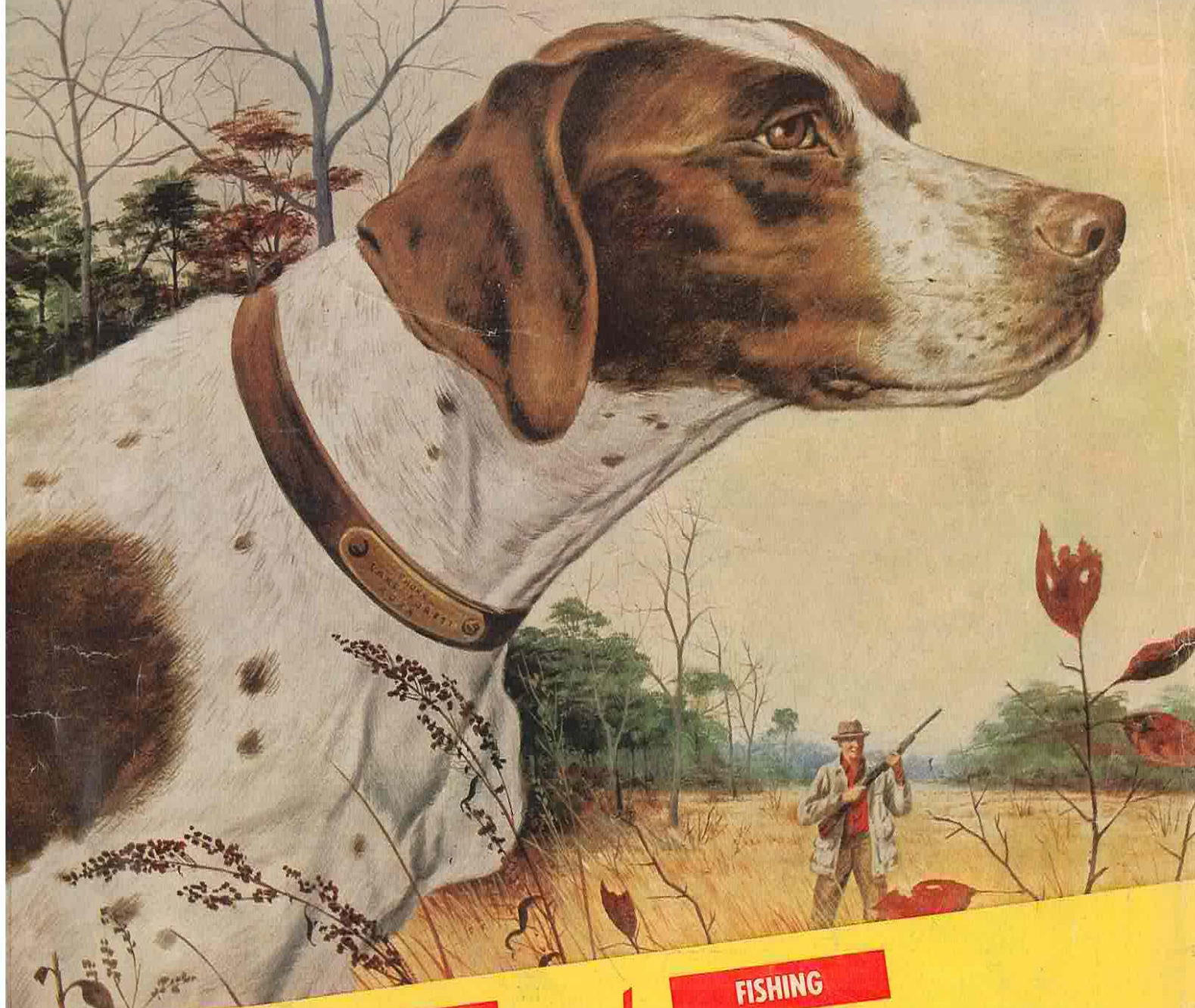


SPORTS AFIELD

SEPTEMBER 1958

35 CENTS



HUNTING

Gun Dogs Make the Difference
•
Low-Budget Moose Hunt

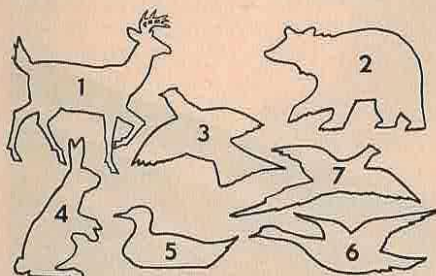
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KNOW YOUR FISH
Beginning an Exciting New Series
By Tom Dolan

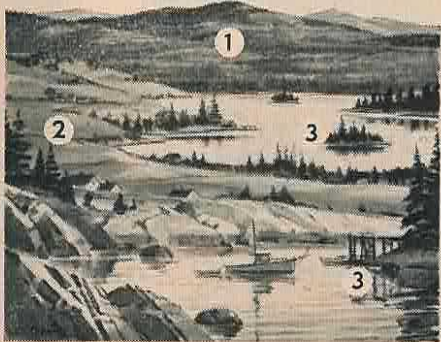
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SPORTS AFIELD—September 1958

THE Mile Gun

BY DONALD HAMILTON

This American had fooled me. Now I saw behind his loud talk lay the hard, honest core of a real hunter

ILLUSTRATED BY H. CHARLES MCBARRON, JR.

THE VISITOR GOT OUT OF THE CAR FIRST. Even if I had not been told, I would have known he was an American by the red hunting shirt and cap he was wearing. In no other country do the hunters wear such colors into the woods. He was a big man of about 50 years who had let himself become somewhat heavy. He did not look as if he would be a good walker, but this did not worry me, as I find it goes best to move quite slowly when I hunt, even when I am alone. After all, the dog will do the running, if he is well trained. I have a very good elk dog, and one younger that is not quite so good yet. I was using the old dog today, because the visitor was an important man.

The company's chief forester got out of the car to perform the introductions. The fact that *Skogschefen* himself had brought the visitor showed how important he was.

"Mr. Anderson," he said, "this is *Skogsmästare* Karl Gröndal, one of our young foresters. *Skogsmästare* Gröndal is an excellent hunter and has spent some time in America studying forestry at one of your universities, so he can speak to you well in English. I am sure he'll take good care of you and see that you get a fine trophy. Good luck."

I shook hands with Mr. Anderson and helped him get his belongings out of the car. *Skogschefen* shook hands with Mr. Anderson and drove away. Mr. Anderson began to load his rifle, a fine-looking weapon with a polished stock of really beautiful wood. It used a very large cartridge, which I approved, as our elk are large

animals. I was disturbed, however, to see that the gun was equipped with a big *kikarsikte*—a telescope sight.

I asked, "Does Mr. Anderson mind if I look at his rifle?"

