

CANADIAN *FIREARMS JOURNAL*

Common Sense Or Nonsense?
In-depth coverage of Public Safety Minister
Steven Blaney's *Common Sense Firearms Act*

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CANADA'S NATIONAL FIREARMS ASSOCIATION



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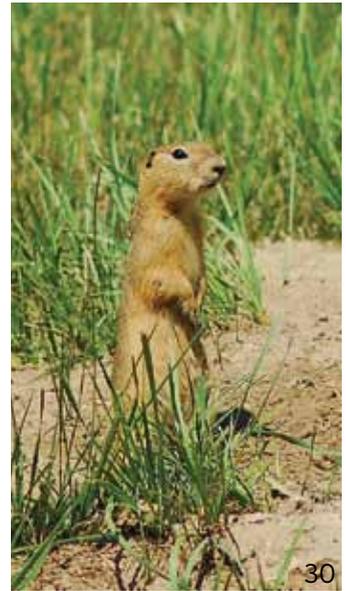
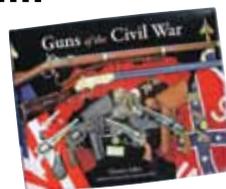
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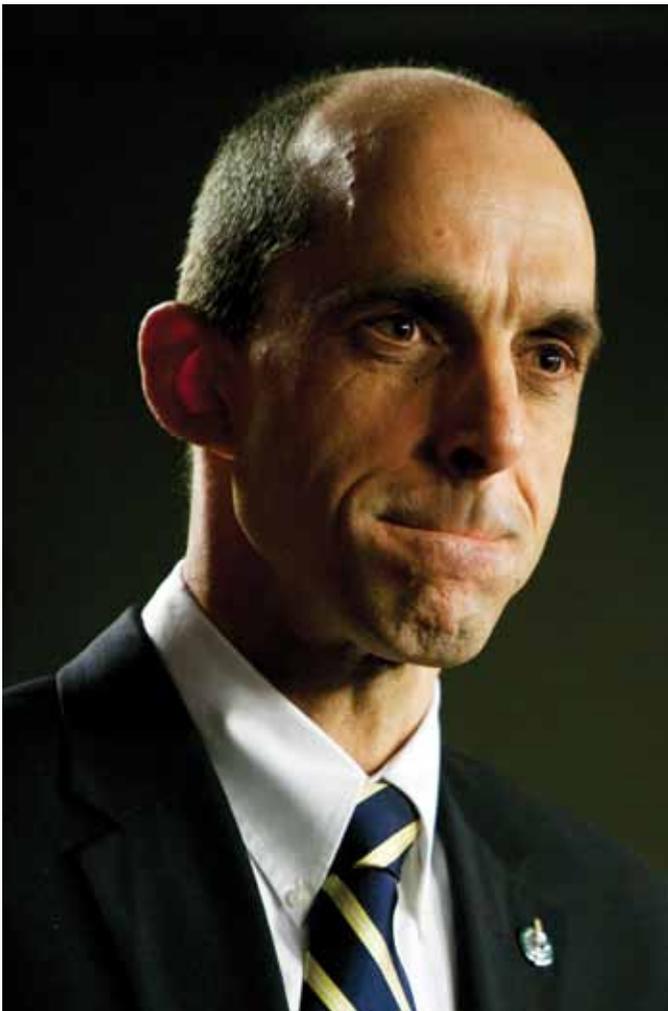
Canada's National Firearms Association exists to promote, support and protect all safe firearms activities, including the right of self defense, firearms education for all Canadians, freedom and justice for Canada's firearms community and to advocate for legislative change to ensure the right of all Canadians to own and use firearms is protected.

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On the Cover

Changes Afoot

On July 23, 2014, the Honourable Steven Blaney, Canada's Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, announced the coming-into-force of an expanded *Order Declaring an Amnesty Period (2014)*.



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**CANADA'S NATIONAL
FIREARMS ASSOCIATION** 

In defence of freedom

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From The Editor's Desk

Chris McGarry

The True Meaning of "No Compromise"

NFA is not willing to back down

Quite often, the first thing people see when they are introduced to Canada's National Firearms Association is the fledging gun rights organization's logo, but more significantly, the slogan and creed we as NFA members strive to live by: "No Compromise." To many in the general public, who are largely unfamiliar with the NFA's inner workings as well as our objectives, this may come across as a considerably bold statement. So then, what exactly does "No Compromise" mean? Simply put, we as Canada's law-abiding firearms community want our rights back, and will settle for nothing less.

Since as far back as the early 2000s, the Conservative Party of Canada has used the repealing of the much-maligned, horribly expensive, not to mention useless long-gun registry as an election promise. The CPC finally made good on that promise during the spring of 2012. While scrapping the requirement to register shotguns and hunting rifles is a small step in the right direction, the draconian Firearms Act, which Prime Minister Stephen Harper vowed to rescind in 2002, remains on the books to this day.

"No Compromise" means we will not accept bureaucratic half measures, such as attaching ATTs (Authorization to Transport) to restricted licenses, tweaking the requirements for licensing or slowly reclassifying some restricted firearms to non-restricted while several more models that are currently non-restricted are moved into the prohibited category with the stroke of a pen.

In order for gun owners in this country to have their rights fully restored, bills C-68 and C-17 must be rescinded in their entirety. The regulation of compelling an individual under pain of prosecution to take a training course and obtain a licence to merely possess their own property is unconstitutional. So is issuing a special permit for a restricted licence holder to take their firearms from home to the range and back.

What Canada's firearms community truly desires is to be liberated from these burdensome restrictions, which have no effect on the criminal elements of our society. We want to be able to enjoy our sport on our own property and to see a complete abolishment of the three categories of firearms.

As the gun control debate continues on, it is genuinely astounding as to how many sitting Members of Parliament have little understanding of how onerous the rules and regulations within the Firearms Act are on law-abiding hunters and sport shooters. Many MPs in the Conservative caucus naively believe that the dismantling of the long-gun registry was the magic bullet (no pun intended) for solving the issue

of flawed gun control legislation in this country. It's not and this is the message the NFA is driving home to the federal government. In keeping with the spirit of "No Compromise," we will no longer accept shoddy efforts to try to appease us while doing nothing to solve the actual problem - in other words, treating the symptom and not the disease. The main objective of the NFA is to restore the rights of gun owners and we will not stop until our mission is accomplished.





President's Message

Sheldon Clare

Proposed Licensing Act Shows Anything But Common Sense

Act is less than it appears

The *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act* has little to do with common sense and a lot to do with affirming the practise of licensing and adding yet another barrier to legal possession of firearms.

The NFA was first given teasers about these specific proposed changes in December 2013. We presented our own views about necessary changes to Canada's failed gun laws, only to find them fall on deaf ears in the Ministry of Public Safety. There were also hints that some currently prohibited and restricted firearms may be changed to non-restricted status, but alas even that

small carrot didn't come to pass, at least not yet.

