

THE FASTEST GUNS THAT NEVER LIVED (PART II)

By Brian Blume

This second article on "The Fastest Guns that Never Lived" is dedicated primarily to the great movie stars of days gone by. Their daring feats and blazing gun battles, far surpassed even the greatest of real-life gunslingers. It is primarily through their efforts that the Old West still remains alive in the hearts and minds of today's Americans.

Thirteen of the greats of the movie and TV screen were presented in part one (still available in the latest issue of The Strategic Review). Another fourteen are presented here. The ratings are purely subjective on the part of this author, and are in terms of TSR's BOOT HILL rules for gunfights in miniature. If anybody's favorite hero has been slighted or left off, please send complaints to the author, C/O this magazine. It is strongly advised that these characters not be used in any current campaign games, as they will overbalance the campaign, but they will provide some very interesting special scenarios.

Don "Red" Barry — Barry is probably most remembered for his starring role in the movie series "The Adventures of Red Ryder" from 1940 to 1944. His last starring role was in "Iron Angel" (1969), but he has appeared constantly in supporting roles in movies such as "Johnny Get His Gun" (1971) and "Showdown" (1973) since then.

William "Wild Bill" Elliot — Elliot rose to fame by starring in the movie serial "The Great Adventure of Wild Bill Hickok" in 1938. In 1944 he took over the lead of the "Red Ryder" series from Red Barry. In 1950 and 1951 he ran the "Wild Bill Elliot" series on the radio. He continued to make top westerns until the late 50's.

"Hoot" Gibson — A pioneer in the early silent westerns, Hoot was one of the first cowboy stunt men. "Action" (1921) began his rise to stardom. During the 1920's, Hoot ranked second only to Tom Mix as the leading cowboy star. His pictures were fast, full of action, but mainly non-violent. By the 1930's, Hoot's popularity declined with the rise of the talkies, but he kept some attention by starring in the first of the "Three Mesquiteers" series (which would later feature such greats as John Wayne and Bob Steele). He later starred in the "Trail Blazers" series in 1943.

William S. Hart — Probably more than any other of the early western stars, Hart portrayed the Old West as it really was. Films such as "Tumbleweeds" (1925, 1939) are now classic westerns. When realism in the westerns no longer had box office appeal, Hart retired from his movie career. He never made a talkie!

Tim Holt — Admittedly, much of the acting, in even the finest of the old western movies, was not top notch. However, Holt displayed a quality of acting ability far above most of his contemporaries. In the late 30's and into the 40's Tim was one of the leading box office draws. In 1946 he made "My Darling Clementine" along with Henry Fonda, Victor Mature, Walter Brennan and Ward Bond which portrayed the events leading up to the famous Gunfight at

the OK Corral. It was a top effort. His career ended in the early 50's, but he appeared as late as the 60's in a segment of "The Virginian."

Allan "Rocky" Lane — Lane achieved cowboy stardom in the mid-40's. He developed a character who was neat, kind, pleasant, handsome, quick on the trigger and tough in a fist fight. In 1946, he replaced Wild Bill Elliot as the lead in the "Red Ryder" series. His career faded out, along with most of the other movie cowboys, with the rise of TV in the early 50's.

Colonel Tim McCoy — Most remembered for the series of films in which he played Lightning Bill Carson, McCoy developed a screen character who was "The Detective of the Range." His character frequently donned disguises during the course of a movie. He starred from the late 20's through the early 40's when he joined the army and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Joel McCrea — McCrea rose to stardom in the mid-30's on the strength of some fine non-westerns. His popularity was slipping when, in 1944, he made "Buffalo Bill." After 1945 Joel made mostly westerns, including the title role in "The Virginian." He portrayed various historical figures including Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson and Sam Houston. In the late 40's and early 50's, he did the radio serial "Tales of the Texas Rangers" and in 1959 starred in TV's "Wichita Town." He is still active (starring in "Mustang Country" in 1975) and is currently the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Tom Mix — Before becoming a movie actor, Mix was at one time a U.S. Marshall and a Texas Ranger. By 1921 he was the "King of the Cowboys" of the movie western. His films had lots of action, chases and fight scenes. He never smoked or drank on screen and usually no one was killed. He did all of his own stunt work and suffered over eighty injuries during his professional career. He retired from the movies in 1935 and died in an auto wreck in 1940.

The Durango Kid — Portrayed by Charles Starrett, The Durango Kid rode across the screen in 56 movies starting in 1940. The "Return of the Durango Kid" appeared in 1945 and continued until 1952. The Kid would appear from nowhere, save the day and reappear as the mild mannered nobody.

Bob Steele — Probably the fastest draw of all of the old movie cowboys was Bob Steele. He rose to fame in the late 20's. In the 40's, he did a series as Billy the Kid and made 20 pictures in the "Three Mesquiteers" series. He also starred in the "Trail Blazers" series. He has continued working until the present and the younger generation may remember him as Trooper Duffy on TV's "F Troop."

Lee Van Cleef — Van Cleef is one of the few "bad men" who has made it big in the western movies. He played heavies from the early 50's all the way through his roles in two of Clint Eastwood's movies, "A Few Dollars More" and "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly." Those two movies launched him in a starring career in European westerns, and today Van Cleef is the most popular western actor in Europe. Many of his films have made it back to the US (such as El Condor and Barquero, both 1970).

The Cisco Kid and Poncho — These two characters are out of place among these other movie stars, but they deserve recognition for their entertainment on TV during the late 50's and early 60's. Their exploits are still shown on some stations around the country.

	GUN		THROWING		STRENGTH	EXPERIENCE	ABILITIES
	SPEED	ACCURACY	ACCURACY	BRAVERY			
Don "Red" Barry	92	96	66	98	59	11+	A,B,E,H
Wild Bill Elliot	95	90	78	96	84	11+	A,E,F,H,K
"Hoot" Gibson	88	90	81	98	91	11+	B,G,J
William S. Hart	89	90	72	96	77	11+	A,E,F,H
Tim Holt	91	91	48	94	63	11+	A,E,F,H
Rocky Lane	97	90	52	95	97	11+	A,B,E,H
Col. Tim McCoy	88	99	69	94	82	11+	A,B,E,H
Joel McCrea	95	94	59	95	77	11+	A,E,F,H
Tom Mix	96	90	88	98	98	11+	A,B,C,E,G,H,J,K
The Durango Kid	97	95	42	96	45	11+	A,B,E,H
Bob Steele	99	96	55	97	59	11+	A,B,F,H
Lee Van Cleef	98	98	63	99	77	11+	B,E,H
The Cisco Kid	88	96	66	96	67	11+	A,B,E,G,H,J
Poncho	38	66	34	34	76		G

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- A — ½ penalty if shooting from horseback.
- B — Never surprised.
- C — Double the length of medium range when shooting.
- D — Shoulder arms are considered "Fast."
- E — May "hipshoot" with no penalty.
- F — No penalty for giving opponent first move.
- G — Treat wounds as one class lower when shot. A "Mortal Wound" result becomes a "Serious Wound," etc.
- H — ½ penalty if firing at a moving target.
- J — Must use "Sharpshooting" rule, and must fire at "gun arm/hand" only.
- K — No penalty for "wrong hand" shooting.