Most hunters are pleased to have other hunters admire their weapons, and Mr. Anderson was no exception. I put the rifle to my shoulder and looked through the telescope. It was even worse than I had feared. The instrument was not a 2½X, nor even a 4X, the strongest I have ever seen used in our dense Swedish forests. This was a 6X glass, clear and sharp, but much too great a magnification for fast shooting. You must understand that the more a telescope magnifies, the smaller the area it can cover. The powerful glasses are fine in open country where the ranges are long and the target is exposed for a long time and easy to pick up; but on our heavily wooded hunting grounds where the light is poor and you often have only a brief instant to shoot through an opening in the brush, the limited field of a strong telescope can be a terrible handicap.

I gave the rifle back to Mr. Anderson and spoke carefully: "Does Mr. Anderson mind if I make a suggestion? We seldom get a shot over 100 meters. I think it would be well to remove the telescope and use the iron sights."

The big man looked a little startled; then he grinned. "Look again," he said, holding out the rifle. Now I realized that it was a custom-built weapon, constructed especially for the powerful *kikarsikte*. It had no other sights. The Americans certainly have some strange ideas.

"Then I would like to lend Mr. Anderson my rifle if

We had gone perhaps a kilometer and a half when the dog began to strain forward to sniff at the ground. We were on hard ground. I could only see that something had passed. It had to be the bull.



I may," I said quickly.

After all, he was an important visitor. Over the telephone last night *Skogschefen* had told me something about him. Mr. Anderson came from California and he not only had big timber interests there that involved him in dealings with our company, he was also distantly related to one of the directors. I was not unaware that it was to my interest to see that he had a successful hunt; but I could not help feeling, also, that when a man of Swedish blood came back halfway around the world to hunt our finest game animal under my guidance, it was almost my patriotic duty to see that he did not leave empty-handed.

To my surprise, however, I found that I had offended the visitor. "Look, kid," Mr. Anderson said sharply, "I had the iron sights left off this gun for the very simple reason that I never used them on the previous one I had.

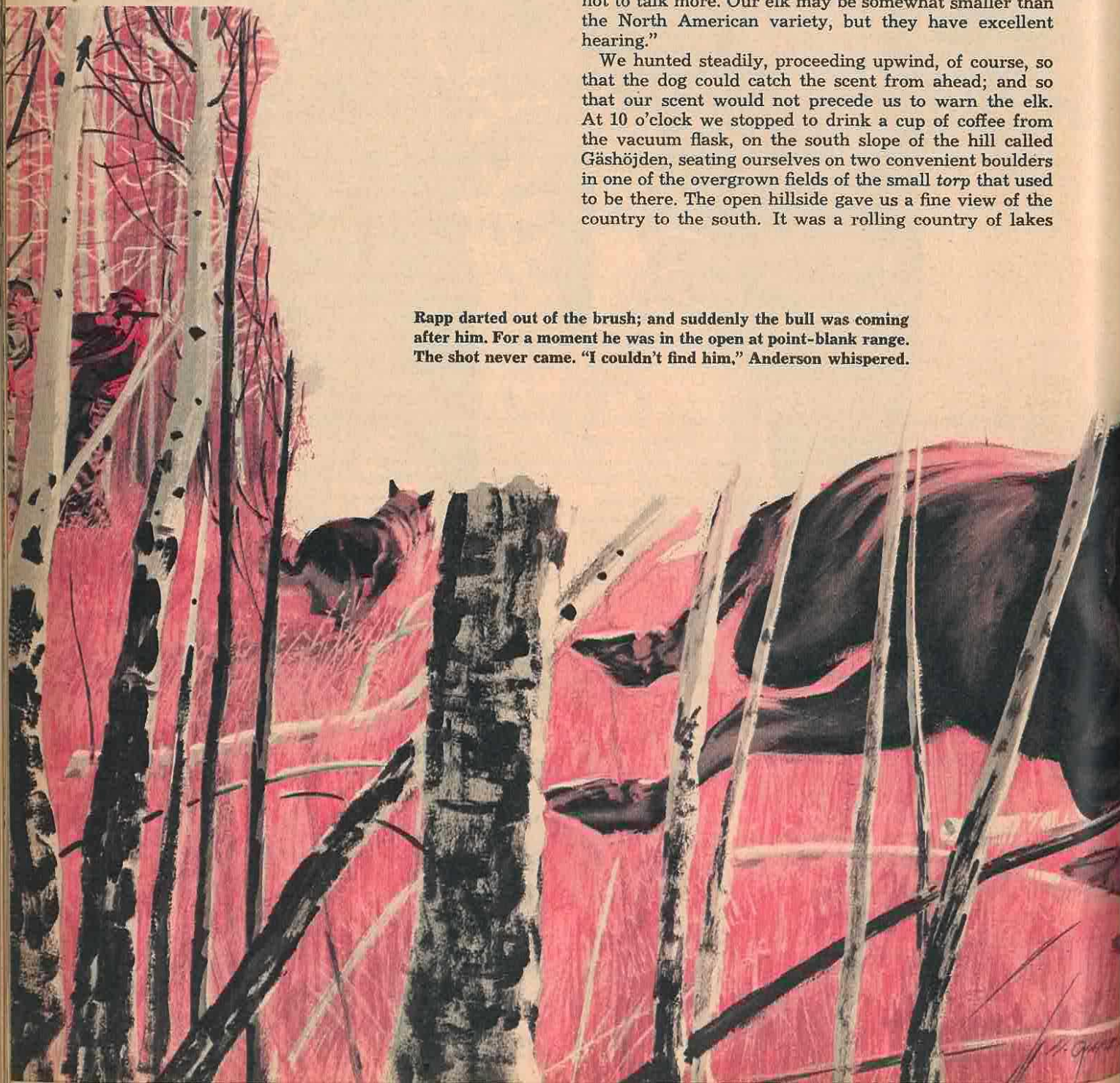
And let me tell you something else: I've shot practically every game animal on the North American continent—west of the Mississippi, anyway—with this gun, just as she stands. She's dropped a desert antelope at 534 measured yards. The boys back home call her the Mile Gun. I've used her on everything from jack rabbit to mountain goat, including elk—and I mean the real elk, brother, the big fellow, not the toy moose you people call elk around here. Let me worry about the gun and the sights, kid. You just bring on something to shoot at."

We Swedes are, perhaps, a little too formal in our habit of addressing strangers only by their proper names and titles until given permission to greater familiarity; nevertheless, I do not think a man of almost 30 years would like to be addressed as "kid" even in America.

"I will do my best, Mr. Anderson," I said stiffly. "Now, if Mr. Anderson is ready, we can start. It would be well not to talk more. Our elk may be somewhat smaller than the North American variety, but they have excellent hearing."