As one writer put it to me, it never goes well when one points out that the emperor has no clothes, and in this case the proposed legislation has little in the way of substance to offer firearms owners. It is merely more tinkering to make the existing licensing program palatable to some. It is designed to divide some firearm owners from others and to label those who oppose it as radical. In short, it is a classic example of doing nothing of substance while appearing to do something grand.

The minister's announcement is worse than disappointing - it adds more gun control and re-affirms the status quo. The NFA regards Minister Blaney's announcement, regarding proposed changes to the *Firearms Act*, to be based upon bad advice. The elimination of the ability to challenge the safety course tests is simply another barrier to lawful ownership and, even worse, a commitment to the flawed system of licensing.

The changes made are minor in that they are merely cost-saving measures for the government, which will appeal to some firearms users by making their paper-

work easier. There is nothing here of substance.

Despite the minister's claim that firearms ownership in Canada is a right with responsibilities, he doesn't seem to grasp that the Supreme Court of Canada has already made it clear that firearms ownership in Canada is a heavily regulated privilege. If he really thinks it is a right, he needs to put that in legislation - that's how politicians get to trump the courts.

In short, this so-called *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act* appears to be little more than a cynical ploy to do some fundraising before the 2015 general election. Unfortunately, it falls far short of what the analytical, firearms-owning public needs to have done and does not secure the firearm communities' support.

His public statements are inconsistent with the written text regarding use of prohibs.

They may not be used "as before" and may only be taken to ranges approved for the discharge of prohibited long arms. Besides the fact that there are few, if any, ranges approved for that



The NFA does not support *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act* as it is written.

purpose, it raises the question as to why other prohib owners under the various section 12s are excluded from this apparently intended but elusive benefit.

Eliminating the ability to challenge the FSET exams adds more unnecessary gun control barriers, and will add particular hardship to those in remote areas, and to those with other training or experience in firearms handling and safety.

The stated proposed change regarding CFOs will require considerably more modification to the law than it appears the CPC is willing to make. The role of the CFO is seeded throughout the *Firearms Act, Criminal Code Part 3*, and the regulations. It will be a complex process to untangle the CFOs from their statutory roles.

The merging of the POL with the PAL only has value in a system that supports the licensing regime of Bill C-68. Administratively, it only comes into effect upon renewal of POLS and is thus not even a true merging of the licenses.

The NFA is not supporting this bill as written. We have reached out to the minister to offer our advice for improvements; it remains to be seen if our offer will be accepted.

It is puzzling to our board as to why some individuals and groups would support such an ill-considered bill, which in writing is quite inconsistent with public announcements, and in fact does nothing to improve our firearms laws to the benefit of firearms owners. In terms of making the CFSC mandatory, it actually reinforces and increases the Liberal gun control agenda of Alan Rock's C-68.

The NFA is not supporting this bill as written.

Hopefully the CPC will take our concerns seriously. Our current firearms laws are incredibly complex and need drastic action to solve the ongoing problems. There is a need to fix these bad laws and compelling reasons to do so. Hopefully this government will seize the opportunity to make real changes to fix our bad laws. The NFA believes that it is more important to tell the minister what he needs to hear, rather than what he wants to hear and we will continue to do just that.

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Rapport du Président

Sheldon Clare

Proposé Licensing Act Indique Quoi Que Ce Soit, Mais Le Bon Sens

Act est inférieure à ce qu'elle s'affiche

La Loi sur la délivrance simple et sécuritaire des permis d'armes à feu n'a rien à voir avec le gros bon sens et tout à voir avec le renforcement du système d'émission de permis, de plus elle ajoute une barrière supplémentaire à la possession légitime d'armes à feu.

L'ACAF a reçu des bribes d'information à propos de ces changements en décembre 2013. À cette époque, nous avons soumis nos propositions quant aux changements qui devaient être faits aux mauvaises Lois Canadiennes, pour s'apercevoir que le Ministre de la Sécurité publique avait aucune intention d'y porter attention. Nous avons appris qu'il y avait la possibilité que certaines armes ayant le statut de prohibées et restreintes seraient changées à sans restriction. À notre grande déception, cela n'a pas été fait, du moins pas encore.

La Loi telle qu'elle est présentée n'a pas grand chose à offrir aux propriétaires d'armes à feu. Elle offre seulement des ajustements mineurs qui peuvent plaire à certains usagers en rendant le système d'émission de permis plus facile à gérer. Elle est conçue pour diviser les propriétaires d'armes à feu et faire paraître ceux qui s'y oppose comme étant des extrémistes. En résumé cette Loi est un exemple parfait d'un Gouvernement qui fait rien de substantif tout en ayant l'apparence de faire de grandes choses.

L'annonce du Ministre est plus que décevante, cette Loi ajoute des contrôles supplémentaires en regard des armes à feu et fortifie le statu quo. L'ACAF constate que les changements proposés par le Ministre Blaney sont le fruit de mauvais conseils. L'élimination de la reconnaissance des acquis en matière de maniement sécuritaire d'armes à feu qui permettait aux gens de subir l'examen seulement du Cours Canadien de Sécurité dans le Maniement des Armes à Feu (CCSMAF) crée une barrière supplémentaire à la possession légitime d'armes à feu et pire encore, confirme l'appui du Gouvernement envers le système d'émission de permis.

Les changements annoncés ne sont que de mesures mineures qui visent à faire sauver des coûts au Gouvernement. Ils plairont à certains utilisateurs d'armes à feu qui auront moins de paperasse à remplir. Il n'y a toutefois rien d'importance dans ces mesures.

L'affirmation du Ministre qui prétend que la possession d'armes à feu est un droit auquel se rattache des responsabilités démontre qu'il n'a pas complètement saisi l'effet de la décision de la Cour Suprême du Canada. Cette dernière affirme dans son jugement que la possession d'armes à feu au Canada n'est qu'un privilège qui doit être lourdement réglementé. Si M. le Ministre croit vraiment que c'est un droit, il doit être conséquent et légiférer - c'est en déposant des Lois que les politiciens peuvent annuler l'effet d'une décision d'un tribunal.

En résumé, la Loi sur la délivrance simple et sécuritaire des permis d'armes à feu semble être un stratagème pour motiver une campagne de financement en vu des élections générales de 2015. Elle est clairement inadéquate pour tous les propriétaires d'armes à feu qui analysent froidement ce qu'elle offre et elle ne motive certainement pas l'appui de cette communauté.

Les affirmations publiques du Ministre sont contradictoires avec le texte de la nouvelle Loi quant à l'usage des armes prohibées.

