



The .44 Magnum cartridge was less than a decade old when publishing magnate Robert E. Petersen used it to hunt deer, elk, moose, black bear and a trophy brown bear. But when he decided to try for a polar bear with a .44 six-gun, even Petersen's guide agreed to participate in the hunt only if he would be able to bring his .375 H&H rifle into immediate play if the handgun failed.

Far out above the ice, down amongst the pressure ridges near Big Diomed Island, Petersen spotted the yellowish blur of a big bear from the window of his Piper Super Cub aircraft. Landing nearby, Petersen, his guide and a cameraman began stalking the bruin through the twisted ice walls. In Bob Petersen's hands was a Smith & Wesson Model 29 revolver, loaded with Norma 240-grain steel-jacketed rounds, and dry lubricated with

graphite to avoid freezing in the sub-zero temperatures.

When the polar bear suddenly appeared, just 25 yards away from behind a block of ice, Petersen quickly fired five shots into its chest and shoulder area. The 1,500-pound white beast dropped to the ice, dead in its tracks. It was the first polar bear ever taken with a .44 Magnum handgun. Vindicated in his choice of the .44 Magnum, Petersen would later proudly exhibit the bear in his Wilshire Boulevard office, with the Smith & Wesson handgun that he used proudly displayed nearby.

With thousands of guns on daily exhibition, the National Firearms Museum offers visitors the opportunity to experience six centuries of arms history at no charge (donations appreciated). Located at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, Va., the self-guided museum has an extensive gift shop that offers a wide selection of books, souvenirs and other fraternal items for sale. For more information, call (703) 267-1600 or email nfmstaff@nrahq.org. View the online galleries at www.nramuseum.com.



A PISTOL FOR POLAR BEAR