We hunted steadily, proceeding upwind, of course, so that the dog could catch the scent from ahead; and so that our scent would not precede us to warn the elk. At 10 o'clock we stopped to drink a cup of coffee from the vacuum flask, on the south slope of the hill called *Gäshöjden*, seating ourselves on two convenient boulders in one of the overgrown fields of the small *torp* that used to be there. The open hillside gave us a fine view of the country to the south. It was a rolling country of lakes

Rapp darted out of the brush; and suddenly the bull was coming after him. For a moment he was in the open at point-blank range. The shot never came. "I couldn't find him," Anderson whispered.



and forests, without any visible signs of human habitation.

"Damn!" said Mr. Anderson. "You wouldn't know we were less than 200 miles from Stockholm, would you?" After a while he glanced at the sun to make sure of his directions, and pointed. "I guess I was born over there somewhere. A little village called Ulriksberg. We drove through it yesterday."

I said, "Yes, Ulriksberg is about 80 kilometers to the east." I glanced at the big man sitting beside me, looking very American in his red shirt and cap, with the fine gun with the telescope sight leaning against the stone nearby. I said, "I did not know Mr. Anderson was born in Sweden."

"My folks moved to the States when I was a year and a half," he said. After a moment, he added, "Damn it, here I've waited all my life for this chance, and when I

finally get over here those dimwits back home start burning up the transatlantic cables. . . . Ever since I first had a gun in my hands, I've planned to come back here eventually and collect one of these brutes. And now they give me just two days to do it!"

I said dryly, "But after all, it is only a toy moose, Mr. Anderson."

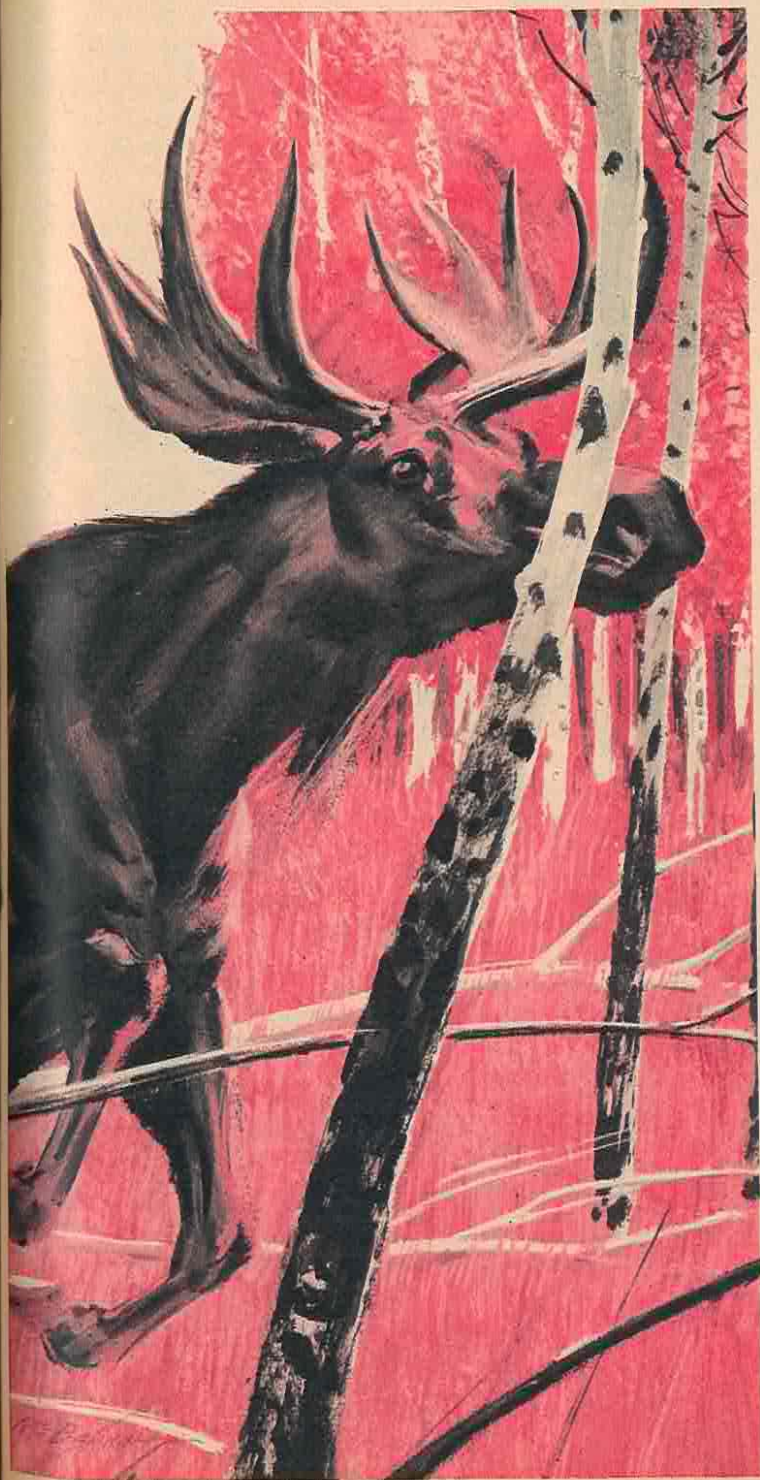
He gave me a quick glance, and said, "Don't you kid yourself I haven't shot bigger game. This just happens to be . . . well, something personal. Like I said, I was born here." He hesitated, and went on almost as if talking to himself: "It's this way. You see, we didn't do too well in America at first. Dad had a lot of ambitious plans, but he wound up being a lumberjack all his life—he did a bit of drinking now and then—and all I heard as a kid was how much better we'd have had it if we'd stayed in the old country. In Sweden, to hear Dad tell it, everything was perfect. Even the hunting was better. In Sweden, he used to say, they have elk, big elk, running around like these Americans have little insignificant deer. Sweden was the country where a man was rewarded according to his ability. In America, to hear him tell it, it was all luck. In America, he would say, honest, hard-working men could slave their lives away for nothing, while some tramp of a girl made a million dollars in Hollywood, or a bum stumbled on an oil well in Texas, or some brat answered a stupid question on television and was rich for life. Just luck, he used to say, shaking the newspaper; see, what have I told you, just luck! Ability and hard work go for nothing here, if a man is not lucky!"