Ces armes ne peuvent pas être utilisées "comme avant". Elles peuvent seulement être utilisées dans des clubs de tir qui sont sanctionnés pour l'utilisation des armes longues prohibées. À part le fait que ces clubs de tirs sont très rares, voire inexistant, nous nous demandons pourquoi les autres propriétaires d'armes à feu qui profitent des privilèges accordés via l'Article 12 de la Loi sur les Armes à Feu (LAF) sont exclus de ce prétendu bénéfice de la nouvelle Loi.

D'enlever le choix aux gens de subir uniquement l'examen du CCSMAF sans avoir

à suivre le cours ajoute une barrière de plus à la possession légitime d'armes à feu. La reconnaissance des acquis n'est plus respectée et les personnes qui habitent en régions éloignées seront pénalisées.

Les changements proposés en regard des Contrôleurs des Armes à Feu (CAF) requièrent beaucoup plus de modifications que le Parti Conservateur semble prêt à faire. Le rôle des CAF est parsemé un peu partout dans la LAF, le Code Criminel et leurs règlements. Éliminer le rôle statutaire des CAF sera ardu et complexe.

Fusionner les Permis de Possession Seulement (PPS) avec les Permis de Possession et d'Acquisition (PPA) d'armes à feu ne fait que confirmer la validité du régime mis en place par la LAF - C-68, de plus ce n'est seulement au fur et à mesure que les PPS seront renouvelés qu'ils deviendront des PPA, ce n'est donc pas une fusion véritable.

L'ACAF ne donne pas son appui à cette Loi telle qu'elle est écrite. Nous avons tendu la main au Ministre pour lui offrir des propositions d'amélioration à la Loi. Nous attendons toujours si notre offre sera acceptée.

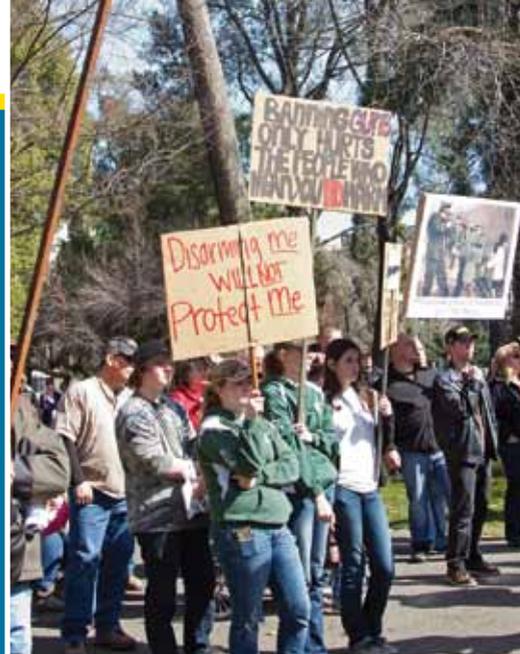
Nous ne comprenons pas pourquoi certains groupes et individus puissent être d'accord avec un Projet de Loi dont le texte écrit est contradictoire avec le contenu de ce qui a été annoncé publiquement. De plus, il n'apporte aucune amélioration aux Lois existantes ni aucun soulagement pour les propriétaires d'armes à feu. Le fait d'exiger que tous suivent le CCSMAF augmente et renforce le contrôle des armes initié par le régime Libéral d'Alan Rock et sa LAF.

Nous souhaitons vivement que le Parti Conservateur prenne nos inquiétudes au sérieux. Les Lois actuelles sur les armes à feu sont trop complexes et elles ont besoin d'être modifiées drastiquement pour régler les problèmes qu'elles génèrent sans cesse. Nous espérons que ce Gouvernement saisisse l'occasion de faire les changements nécessaires à nos mauvaises Lois. L'ACAF croit qu'il est plus important de dire au Ministre les choses qu'il doit savoir plutôt que celles qu'il veut entendre et c'est ce que nous continuerons de faire.



Être Activiste

By Stephen Buddo



L'Association Canadienne pour les Armes à Feu (L'ACAF) existe afin de faire la promotion, de supporter et de protéger toutes les activités sécuritaires impliquant des armes à feu, incluant le droit à l'auto-défense, la formation, la liberté et la justice pour la communauté des amateurs d'armes à feu et de préconiser des changements législatifs qui assurent que les droits de tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes de posséder et d'utiliser des armes à feu sont protégés.

Au moment où vous lisez ces lignes, le registre des armes longues n'existe plus dans le reste du Canada. Le « bain de sang » annoncé par le puissant lobby anti-armes à feu n'a pas eu lieu. N'oublions pas que le registre des armes d'épaule est né au Québec suite à l'incident de la Polytechnique en 1989 et il mourra au Québec, car le Québec, curieusement, croit toujours qu'enregistrer des objets inanimés est la solution miracle concernant le comportement humain aberrant impliquant des armes à feu. Le message reçu est que les amateurs d'armes à feu du reste du Canada méritent la confiance de la société alors que l'on doit se méfier des propriétaires d'armes à feu du Québec.

Malheureusement, les amateurs d'armes à feu ont peu ou pas d'amis ici au Québec. Tous les partis qui siègent à l'Assemblée Nationale nous sont hostiles. La plupart des médias nous « démontent ». La population, suite à des années de conditionnement médiatique jumelé à un gavage de propagande gouvernementale, nous considère comme des criminels en devenir. Même le Barreau du Québec, duquel on espère une certaine neutralité, considère que le

registre des armes d'épaule est une sois-disant « valeur Québécoise ».

Tout cela pour vous dire que les amateurs d'armes à feu au Québec ont commencé à se regrouper sous la bannière de l'ACAF afin de faire valoir leurs droits et libertés envers les divers paliers de gouvernement. Heureusement, l'ACAF est le porte-étendard de ce combat depuis sa création à la fin des années 1970, faisant pression sur les élus afin de mettre en place une législation qui nous est favorable. L'ACAF a aussi aidé financièrement des gens qui étaient accusés en cour criminelle. Nous avisons nos membres le plus rapidement possible concernant les changements législatifs. L'ACAF compte 75,000 membres et nous devons aider les 500,000 propriétaires d'armes à feu au Québec dans leur combat envers le gouvernement provincial qui sera entendu prochainement en Cour Suprême du Canada.

Vous tenez à conserver votre propriété privée (armes à feu)? Il y a quatre choses que vous devez faire afin de combattre les politiciens anti armes à feu :

Premièrement, allez voter. Nous vivons dans une démocratie. Votre droit de vote vous permet d'éjecter un(e) politicien(ne) qui ne fait pas votre affaire. Il y a 500,000 propriétaires d'armes à feu au Québec. Nous pouvons faire avancer les choses, si on vote tous « du même bord ». N'oubliez pas que si vous ne vous occupez pas de la politique, la politique va s'occuper de vous!

Deuxièmement, écrivez à votre député, que ce soit par courriel ou par courrier conventionnel. Dites-leur que vous n'êtes pas d'accord avec l'agenda anti-armes à feu de son parti et que vous allez voter pour quelqu'un d'autre.

