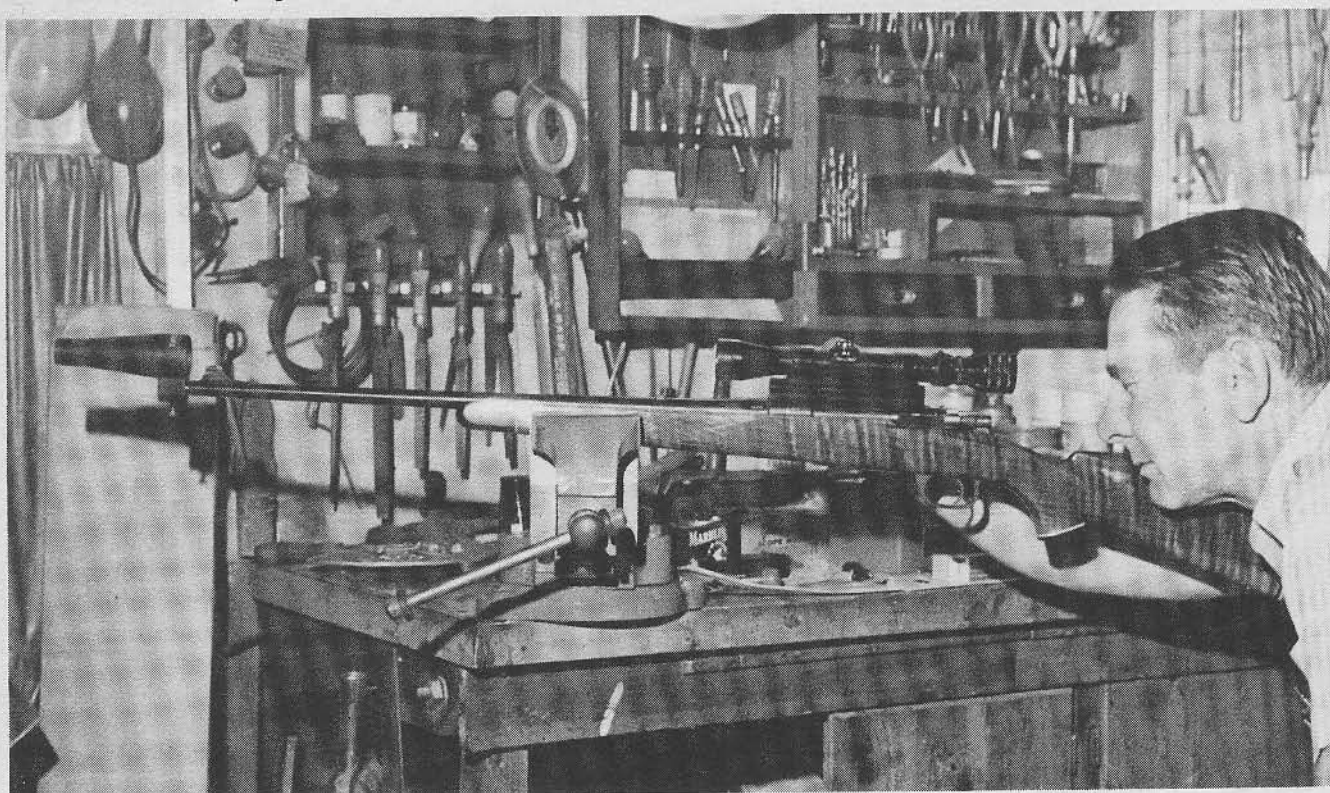
The screws in the mounting rings, part of the tunnel-type mount, must be pulled up tight to assure that the scope does not shift or slide under the rifle's recoil.