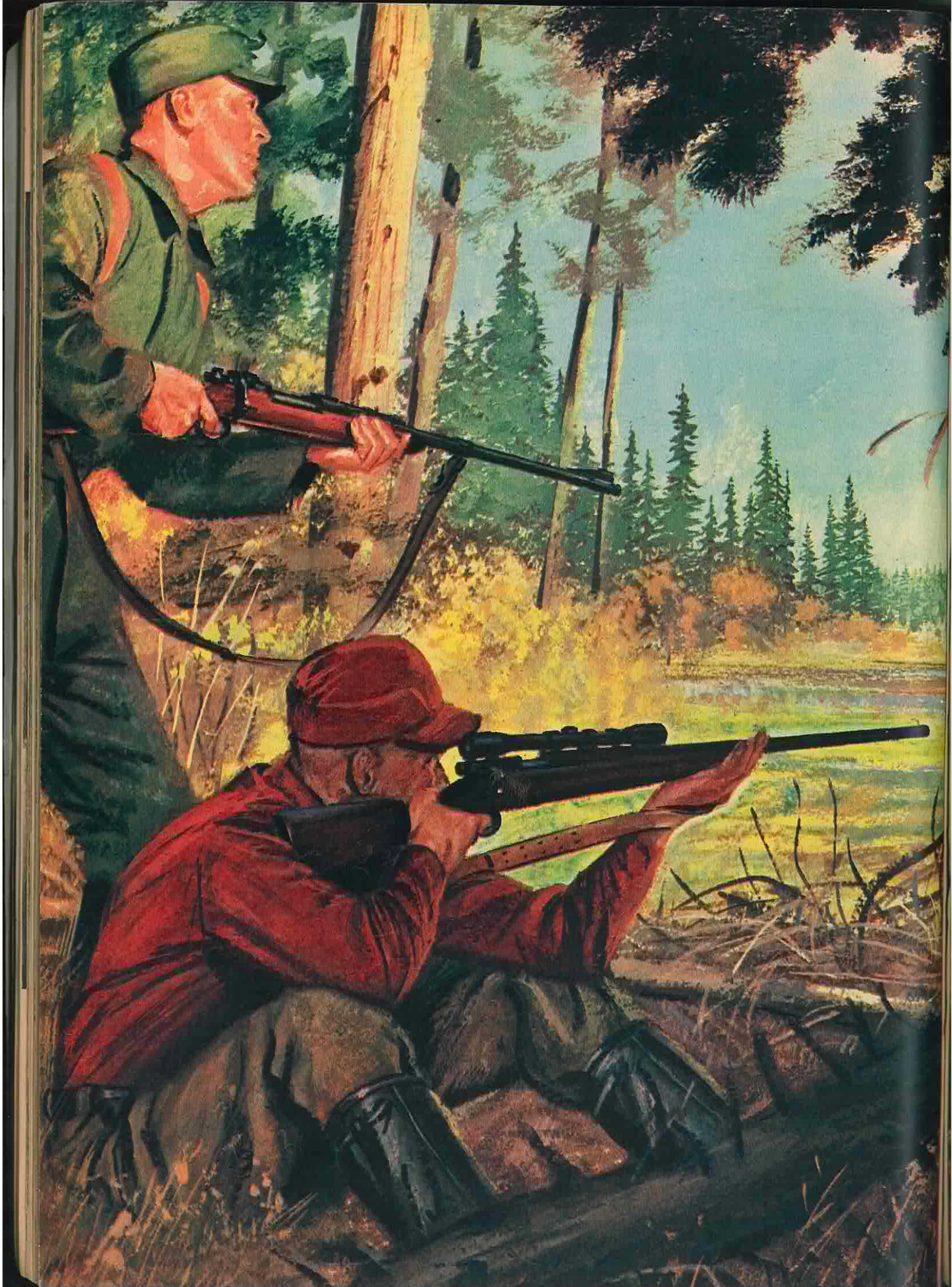
Mr. Anderson drew a long breath, and went on. "Well, I've been lucky over there," he said. "I'll admit that. I've had the breaks and plenty of them. But—well, a man likes to think it's a little more than luck, if you know what I mean. I guess I just have a sneaking desire to know how I'd rate back where my family came from. Don't get me wrong. I'm an American and I like being an American. You have a nice little country here, but I don't want it. It's this way: I'm a pretty good hunter over there, if I say so myself, and it's kind of a measuring rod, don't you see? I've always promised myself that when I got a chance I'd take a crack at these lousy elk Dad was always spouting about." He patted the stock of the rifle beside him. "Don't think for a minute I'm superstitious about it, or anything like that. I know the old Mile Gun will knock them over, just like any other kind of game—I just want to see it happen. It's something I've got to get out of my system. I want a nice big Swedish bull elk rack to hang on the wall alongside my other trophies. I guess it's a way of thumbing my nose at the old man and all his talk of luck, like I didn't have the nerve to do while he was alive."

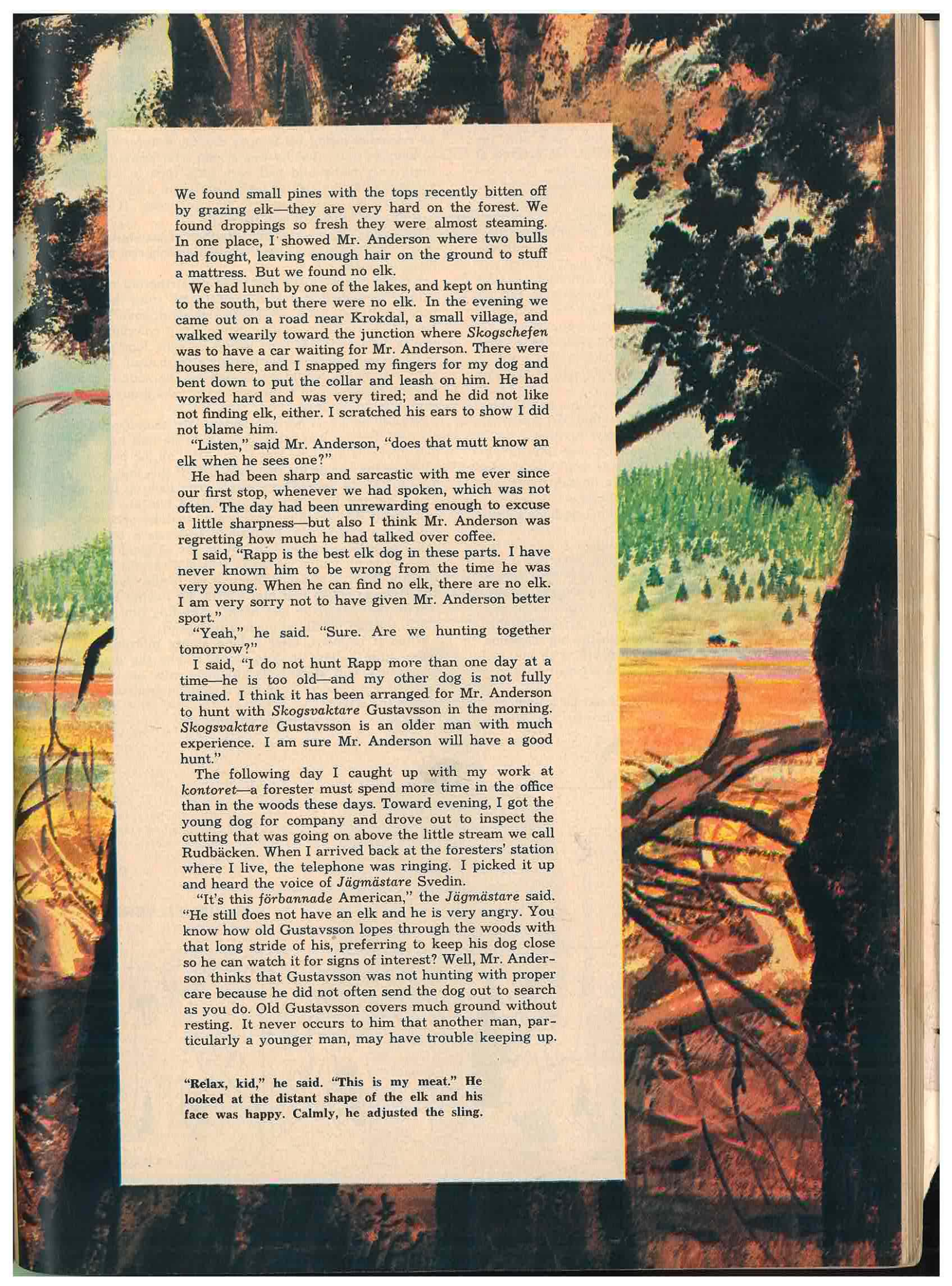
Then he gave me a sudden look, and leaned down to put the cap on the coffee. When he spoke again his voice was brisk and confident: "Not that there's anything to it, as hunting, from what I hear. They tell me the dog just rounds up the elk and bluffs it into standing still so you can sneak up and shoot it at your convenience. It sounds to me pretty much like shooting fish in a barrel."