Les politiciens calculent que si une personne leur écrit une lettre c'est que 500 autres personnes pensent la même chose. Si vous êtes membre d'un parti politique, vous devez influencer les instances du parti à implanter des politiques pro-armes à feu.

Troisièmement, emmenez quelqu'un tirer, surtout quelqu'un qui n'a jamais tiré. Il s'agit de changer des mentalités. Il est grand temps que la population comprenne que nous, les propriétaires d'armes à feu responsables et respectueux des lois, méritons la confiance de la société, tout comme les citoyens des autres provinces Canadiennes.

Finalement, encouragez les commerces qui touchent de près ou de loin les armes à feu, comme les détaillants, les armuriers et les clubs de tir. Tous ces commerçants rencontrent des embûches comme nulle part ailleurs au Canada à cause de la Sûreté du Québec, qui applique la loi à sa propre manière.

N'oubliez pas que le contrôle des armes à feu n'a rien à voir avec la sécurité publique - Kimveer Gill l'a clairement démontré lors de l'incident du collègue Dawson. L'histoire récente nous indique clairement que l'enregistrement des armes à feu n'est que le précurseur d'une confiscation éventuelle.

Avant la révolution tranquille des années 1960, l'église catholique s'immisçait dans les moindres détails de la vie quotidienne des citoyens et citoyennes du Québec. Suite à cette révolution, c'est maintenant l'état qui vient s'immiscer dans les moindres détails de votre vie. Est-ce vraiment des affaires de l'état de savoir ce que vous possédez? En 2014, il est temps de dire à l'état de se mêler de ses affaires.



Vice-President's Message

Blair Hagen

Gun Culture

It is our culture and our right

There are a few more loaded terms than this one, and it's one that the civil disarmament lobby has attempted to hijack in their efforts to de-normalize the ownership and use of guns in western democratic societies like Canada.

Often, you will hear the term "gun culture" applied to inner city criminal gang activity, the seemingly random shootings in large US cities. Canadian media dearly love to report on as if it was a portent of what could happen in Canada if we were to "loosen" our gun control laws. Too late, it's already here in cities like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, where organized gang gunplay is unabated by gun control laws to which law-abiding Canadians are routinely subjected.

We all know it. They know it too, but mainstream media's political bigotries in regards to our American cousins make it useful for some media in the cultural values war in Canada. The cultural war to establish dominance of a certain view of this nation, its laws and history.

Thankfully, even with a failing judicial system that places the rights of offenders above those of victims, it will still be decades before Canadian cities see those levels of violence. Canada does not yet have the population, demographics and cultural challenges to sustain those types of social problems and crime that the Americans have been challenged by for many decades. We're still mostly just a bunch of hard working, law-abiding folks who respect the rights and property of our neighbours. Canadians have time to change the politics of our legal system to minimize that danger, if they have the foresight to do so.

But for some social engineers, firearms are a cultural manifestation that must be controlled and progressively eliminated if Canada is to avoid US-style crime and lawlessness.

Never mind real issues of public safety, never mind decades of statistical evidence that show that both crime rates and accidents involving firearms are falling, a cultural war that has been going on largely unnoticed by law-abiding, regular Canadians for decades.

We like to think of ourselves as a reasonable and sober-minded people, and we are. Good-natured co-operativeness and problem solving are part of our nature. If there were a problem regarding the availability and ownership of arms, why would we not all pull together to solve it?

But there isn't; certainly not in regards to "easy availability" of firearms in Canada.

Canadian gun culture was formed under the umbrella of three words: rights, safety and responsibility. For most of the history of Canada those words were recognized and celebrated by most. Rights in the form of our ancient rights inherited through *British Common Law*, safety as a life-long practice and responsibility as the mantle of all who chose to lawfully bear and use arms.

Somewhere along the line, this was taken for granted or downplayed towards a co-operative spirit to address problems in Canadian society, or shunted aside to assist the law enforcement effort.

A myth was manufactured to replace the history and values of Canadians with naïve and foreign values of militant pacifism and civil disarmament, where Canadians always stood on the side of right and shed blood for it. Firearms as a tool were to be progressively eliminated from our cultural fabric. Safety was to be replaced by dialing 911, hunting was to be done with cameras and marksmanship was to be practiced with computers and video games.

You and I were bullied, cajoled and shamed into accepting this brave new world. It almost worked. Almost.

The good news is Canadians have learned from the mistakes of the past, and from the mistakes of our Commonwealth cousins who suffered much worse from confiscatory and rights-killing gun control laws. They told us by keeping their gun culture hidden and unspoken, even denying that one existed, empowered the politicians and the gun control lobbies in their countries to pursue even further punitive laws and regulations. It emboldened the civil disarmament lobbies in the UK and Australia to pursue their goals in the belief that they had destroyed any opposition to them in the public.

In Canada we were given a second chance - a *Firearms Act* and legislation that failed. A civil disarmament lobby that tied itself too closely with one political party and a movement which is no longer dominant in Canadian politics, but more importantly we stopped apologizing for lawfully owning firearms and possessing that property - a Canadian right and cultural tradition, practiced by generations of Canadians; father, grandfather, mother, aunt, cousin and now

This is why I use the term **“gun culture”** when I speak in media, the public or in any forum. **I use it in the positive sense.** We own the term, not those who would disarm us with pernicious and confiscatory legislation.

you. You may hunt with it, plink, shoot targets or just sit at home in a comfortable chair and admire the thing. It might be a Remington, Winchester, Glock, ArmaLite or even the old Cooney that was passed down to you as the next caretaker of your family history. You may have taken many a deer or bear with it, ducks by the score. Annihilated legions of pop cans or prevented very serious harm to your loved ones with it.

It is our right and our culture, one we celebrate by practicing the principles of safety and responsibility, one we can never again take for granted again, lest it be

stolen by politicians, bureaucrats and civil disarmament lobbyists.

This is why I use the term “gun culture” when I speak in media, the public or in any forum. I use it in the positive sense. We own the term, not those who would disarm us with pernicious and confiscatory legislation.

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Preserving Our Firearms Heritage

Gary K. Kangas

Taylor Sapergia, Firearms Artisan

Turning a passion into a career

Our firearms heritage is enhanced by artisans – those who create artworks in wood, metal and leather. These artworks become valued items as tools or collectables. A handcrafted firearm is a visual treasure or a precision tool to compete with or harvest game. The creators of these treasures truly have a calling. However, their careers begin with a vocation. Such is the life of Taylor Sapergia. Taylor does not view his life as being extraordinary, but extraordinary, nonetheless, it has become.

Taylor's reminiscences of his boyhood seem ordinary. His father had a workshop in the basement of the family home. Taylor's father taught his enthusiastic son the proper use of hand tools and power tools. Taylor's uncle had percussion muzzle-loading guns, a rifle and shotgun, which ignited his interest in guns and shooting. By the age 14, Taylor's passion had grown to building a percussion pistol. The budding artist could not source any parts in the nearest town to where the family lived in rural Ontario.