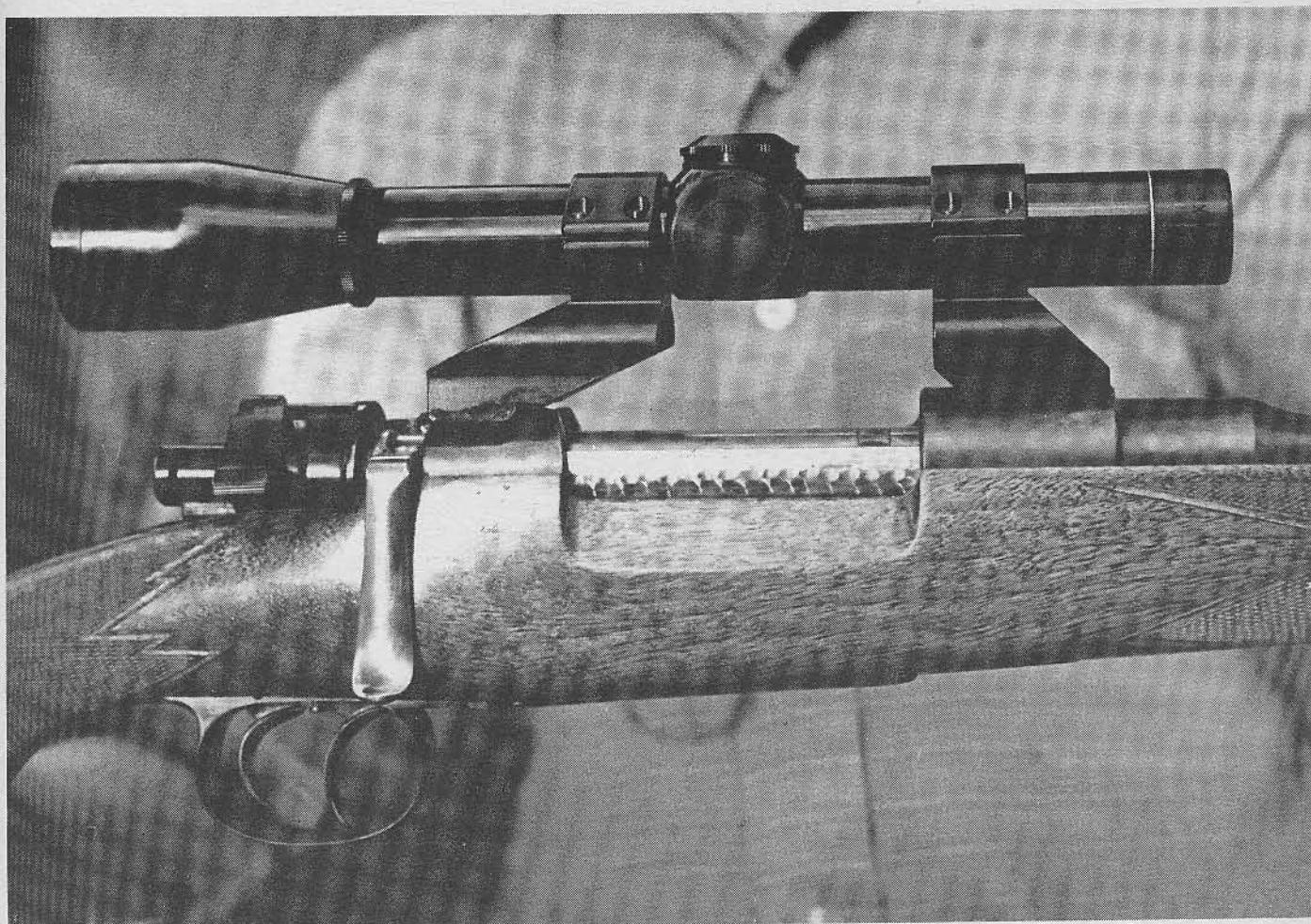




Once the base has been installed on the rifle, scope is laid onto the rings, assuring perfect contact with mount.

Bish uses the Sweazy Sight-A-Line to collimate the scope with bore. Final adjustments are made with turret knobs.





The author feels that the Holden Ironsighter presents a pleasing, streamlined appearance, but mounts the scope a trifle high over the receiver. In spite of this, the advantage of being able to use iron sights is a plus factor.

revealed that they still had only a limited number of the tunnel scope mounts in stock. No information was given as what rifle actions these mounts were for. They are described here for comparison only.

The shimming of a scope mount to assure alignment doesn't reflect on the quality of the mount. Considerable variations in rifle receivers will occur, all in the same model. This is due to final buffing and polishing either at the factory, when the rifle was new, or in later years, when it may have been rebuffed and blued by an outside source. Variations in the contour of a rifle receiver are especially

prevalent in military models such as the '98 Mauser and '03 Springfield, as excess metal sometimes has to be removed to attain an attractive blued finish. Correct shimming of any mount certainly isn't indicative of the quality of the scope mount or rifle, providing it is done correctly with steel shim stock.

Precisely done, the shim stock between scope mount and rifle receiver is hardly noticeable, even to the practiced eye.

As with any scope installation, the positioning and precise alignment of the mounting base is all-important to



The original Brno mount (on top rifle) appears heavy and bulky when compared to the compact, lightweight Ironsighter tunnel-type mount manufactured today by J.B. Holden Company.



Holden Ironsighter scope mounts are available to fit most quality American rifles and handguns, as well as Mauser-made actions.



Holden's new wide-angle Ironsighter is mounted on a Model 99 Savage. It also is available for Marlin, Winchester, Browning, Remington models.

assure the full potential of the scope's internal adjustments. Take for example a recent installation I made on one of the finer commercial sporting rifles. The scope mount incorporated a one-piece base. With the base securely attached to the receiver, I proceeded to install the scope and rings. However, when the installation was completed and the scope collimated with the axis of the bore, I found that all of the "up" adjustments in the scope's turret had been utilized. I just couldn't lower the crosshairs any farther with the adjustment knob atop the turret.

Removing the scope from the base, then loosening the screws holding the base to the receiver, I shimmed up the rear portion of the base, using nothing but steel shim stock. After a bit of experimentation, it was found that a shim in .030-inch thickness raised the rear portion of the scope

base sufficiently to allow full adjustment from the scope adjustment knobs.

Shimming scope bases should be no by-guess-and-by-golly affair. It must be a precise procedure if accuracy is to be expected. In mounting the Holden Ironsighter, shims were necessary to bring it to a true zero that coincided perfectly with scope collimation. The thickness and placement of these shims quite naturally will vary from one rifle receiver to the next.

At any length, scope mounts designed with sighting tunnels should meet with great acceptance by hunters the world over. It is a certainty that they are fully capable of saving a hunt that might be a bust due to scope failure or being unable to locate game in heavy brush, because of the limited field of view.