I said, "Perhaps, but first we have to find the barrel. If Mr. Anderson has had enough coffee, perhaps we should go."

I had hunted that division every autumn for five years. It was my division and I knew it like you know the street on which you live. In all that time I had never come down from Gåshöjden and through the marshy bottoms around the lakes and tarns below without seeing at least one elk, usually a big one. That was why I had chosen to hunt this way today. But today it went not well. We found tracks made that morning, so numerous that in places the ground was trampled as if by cattle.







We found small pines with the tops recently bitten off by grazing elk—they are very hard on the forest. We found droppings so fresh they were almost steaming. In one place, I showed Mr. Anderson where two bulls had fought, leaving enough hair on the ground to stuff a mattress. But we found no elk.

We had lunch by one of the lakes, and kept on hunting to the south, but there were no elk. In the evening we came out on a road near Krokadal, a small village, and walked wearily toward the junction where *Skogschefen* was to have a car waiting for Mr. Anderson. There were houses here, and I snapped my fingers for my dog and bent down to put the collar and leash on him. He had worked hard and was very tired; and he did not like not finding elk, either. I scratched his ears to show I did not blame him.

"Listen," said Mr. Anderson, "does that mutt know an elk when he sees one?"

He had been sharp and sarcastic with me ever since our first stop, whenever we had spoken, which was not often. The day had been unrewarding enough to excuse a little sharpness—but also I think Mr. Anderson was regretting how much he had talked over coffee.

I said, "Rapp is the best elk dog in these parts. I have never known him to be wrong from the time he was very young. When he can find no elk, there are no elk. I am very sorry not to have given Mr. Anderson better sport."

"Yeah," he said. "Sure. Are we hunting together tomorrow?"

I said, "I do not hunt Rapp more than one day at a time—he is too old—and my other dog is not fully trained. I think it has been arranged for Mr. Anderson to hunt with *Skogsvaktare* Gustavsson in the morning. *Skogsvaktare* Gustavsson is an older man with much experience. I am sure Mr. Anderson will have a good hunt."

The following day I caught up with my work at *kontoret*—a forester must spend more time in the office than in the woods these days. Toward evening, I got the young dog for company and drove out to inspect the cutting that was going on above the little stream we call *Rudbäcken*. When I arrived back at the foresters' station where I live, the telephone was ringing. I picked it up and heard the voice of *Jägmästare* Svedin.

"It's this *förbannade* American," the *Jägmästare* said. "He still does not have an elk and he is very angry. You know how old Gustavsson lopes through the woods with that long stride of his, preferring to keep his dog close so he can watch it for signs of interest? Well, Mr. Anderson thinks that Gustavsson was not hunting with proper care because he did not often send the dog out to search as you do. Old Gustavsson covers much ground without resting. It never occurs to him that another man, particularly a younger man, may have trouble keeping up.

"Relax, kid," he said. "This is my meat." He looked at the distant shape of the elk and his face was happy. Calmly, he adjusted the sling.

And he has very little English and pretends to none at all when he does not like someone. All in all, it seems to have been a very unfortunate day. Mr. Anderson is convinced that the old man deliberately gave him 'the big run-around,' whatever that may be. He arrived at the hotel an hour ago, exhausted and furious. He called *Skogschefen* right away. He wants to hunt again tomorrow."

"I thought he had to leave for America."

"He is rearranging his schedule to get one more day. He is angry and stubborn. He wants an elk, a bull elk with fine antlers. *Skogschefen* says we must get him one if we have to take it from the slaughterhouse and stuff it up for him to shoot at. I am up at Lövnäs now, talking to Jansson. He says there have been several good bulls in his division recently. How is it down your way?"

"Not good," I said. "We saw nothing yesterday, as you know; and I was down along Rudbäcken this evening with the puppy and could find no fresh sign. It looks as if it is up to Jansson."

Jägmästare Svedin laughed. "You think so, do you, *gubbe*? You will be pleased to know that Mr. Anderson has asked for you particularly. He says he likes a guide who 'doesn't race through the damn woods like he was going to a fire.' He also likes the way your dog works. *Skogschefen* wants you to take care of him tomorrow. So if you'll meet us here in the morning—"

In the morning, the weather was fine, perhaps a little too fine. Hunting is better when the air is heavy and damp, with maybe a little rain falling. I was at the Lövnäs foresters' station a little before 7:00, but it was 7:45 before the company car drove up with Mr. Anderson. After his long march with old Gustavsson, I think Mr. Anderson must have found it hard to get out of bed. He limped a little, I noticed, as he came across the yard to us, carrying the beautiful rifle with the big telescope. He shook hands with *Jägmästare* Svedin, with me, and with *Skogsvaktare* Jansson. Then he stepped back and gave us all a searching look.

"I guess I've kind of talked myself out on a limb," he said dryly. "After the way I've thrown my weight

around, if you boys trot out an elk for me and I fluff the shot, you'll laugh yourselves sick for a week."

The man was not stupid; I could also sense that maybe he regretted losing his temper the day before. You had to keep in mind that he was a man who wanted something very badly and had very little time in which to get it. I took the risk of joking with him a bit.

I said, "No need to worry, Mr. Anderson. It will be just like shooting fish in a barrel."

He looked at me sharply. Neither of us smiled. He said, "Okay. Well, let's go find the damn barrel and get this over with."