Taylor shares in his own words on how he began: "I made my own parts with a hacksaw and file. My dad taught me how to use his lathe. I bored a .50 calibre bore into a piece of shafting from Silverwood's Dairy, supplied by my uncle who worked there. I learned how to drill and tap, make machine screws, how to forge, harden and temper springs. I bought a piece of walnut from a hardwood supplier in town for \$3.95, enough wood to create two matching stocks. That was a hefty amount of money for a kid who received 25 cents a week for allowance. The pistol evolved and I fired it. I still have it 51 years later."

Upon completing his education, Taylor joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Following depot training, he was posted to various detachments around

British Columbia. Once, during a trip to Vancouver, Taylor purchased a flintlock Thompson Center .50-calibre Hawken rifle. The rifle would later harvest many coastal blacktail deer.

What started as a hobby soon grew into a full-time pursuit. During his service as an RCMP member, Taylor became acquainted with a man and his son-in-law who were both interested in muzzle loaders. After Taylor showed them his pistol, they both requested that he build them rifles, a Hawken-style rifle and a Kentucky long rifle.

Taylor states, "I ordered some parts from Dixie Gun Works and built a truer representation of a Hawken rifle than the commercial effort I owned. As my interest in authenticity increased, I began buying books on these interesting and beautiful old rifles. I studied them for information and inspiration."

During this period, Taylor was commissioned to build more rifles. "My rifles were becoming more believable and authentic," he states.

Around the time Taylor married his wife, Heather, and was starting a family, his calling became more intense. He juggled family responsibilities while working full time as an RCMP member and building rifles. Deciding to pursue his interest as a full-time career, Taylor left the RCMP and started up his rifle business in the laundry room of his home in Squamish, BC.

The author's association with Taylor began in 1975 after he met the master artisan at the Otter Point Rendezvous in Sooke, BC. This amazing young man's marksmanship with his own made rifle was dazzling. He called the Hawken-style rifle the "bull thrower," a .72 calibre, plains-style rifle that was exquisite in every detail and incredibly accurate. Taylor and the author have remained friends for nearly 40 years. Over this span of time, Taylor's skill, knowledge and artistry have blossomed tenfold.

Taylor says, "An employment opportunity was offered to Heather and we moved our family to Prince George in October 1977. With two infant children, I stayed home and ran my small gun-building business, taking employment with others as the need arose while Heather developed her career as a medical laboratory technologist.

"We bought our current home in 1978 and for the first time I was able to build myself a decent shop. I have continued to build muzzle loaders on commission, taking orders from folks across Canada, a few to the United States and even a couple to Europe. Building black powder guns is certainly the most satisfying and rewarding aspect of my working life, but it falls short of paying the bills."

Taylor feels fortunate in two ways. First, that his wonderful wife Heather has supported him in his need to be creative, and second, that he has been able to obtain gainful employment when necessary, working for corrections, for Don Robinson building Fraser River Hawken rifles, where he has gained a wealth of knowledge.

"Don is a dear friend, an avid collector and talented gunsmith. I learned so much working in his shop, and I think I must have restocked every known modern firearm. I consider my time with Don as a paid apprenticeship."

Taylor then taught high school periodically and worked for the Ministry of Children and Families.

In 2005, Taylor became a full-time artisan and service provider with Taylor's Edge Sharpening Service. Taylor is able to be in his workshop full-time, restoring the edges of fine cutlery and creating more historically accurate works of art.

Over the past 51 years, taking inspiration from a growing collection of fine

reference material, Taylor has created over 100 pieces of functional, historically accurate art.

In 2007, he submitted one of his pieces to the prestigious Dixon's Gun Makers Fair in Pennsylvania.

"I entered the journeyman level by passing the beginner's level and won three ribbons: a first, second and third. Also during the visit to Pennsylvania, I was privileged to meet two renowned collectors and view their collections. This exposure has made a profound impact upon me, in both creativity and motivationally. I returned to Dixon's Fair two years later, with a second rifle, this time entering the master's category, and was rewarded two ribbons for my work, a first and a second. Over the years, I have always returned to the shooting events that draw us together. Apart from my competition of shooting, in which I have always done very well, I get to see my (children) again and again. When one pours so much of one's self into a rifle, pistol or fowling piece, it is always difficult to let it go, and seeing them again and again over the years is gratifying. It is also a measure of my own evolution as an artisan."

Taylor is an inspired and dedicated craftsman who has made his mark as a winning competitor at multiple rendez-vous, the BC Summer Games and his

rifles having won international acclaim at the prestigious Dixon's Gun Makers Fair in Pennsylvania.

The awards, acclaim and attention that Taylor has garnered add a great deal of luster to Canada's firearms heritage.



The lock area of an A. Verner .50-calibre Sapergia collection.



The incised carving on the buttstock of an A. Verner-style .50-calibre Sapergia collection.

Gun Control Laws & Canadian Federalism

There is a widely held belief amongst the Canadian firearms community that firearms legislation falls strictly under federal jurisdiction and that provinces have no power to regulate firearms.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me explain.

Under the British North America Act of 1867 (the BNA Act), which is the cornerstone of our constitution, Ottawa and the provinces were each awarded certain fields of jurisdiction, though firearms are not expressly mentioned anywhere. Rather, sections 91 and 92 of the BNA Act award jurisdiction over criminal law, the armed forces and customs to Ottawa, and property and civil rights (amongst other topics) to the provinces.

Indeed, provinces do have the power to regulate certain aspects of firearms and they have certainly done so in the past, albeit to a limited extent. This, of course, does not mean that things will not change in the future.

Historically, most significant gun control legislation has indeed originated from Ottawa; the 1995 Firearms Act being the most significant such legislation in recent memory. Through its powers in the fields of customs, and most importantly criminal law, Parliament has enacted gun control measures.

In 1996, further to the enactment of the Firearms Act, Alberta challenged the federal legislation before its own provincial courts, on the basis that it infringed over the province's powers to legislate property and civil rights. More specifically, Alberta challenged the registration and licensing provisions that are at the core of the Firearms Act. The case ended up before the Supreme Court of Canada, and is known as the Reference re Firearms Act (2000) 1 S.C.R. 784.

In that reference (the name given to a case centred around a constitutional question put before the Supreme Court

of Canada,) the question was not whether firearms are a matter of exclusive federal jurisdiction, but whether the Firearms Act was valid criminal law; hence, falling under federal jurisdiction. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Attorney General of Canada. In doing so, it came to the conclusion that the "pith and substance of the Firearms Act is directed to enhancing public safety by controlling access to firearms" and that the changes introduced by the Firearms Act "represent a limited expansion of the pre-existing gun control legislation." Most of us will disagree with the latter statement, but that is the conclusion drawn by the Supreme Court and that is the state of the law in Canada at this present time.