We had the company car leave us at the old railroad embankment that is now a woods road; from there we began hunting slowly west into the wind, covering the ground thoroughly, waiting while Rapp completed his circles. Time and again he would be gone long enough to let us hope he was investigating a fresh trail. Invariably, our hopes would be dashed by the sound of his panting breath as he returned, at last, along our tracks, having found nothing.

Nobody spoke as we proceeded. Mr. Anderson kept up well, but he was more noisy than he had been the first day, so I knew he was tired. After all, he had been going in the woods for two days before this one, a long time for a city man. There was a grim look on his face that I did not like. When a man stops hunting for the enjoyment it gives him, and begins to take success or failure very seriously, he usually becomes a less safe and responsible hunter—and even not so good a shot, since he is no longer relaxed. I kept a careful eye on Mr. Anderson. I had just about come to the conclusion that it was time to rest him a little by having lunch—and maybe make him less tense by getting him to talk a little—when old Rapp opened up ahead.

When it happens, after a long empty morning, you never quite believe it. You think maybe the dog has gone crazy and started barking squirrels or birds. I held out my hand to keep Mr. Anderson from running toward the sound.

(Continued on page 104)

PIERRE

by JIM ZILVERBERG





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impulsively, I took a step forward. Instantly, the buck wheeled and trotted off down the line toward the edge of the swamp. I lowered the bow, feeling a little annoyed with myself, but at the same time pleased. It was a far better thing I'd done, I felt. . . . Now Charlie would have his chance and he would never know of the fine thing I had done in friendship's name, I who had laid down my bow for a friend.

I was in quite a glow as I moved slowly along, herding the buck toward Charlie. About the time I got there, the deer would be down. Charlie and I would dress it and lug it back to camp—together.

But it didn't turn out that way. When I got to the edge of the swamp Charlie was sitting outside the blind, looking like someone's rich uncle.

"Well," he said. "Nice going."

"What do you mean, nice going?" I demanded.

"Don't try to kid me," he said, grinning. "I can tell to look at you. You got him, didn't you?"

"Got who?"

"Why, the buck, of course. I sat here and watched him walk into the swamp right toward you. He . . ."

"You what . . . !" I roared.

Charlie looked sheepish. "I figured you needed him more than I did, he confessed. "Inviting all those people. He

stood right by that tree—a perfect shot. But I decided I'd had my chance the other day and now it was your turn. Did . . . didn't you see him?"

"Yes," I said slowly, feeling my self-righteousness drain away. "I saw him." And I told Charlie of our encounter in the swamp.

We saw the big buck once more. That was while we were walking silently back to camp. A sudden shout from the swamp brought us to a clump of cedars where a skinny little guy in dungarees stood triumphantly beside a dead deer—our deer.

"He walked right into me," he babbled excitedly. "Ain't he a buster!"

"Yes," I agreed, kneeling beside the fallen monster. The little guy's arrow had roved clear through the lungs, bleeding out the deer and practically field dressing it.

"One shot," the little guy went on. "He jumped twice and landed in a heap right here."

"Nice work," Charlie said huskily. "Uh . . . been hunting long?"

"Who—me?" the little guy said, laughing. "Heck, no. I just drove up here this morning. I try to get out one day during the week."

Charlie and I helped him lug the big buck out to his pickup truck in the clearing. Neither of us has done a good-hearted thing since. ■ ■ ■

The Mile Gun

(Continued from page 82)

"Wait," I whispered.

Then the challenging bark rang out again, a little to the left of where it had been. It was the *ståndskall* for certain this time—the sharp, peremptory cry that tells the hunter that the dog had succeeded in bringing the elk to a stand, to bay. It is not, you must understand, the musical sound a driving dog makes on a hot trail. That is just good fun, an exciting chase, with no danger involved—at least not for the dog. This is a fighting cry. This is 15 kilos of dog saying insulting things to some 300 furious kilos of elk that tries to kill him.

Rapp was silent for a moment. Then his voice came again, still farther to the left and more distant. I listened for a moment longer—it was the *ståndskall* all right, but it had an impatient note. "Master," it said to me, "Husse, come quick. This beast is not behaving right. I cannot hold it here for you all day." I started to run, heading to a point that would put us downwind of the fight, since an elk will not hold for the dog if it is frightened by the scent of man. Mr. Anderson ran, too, and I could hear him pounding along behind me. We splashed through a swamp and fought through heavy brush. The fight kept on moving ahead of us.

Sound is hard to judge in the forest. We came on the stand quite suddenly. I threw out my arm to halt Mr. Anderson, then beckoned him forward so that he could see. It was, as always, a stirring sight. Down at the foot of the sloping forest meadow on which

we stood, among some scrubby birches, a great bull elk was standing half-hidden among the dry autumn leaves, while in front of him old Rapp was doing his crazy war dance, darting in and out and barking furiously. Then the trees shook as the elk lunged forward. Rapp, momentarily silenced, bounded out of the way; then he opened up and bared in again. It looked, of course, more heedless and dramatic, and much less skillful, than it really was. Actually, the old dog was very carefully judging the amount of aggressiveness that would keep the bull angry and interested without putting him to flight. You can count on your fingers the number of dogs in Sweden who can stand an elk properly.

"There's your *tjur*, man!" I whispered, forgetting the polite form of address. "There's your bull! Look at that crown! How do you like our toy moose now, *gubbe*?" I was a little excited. I never get over that. When I get over it, I will stop hunting.

Mr. Anderson did not speak. I glanced at him. His face had an intent look. He started to raise his rifle, and lowered it again, and shook his head. It was much too long range and there was brush in the way. I was glad to see he had judgment enough not to take the shot. He started forward. I put my hand on his arm.

"No. We have to go around and come up against the wind. He is nervous already. If he smells us he will run. This way."

We circled the pine thicket to our left, and raced down the hill. Even as we

were running, I heard Rapp break off, to come in strong on the next hill beyond, having again brought the bull to a halt. His bark now was a little angry with me: "Husse, what am I supposed to do with this monster, shoot it myself?" We labored up the hill and saw them feinting at each other on the far side of a small cutover area in which clumps of young trees had come up higher than a man. We could catch only occasional glimpses of the dog's gray coat as he fought; and of the elk standing like a sullen dark shadow among the leaves and branches, then lunging, then standing again, awaiting his chance to kill.

"Be ready if he breaks this way," I whispered.

I heard Mr. Anderson breathing heavily beside me. I heard the faint metallic sound as he released the safety of his gun. I wondered, as always, why with all the money spent on perfecting weapons, no one has yet produced a rifle with a safety that is both convenient and soundless. Some of them will frighten game at 100 meters on a windy day. Then Rapp darted out of the brush toward us; and suddenly the bull was coming after him through the small trees. He came at a run, and swung sharply right—and for a moment he was in the open at point-blank range, his whole side exposed. I had the bead of my front sight swinging with his shoulder in case a second shot should be needed to put him down . . .