The Supreme Court never said that gun control was a field of exclusive federal jurisdiction. On the contrary, the highest court in the land left the door wide open by noting that provinces may very well have the power to enact legislation with respect to the property and civil rights aspects of firearms. However, as the latter question was not before the Supreme Court in the context of that constitutional reference, no formal ruling was made on that point.

In point of fact, provinces have legislated in relation to firearms. In most, if not all, Canadian provinces provincial legislation (statutes or regulations) regulate the type and calibre of firearms that can be used for specific hunting applications. In Quebec, the possession and transportation of firearms is prohibited in public transit and in certain establishments, such as schools. Also, Quebec has shown its intent to create its own long gun registry, based upon the data of the defunct federal long gun registry. However, it has yet to pass legislation to accomplish that goal. If and when it does, it will be required to respect the division of powers between the federal and provincial legislature. In other words, Quebec will need to frame its legislation so that it falls within provincial powers over property and civil rights, or some other head of provincial jurisdiction. It cannot pass criminal law in disguise. It is quite possible that such eventual legislation will be challenged and will end up before the Supreme Court of Canada, as infringing on federal powers. Actually, I would be greatly surprised if it were not challenged.

About a year ago, Quebec filed a bill in the National Assembly (Bill 20) that purported to create a Quebec long gun registry. It was never debated, much less enacted. With the recent provincial election and ensuing change of government, that bill is no longer on the agenda. However, it might be revived, either in its previous iteration or under a new form. One might wonder why Quebec never pursued passing that legislation. It was certainly not because it lacked the long gun registry data, although that is what it wants the public to believe. The lack of data could have been easily obviated by providing that the legislation would only come into effect upon receipt of the underlying data, if that were ever to happen. I very much believe that Quebec did not pass Bill 20 on purpose, because it feared a constitutional challenge of its validity. The one and only version of Bill 20 that was filed before the National Assembly in February 2013 did little else than replicate the registration scheme that existed under the repealed provisions of the Firearms Act. It added provisions in relation to the disclosure of the storage location, as well as provisions for the inscription of a registration number (in addition to the serial number) on the firearm, in all likelihood by way of engraving. The only provision in Bill 20 that arguably purported to regulate trade (an aspect of property and civil rights,) as opposed to public safety, were the ones requiring an authorization of the Chief Firearms Officer, in order to transfer ownership of a non-restricted firearm.

All in all, I am far from convinced that Bill 20 would have survived a constitutional

challenge. It very much looked like criminal law, in disguise. However, a piece of legislation that would be framed differently might very well pass such a challenge and be found to be constitutionally valid provincial legislation.

All this to say that we should not only be concerned with and worry about existing federal legislation that treats us like would-be criminals, but we should also be mindful of the possibility that more provincial gun legislation might be enacted in the future, to make our lives even more complicated. Not that this will have any effect on crime, because by definition criminals do not abide by the law. Unfortunately, as the Supreme Court of Canada noted in the Reference re Firearms Act when it addressed arguments that universal registration would be costly and ineffective at preventing crime, "the efficacy of a law, or lack thereof, is not relevant to Parliament's ability to enact it ..." The same would be true of any current or future provincial firearms legislation. That is the unfortunate reality.



"All this to say that we should not only be concerned with and worry about existing federal legislation that treats us like would-be criminals, but we should also be mindful of the possibility that more provincial gun legislation might be enacted in the future, to make our lives even more complicated."

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Team NFA

Matt Neumann

The Perfect Shot

I have been a competitive shooter for the past 15 years (0.22 biathlon rifle) and I am nowhere near close to finding the solution to shooting perfection. The truth may be that it doesn't entirely exist, but every time I take a perfect bull's-eye it prompts me to want to repeat it again and again. To find the final result we must look at all of the elements we control.

Limit the variables

After taking the effort to go through all of the motions to get a perfect shot, everyone hopes to see a bull's-eye. So why let anything change that? With the right ammunition you will immediately notice a smaller variance between individual bullets, including a tighter group from a bench rest and few or no flyers. If accuracy matters to you, I would suggest testing different ammunition brands to see what works best in your gun. Typically as prices rise, so does reliability.

Also take the time to keep the barrel, chamber and action clean to avoid jamming, malfunctions and inconsistency, especially in colder weather. Why let a dirty barrel decide whether you hit or miss? I compete with a \$3,500 Anschütz with a German handmade custom stock. I typically shoot Lapua Standard Plus (\$6.50 a box) for training and Lapua Polar (\$22 a box) for competition. If we assume the rifle is zeroed and the equipment is taken care of it, is more than capable of shooting a dime-size group at 50 metres.

So what's stopping us from starting every day like this? Below are some factors that we control during the shot.

Position is crucial

To get the same shot time and time again, we need to eliminate (or at least reduce) human error.

Ask yourself, "Are any muscles altering the natural follow through of the rifle?"

If so, I promise it won't be identical every time. For me, it's a fine line be-

tween maintaining control and not gripping and flexing muscles.

Take care not to grip the pistol grip too tight. A good way to check position is a process called natural alignment. Align on target, close your eyes for about five to 10 seconds, relax, run through your position checkpoints and open your eyes. Are you aligned? If not, shift your hips and try again. Shooting shouldn't be forced, but comfortable and natural.

Breathing

Having different amounts of air in the lungs before taking each shot can influence the follow-through of the rifle, as well as throw off your timing. I breathe out approximately 50 to 60 per cent of my lung capacity before each shot. I also time the trigger squeeze with my breathing.

Sight picture

I have been told, "Just aim for the middle!" This has so much truth. I compete by regulation with peep sights and no magnification or tint. Align rear with front and front with target. No need to over think this process. Reminder: don't hold the sight picture for more than three to four seconds to maximize accuracy/consistency.

Wind

As we all know, wind can painfully influence a bullet's final destination. It's inevitable in the outdoors and we must learn to cope with it the best we can. Most bullets spiral clockwise, including my Anschütz barrel, so for horizontal wind corrections, I usually accompany it with a vertical adjustment. I typically adjust in a three-to-one ratio. To use an example, on a 50-metre range shooting 0.22, a strong breeze coming from the left will push the bullet right and slightly down. I'll make a decision and correct left three and up one. Taking the bullet's arch path into consideration, I will also adjust down for a tail wind and up with a headwind. I think wind flag interpretation is the key to understanding the appropriate correction. Go shooting on a really windy day - it will work wonders when you return to ideal shooting conditions.

Trigger pressure

I cringe when I hear the words "trigger pull," as I much prefer trigger squeeze. To me it embraces the key elements, including a gradual controlled execution as opposed to an aggressive pull. I shoot a hair trigger with 500 grams (one pound) of trigger pressure. I know exactly when 500 grams is up and when the firing pin does its job. I have to take five (accurate) shots in eight to 10 seconds in cold weather, with gloves on. It's very fine work. Consistency is the biggest part to trigger pressure, especially in the final 90 to 100 per cent stages. Attention to this is one of the easiest ways to improve dramatically starting out.