The first shot never came. An instant later the opportunity was lost: the bull was gone in the forest. I looked at Mr. Anderson. His face was pale, and he looked astonished and angry and, I thought, a little frightened, like a man confronted with the completely unexpected.

"I couldn't find him!" he whispered. "Damn it, there he was, right on top of us, big as a house, and I simply couldn't pick him up in this damn scope, he was going so fast!"

I started to speak, but Rapp began to bark again off to the right. I beckoned to Mr. Anderson, and we ran again. Suddenly I stopped running. Rapp was no longer barking. I looked around quickly. We were in dense woods, but they opened up slightly ahead. There was a narrow lane between the trees down which we could see and shoot. I pushed Mr. Anderson forward.

"Be ready now!" I whispered.

From the silence, I knew that the elk had broken off the fight and was running. Perhaps an eddy of air had brought him our scent. It was unlikely that Rapp could stop him again, but we might get a shot nevertheless. I wanted to offer Mr. Anderson my gun, as I had once before, but there was no time to discuss the matter. I heard a sharp rapping sound in the woods—an antler or a hoof—and a twig broke with a sudden crack. The dark shape of an elk was bearing down on us at a dead run, but something about it was not right. I tried to see it clearly, but the forest was too thick. It was heading directly for us. At the last moment, only, sensing our presence, it swerved and broke into the clear not 20 meters away—and I

saw that it was not the bull Rapp had been working, but a lone cow elk that must have been frightened out of hiding by the noise of the fight.

I started to speak, and checked myself. A cow without calf was perfectly legal game. The big bull was probably gone, anyway. If Mr. Anderson wanted to take this shot, there was no reason to object, and he would have some kind of an elk, in case we were not able to get another *tjur* for him later. I waited—if there is a worse suspense than waiting for a man to shoot after you have labored hard to bring him into position, I do not know what it is. Mr. Anderson did not fire until the cow was disappearing into the woods.

I saw her hunch up in the unmistakable fashion of an animal hit low and far back. The harm was done and I could make it no worse, so I threw the Mauser to my shoulder and took a risky shot through the brush and trees in the hope that luck would guide the bullet home, but luck was not with us today. The wounded elk disappeared among the trees. I turned to look at Mr. Anderson, who was swearing softly and bitterly.

He looked up. "Okay," he said. "I gutshot him like a damn greenhorn! I was late getting on him again, with the scope, and then I couldn't stop my damn trigger finger when I saw him getting away . . . Ah, hell! Will the dog find him for us? Where is the dog, anyway?"

I stared at him for a moment, realizing that he did not know that he had not been shooting at the big *tjur*. In the limited field of the powerful telescope, at such close range, he probably had not even been able to see the whole animal. I felt sorry for him; he was like a man with a very long broomstick trying to kill a rat in a low and crowded cellar.

I told him what had happened. He was silent for a while, then he said: "I should have quit while I was ahead, I guess. When a man's got a personal jinx he's a fool to buck it. A damn old barren cow, eh?" He laughed sharply. "I've really loused up this hunt but good, haven't I? A lousy tracking job and nothing but a pair of ears at the end of it. Well, do we go after her now or do we wait for her to lie down and stiffen up a bit before we chase her."

I said, "We'll wait for the dog, and to hear what the *Jägmästare* thinks is best. In the meantime, maybe, Mr. Anderson would like to trade guns with me."

He shook his head. "Don't rub it in, kid. Maybe the old Mile gun isn't quite the thing for these woods of yours, but the way I'm feeling now I couldn't do any better with a machine gun. I'll stick to something I know. Besides, you'll want your own gun to shoot with in case I goof again."

The *Jägmästare* came up, followed by Rapp, hot and tired. Our dogs are trained to leave an elk once he starts to run as if he means it, otherwise the hunter would soon be without a dog. The *Jägmästare* thought it best for us to follow the wounded cow at once. It was easy tracking at first. The *spär* of



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a running elk is spread out and easy
to tell from that of an elk walking nor-
mally. But after a while the cow had
slowed her pace until her tracks looked
like those of any other elk—and there
had been many in that area. Several
times we had to backtrack and start
again, having taken the wrong trail. At
last, sensing the direction in which the
search was taking us, we cut over to
the new company road along the east
shore of the lake called Mänsjön. We
walked along this road, studying the
soft surface, until we came to the place
where the cow had crossed.

"Well, she took to the lake," I said
in Swedish.

The Jügmästare translated for Mr.
Anderson. "They swim very well," he
said. "They often take to the water
when they fear pursuit. It is going to be
difficult to find where she came out." He
looked hard at Mr. Anderson. "You're
quite certain this förbannade cow is
wounded. We have seen no blood at
all."

I said, "They do not bleed much
when—"

I checked myself. The Jügmästare was
still looking at Mr. Anderson very hard,
as if trying to tell the big man some-
thing. I realized that, being a diplomat,
he was giving Mr. Anderson—an im-
portant visitor—an opportunity to avoid
the drudgery of trying to find a
wounded cow elk that he did not really
want, that could by now be anywhere
in the swampy wilderness around
Mänsjön. All Mr. Anderson had to do
was say that he remembered now that
he had shot high, or hit a tree, or seen
the bullet throw dirt at the cow's feet.
Mr. Anderson could then go on with
his hunt. Some foresters would be sent
out in the morning with a spårhund on
leash—a tracking dog—to find the
wounded elk. The trail would be cold,
and even if found the animal would
have had a night in which to suffer, but
this need not concern Mr. Anderson.
There were many other elk. We might
even get another chance at a big tjur,
and win a fine trophy to take back to
America.

Mr. Anderson said, "Listen, boys, I
may not be much good at this kind of
snap shooting—where I hunt we aren't
used to having the game run right
over us—but I still know where I'm
putting my bullets when I do manage
to get off a shot. That cow is hit. She
may not be bleeding much externally,
but if I know my gun she's a mess in-
side. So let's just get on the ball and
find her, huh?"

It was at that moment, I think, that
I decided that Mr. Anderson might be
worth watching closely; that he might,
for all his gaudy clothes and unsuitable
weapon and loud talk, be a real hunter
—that is, a man who, in the woods,
takes the responsibility for all his
shots, not just the good ones. Five min-
utes later we were making our way
along the lake shore. Mr. Anderson,
Rapp and I labored along the shore in
silence, splashing through swamps and
jumping small watercourses that ran
into the lake, and climbing over rocky
outcroppings covered by brush and
small trees. I was holding Rapp on

leash, not wanting to make the situation
more complicated by getting up another
elk before we had disposed of this one.
We had gone perhaps a kilometer and
a half in this way, when the dog began
to strain forward to sniff at the ground.

We were on hard ground. I could
only see that something had passed. I
let Rapp lead me off the ridge and
down to the swamp below, where I
stopped to examine a fine set of prints
in the soft mud.