Follow through

"Watch the bullet hit the target."

Obviously once the bullet has left the muzzle, you no longer control its direction. However, that split second while the bullet is still in the barrel, you control everything. Avoid blinking, jerking or clenching up in anticipation. Expect the shot, embrace any kick, trust your position and have confidence in your shot.

Have fun and be positive

Eventually all these things will fall into place without conscious thought. It won't happen overnight, but consider these points and be patient. Choose a single aspect to focus on next time you hit the range and, of course, happy shooting.

Politics & Guns

Bruce Gold

More Guns Equals What?

The firearms debate spins around the question of causation. The anti-gunners, whose agenda seeks to severely restrict and eventually eliminate all civilian firearms ownership, base much of their schema on the implausible theory that guns cause crime and more guns in circulation among the public naturally equals more crime. The driver of this cause and effect, the causation, is a series of assumptions:

1. Most gun crimes are committed by normal, regular people who are "entrapped" into violence because a gun was available when they "acted on impulse."
2. Firearms, an inanimate object, have an incredible "symbolic power" to create and intensify violence by their mere presence. Even a picture of a gun has this magical ability. This is called the "weapons effect."
3. The absence of firearms from civil society will reduce all other forms of violence as well, because it will effectively impose a pacifist sentiment on the civil culture. This imposition of a higher morality upon the population will shift the culture towards a utopian ideal of zero violence.

The pro-gun side of the debate rests its position on the theory that more guns equals less crime. The causation for this is also a series of assumptions:

1. Most gun crimes are committed by people with a pre-disposition and long history of violence. Criminals use guns as part of a cost/benefit calculation that says it is to their advantage to do so.
2. People are not the pawns of inanimate objects. They act because they choose to do so.
3. Disarming the law-abiding changes the balance of power between them and criminals to the benefit of the criminal element in society. The idea that gun laws will prevent criminal access and use is a utopian pipe dream.
4. Pacifist non-violence places power in the hands of the violent and only protects people from those who have no intent to harm them in the first place.

To honestly debate these theories, we must recognize two very basic facts. An honest debate includes both pros and cons. A firearms debate that places all positive uses (hunting, recreational shooting, self-defense, etc.) off the table is fundamentally dishonest. Separating the firearms debate from the issue of self-defense is also deeply dishonest because it falsely assumes that this inanimate object can only be used for harm and never for good. If someone wishes to promote a full-bore pacifist argument that all violence is bad, irrespective of need or outcome, let them be honest about it up front, not bury it in a maneuver to censor beneficial uses.

If we intend to look at our assumptions about how the world works, we can see an immediate difficulty. If we use single incidents, no matter how rare they may, be as "proof," than all these conflicting assumptions can be proven because one can always find one example.

To understand the general case of how the world usually works, it is imperative to consult statistics regarding what has happened in real-world applications of the theory. Fortunately, we have as strong examples two contemporary jurisdictions that have chosen to follow completely different policies in regards to gun control legislation: the United Kingdom and the United States.

While the UK has banned all types of firearms outside of shotguns and .22-calibre rifles and severely restricted the right of self-defense, the US has seen an expansion of gun ownership and greatly expanded the right to self-defense with shall-issue open and concealed carry laws.

We can start our discussion by noting that in the UK, US, as well as in Canada, a pattern has emerged beginning with mass shootings followed by public alarm and outrage, which ultimately resulted in expanded restrictions on the rights of law-abiding firearms owners. While anti-gunners view this as a beneficial move to increase public safety, pro-gunners will quickly note that almost all of these mass shootings have taken place in gun-free zones. The pro-gun camp likes to further point out the failure of the disarmed equals safe theory, advocating instead for fewer barriers for the law-abiding to have access to the means of self-defense - not more.

After all, if a total, 100 per cent, absolute, heavily enforced, severely penalized, prohibition of all guns of any kind did not work, how exactly would the antis' agenda produce the claimed results?

United Kingdom

The UK spent decades pursuing a policy of civil disarmament and suppression of the right to self-defense. By 1969, a policy of denying all firearms licenses for self-defense had been adopted. Safe storage requirements were also implemented to prevent access to the means of self-defense. After the Dunblane Massacre in 1998, all handguns were banned, confiscated and destroyed. In practice these changes virtually destroyed the gun culture of lawful use and enjoyment, an intended outcome.

The right to self-defense is now so diminished that even aiding a crime victim is legally hazardous. The UK instructs any citizen under violent attack to shout "call the police," lest a cry for "help" cause a bystander to intervene. The British now have a legal "duty of care" to burglars and can be sued for failing to provide adequate and effective care. In 2006, it became official pol-

icity to give a mere warning to first-time burglars, who were then let go without arrest.

The result, within two years of the lifesaving handgun ban, handgun-related crime had soared 40 per cent. The Home Office now admits that violent crime in the UK has risen to South African levels and the risks of a person being assaulted are significantly higher than in the US. The UK has become the most violent, crime-ridden nation in Europe. Britain's politicized police now admit to routinely falsifying crime statistics to conceal the true extent of the government's failure.

(The one crime statistic where the UK does better than the US is the homicide rate. Unfortunately, this success is tied to how statistics are gathered. The US rate is based on an initial report of a homicide. The UK rate is based on the final legal resolution of the case, so unsolved murders, or those reduced to a lesser offence, are not counted.)

United States

The US has followed a policy agenda opposite to the UK's. Despite many attempts and some successes by the anti-gunners, the general trend has been towards more guns and improved rights to self-defense.

Over the past three decades, Americans have massively increased the number of guns in circulation. Between 1986 and 2011, the number of guns in the US increased by an amazing 144,081,284 (manufactured plus imports, minus exports; ATF official data.) Not surprisingly, there has also been a steady increase in states with shall-issue concealed carry laws that legally allow a citizen to carry a concealed firearm for self-defense. The "shall issue" is vital because it mandates that the authorities must issue a license, providing there is no legal barrier such as a felony or history of mental health issues. This results in a dramatic increase in permits over a "may issue" jurisdiction (such as Canada) where the authorities can deny a permit for any reason or no reason at all.

Florida started the modern trend to "shall issue" in 1987, and the move was received with a wave of dismay and pre-

dictions of rampant carnage. Since then, the Sunshine State has issued 2,031,106 licenses. Overall, the number of license holders in the US is estimated at around eight million. A study of Texas license holders found that they were 13 times less likely commit a crime than the general population. There are now some 42 shall-issue states. These changes were accompanied by a massive decrease in crime. In 1986, there were 1,489,169 violent crimes with 20,613 murders (includes manslaughter.) In 2011, there were 1,206,031 violent crimes and 14,661 murders. (With a population increase of 70 million, Justice Department statistics.)