Mr. Anderson's voice said, in a whis-
per, at my shoulder, "I'm not the
world's best tracker, but if that's a
cow I'll eat it, hide and all. Besides, it's
headed toward the lake instead of go-
ing away from it."

I looked at the great cloven hoof
marks, so fresh that they had not had
time to fully fill with water. Rapp was
straining at the leash and whining soft-
ly. I thought he, too, recognized the
spår. I did not look at Mr. Anderson,
but waited for him to speak.

He whispered, "It looks pretty much
like the same one, Gröndal, doesn't it?
The big one, the one we had this morn-
ing?"

I nodded. I whispered, "He cannot be
far ahead. If Mr. Anderson wishes, I
will let the dog go. We can attend to the
cow later."

He hesitated. It was only natural that
he should be tempted. Then I felt him
shake his head. "If we stir up the
country with a lot of barking and
shooting, we'll never catch her. One
thing at a time, kid. Let's take care of
this business first; maybe we can come
back for the big fellow later."

We went on, Rapp still whining un-
happily. As we entered the woods
beyond the swamp, there was a sudden
crashing sound among the trees to the
left as the bull that had been standing
there turned and fled, running very
lightly for such a big animal. It was the
wrong angle for shooting, and much
too thick brush; but I could see the
sunlight gleaming on his antlers. He was
at least a 12-pointer. Our Swedish elk
does not normally have the shovel
horns of its larger relative, the Ameri-
can moose. Instead, the horns—we
hunters call them the crown—are
branched, and we judge them by the
number of points. Elk have been shot
with over 20 points; but a 12-pointer
is very, very good for our part of
Sweden.

When the bull was gone, I looked at
Mr. Anderson. He had not even taken
the gun from his shoulder. He was
standing there with a wry, resigned
look on his face, knowing, of course,
that having been disturbed twice in
one day, the big bull would not stop
now until he found peaceful country
far away.

"Well," said Mr. Anderson, "that's
that. Now let's finish off this cow and go
home. I've got a plane to catch."

He could not keep a little bitterness
out of his voice—the bitterness of a
man who had come a long way to
prove something to himself, and had
failed miserably. I have shot 58 elk as
part of my forester's job, and a trophy
means very little to me, but who am
I to say what it means to another man?

We continued on our way in silence. It was an hour and a half before we found the cow's spär leaving the lake; and then we could not be sure it was the right one until we followed it several hundred meters and found a leaf touched with wet blood, as if the lake water had merely dissolved a little of the crust that had formed over the wound.

We followed with the dog on leash, but the trail swung to the east, downwind, and at last I let Rapp go. With our scent drifting ahead to betray us, it was better for the dog to hunt in advance. We followed as rapidly as we could. After all the long hours of tracking, it seemed only a few minutes before we heard the ständskall ahead. I started to run, but was forced to wait for Mr. Anderson, who was too tired to run.

"Damn it, don't wait for me!" he panted as he reached me. "The hell with who shoots the poor brute, just so somebody gets to her and puts her out of—"

Rapp's barking interrupted him. I looked at Mr. Anderson, and nodded, and headed toward the sound at a lope, trying to swing to the right so that I could make the approach downwind, but I ran into open marsh in that direction. I followed the wooded edge, therefore, increasing my pace as the dog's voice became more demanding. Wounded, the cow would be hard to hold; they do not stand as well as bulls, anyway. I came around a point of woods, and checked myself abruptly. I was looking over a bay of marsh, as you might call it, and on the far side, in the open but quite near the trees, was the standing figure of the wounded elk and the gray darting shape of the dog.

I looked around quickly, and tested the wind, but the situation was a difficult one. They were at least 300 meters away, maybe more, and the wind was blowing from the forest toward the open marsh. It was, if anything, coming more from my direction than from the other. If I tried to move closer, using the trees as cover, the cow would be bound to get my scent. If I tried to approach to the right over the marsh, she would be bound to see me. The elk's eyesight is not remarkable, but a man moving in the open at a few hundred meters is fairly conspicuous.

I drew a long breath and lifted the rifle to my shoulder. The range was too long; much too long. The bead of the front sight completely blotted out the target. I knew that if I hit at all at this distance it would be only by chance, but it seemed to be the only

chance to put an end to this. I held my breath, therefore, and took aim, trying to estimate how much I should hold high. Then a hand was on my shoulder. I looked around angrily.

"Relax, kid," Mr. Anderson said. He looked at the distant shape of the elk, and suddenly his face was almost happy. "Relax, this is my meat. First time in three days I've had room enough to breathe."

Old Rapp was still barking loudly, but his voice was cracking with weariness. I lowered my gun, and watched Mr. Anderson sit down on the hillside a little back from the edge of the marsh, where he was in the shadow and had a slight elevation to shoot from. Calmly, he arranged the rifle sling on left arm in a certain way; then he levered the butt of the handsome weapon to his shoulder and leaned forward, placing his elbows on his knees. The sling bound man and gun firmly together. Mr. Anderson pushed off the safety and laid his cheek against the polished stock.

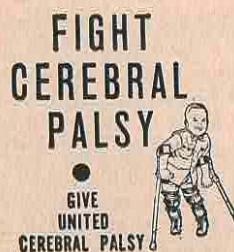
Old Rapp barked shrilly and warningly. I turned to look at the elk, and groaned. She had turned away from us now, leaving no vital area showing. Then the dog came dancing toward us, and the elk swung her head to meet the challenge. For a moment, the curve of her neck was toward us, a tiny target 300 meters away. In that instant, Mr. Anderson's rifle fired. There was a time lag of a fraction of a second that seemed much longer. Then, on the other side of the marsh, the wounded cow threw her head high up and back and sank to the ground in one single, almost fluid, motion. When we reached her, she was quite dead with a broken neck. Old Rapp was growling fiercely and worrying tufts of hair from the fallen enemy.

Mr. Anderson said, "Well, that wasn't a bad shot. But I guess the old Mile Gun and I are going to head back to the wide-open spaces where we've got room to operate." He looked at the elk for a moment. His expression was peaceful and satisfied. "I don't want to spoil the dog's fun," he said. "He's got a couple of good bites coming for his work. But don't let him chew up the head too badly, I want that."

I leaned down to push Rapp aside. "You want it?" I said surprised. "A cow?"

"Damn right I want it," He said grinning at me suddenly. "I earned it, didn't I? I'm going to stuff it and hang it on the wall to remind me to stay where I belong and not try to be a big man in too much territory. And maybe," he added dryly, "also to remind me to keep my big mouth shut, although I guess maybe it'll take more than a stuffed elk to do that, eh, kid?"

I cut the traditional pine twig and put it in his cap—the elk hunter's symbol of success. As I began the job of field-dressing the cow, he started to tell me about some other long shots he had made, one on an antelope at 534 measured yards. I had heard about it before, but I did not mind. He was, after all, for all his loud talk, a hunter; and there are too few of those. ■ ■ ■



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