Conclusion

In the UK, severe restrictions on self-defense and firearms have utterly failed to reduce crime. These restrictions have made the law-abiding more vulnerable and effectively supported and encouraged violence criminals. The government's guarantee of unarmed, defenseless victims and the savage punishment of any self-defense attempt have not led to the promised low-violence utopia.

In the US, a dramatic increase in gun ownership and laws supporting self-defense have led to dramatically lowered crime rates.

Clearly, one theory and its assumptions have been proven correct in a major, real world demonstration. The other theory and assumptions, also in a decade's long, real world demonstration, has proven dangerously wrong.

It's time for an honest gun policy debate in Canada. It is time and past time for a debate where one side of the gun equation is not censored out, a debate where criminal violence is on the table but self-defense is pre-emptively placed off limits.

It's time for an honest gun policy debate in Canada. It is time and past time for a debate where one side of the gun equation is not censored out, a debate where criminal violence is on the table but self-defense is pre-emptively placed off limits.

HUNTING ON THE CHEAP

By Bob Shell





Blaze orange clothing and an inexpensive but reliable gun can be the best investments you'll make.

For hunters on a budget, it is often a daunting task to find an affordable rifle. With gas, food and other necessities of life going up, who can afford a new rifle? Luckily, there are a couple of choices out there for those wishing to buy one good hunting rifle.

Many new rifles can cost up to \$1,100 or even more, which is beyond what many first-time or low-budget hunters can afford. You may be looking to buy a rifle for a youngster, but are hesitant about spending a lot of money because he or she might not stay interested in the sport.

Yes, the expensive rifle is pretty and accurate, but pretty has never killed the first animal. So where does one go for a reliable and rugged rifle? You can try to buy a used gun, but that might be a lost cause, particularly if you don't know the seller or what to look for or why he is even selling it in the first place. This, among other questions, needs answering. If you know what you are doing, you may fair out okay. However, for someone who wants a new rifle, there are a couple of options.

The first option is to buy a single-shot rifle made from Harrington and Richardson. They are plain, no-nonsense rifles that shoot well and are ex-

tremely accurate. The models come in a variety of calibres and list for under \$300. I own a couple and like them very much. The accuracy of this rifle is more than adequate for any range in which you are likely to shoot.

If you prefer a bolt-action rifle, you are in luck. There are several out there that run in the price range of \$300 to \$400. Occasionally, you can get a package deal that includes a scope to sweeten the pot.

You may be wondering just how effective these guns are, considering some can be purchased for a paltry \$300. In a word - very. I have shot the Marlin XL7 and the Weatherby Vanguard. Both of these rifles do the job they were intended to do.

The Marlin runs about \$300, while the Vanguard goes for \$399. Both come in good hunting calibres such as the .270 and .30-06. These models, as well as the TC Venture, are all very accurate rifles. I have shot all three and they are just as effective as rifles that cost considerably more.

The Vanguard also comes in some magnum calibres, but we will avoid them as a cost saver. Magnums are not necessary for the game animals discussed in this article.

Ruger has come out with their version of a low-cost rifle, known as the

American. I own one in .30-06 and let me tell you, it shoots!

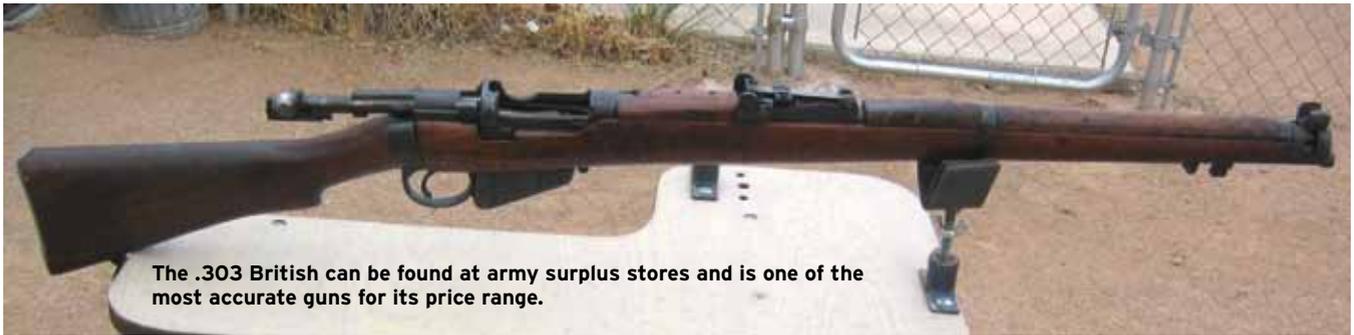
Remington's newest offering, the Model 783, is also a good performer and should be considered. Both the Remington and Ruger are in the \$300 price range, making them affordable.

If you prefer lever-action rifles, luck is with you. Mossberg and Marlin make them in various hunting chambering, from the .30-30 to the .45-70. They are accurate and relatively inexpensive. For someone watching his dollars, they would make a good choice. For the budget-conscious hunter, the selection is outstanding.

Just take a little time to shop and you won't be disappointed. These low-dollar rifles are reliable, strong and safe. In the unlikely event of a case rupture, they possess good gas venting systems for a shooter's protection. Like many products, shopping around will put you behind the one that suits your needs. The prospective buyer needs to feel comfortable with and trust his rifle.

There are others, but I have worked with these aforementioned guns and am confident in recommending them.

As for a scope, if you shop around you can get a good one without going broke. Get the most effective one you can afford. If you are not going to take



The .303 British can be found at army surplus stores and is one of the most accurate guns for its price range.



If you have a larger calibre rifle, such as a 45-70, you should give serious consideration to cast bullets.

long shots, a fixed power of around 4X would be less expensive and can handle shots out to 200 yards or more, depending on your skill.

While most game is shot within 200 yards, many are shot at lesser distances. If you stay in the woods, a 100-yard shot is a long one.

There are many scopes on the market from the low-dollar models to some that go into the four figures.

I haven't tried all of them, but one company that produces nice scopes at reasonable prices is Hawke from Great Britain. Other good scopes include the Weavers and Bushnell.

There are many good brands, some that I have used such as the Alpen, Leupold and Trijicon, as well as others, but some of them are not cheap. As stated earlier, simply buy the best scope that you can afford. A poorly made scope can and will ruin a hunt by fogging up or losing its zero. Make sure the mounts are up to the job and they don't have to be pricey. It is important to pay attention to these details so as not to spoil a hunt. Nothing is a bargain if it breaks during a hunting trip.

There are several capable hunting rounds and if you already have the rifle, you can get or reload the ammunition at a reasonable cost. Another option is to

purchase some of the military surplus rifles currently available, which have the power and accuracy provided they are well maintained.

Again, if the ammunition is available, use it. One of the best types in Canada is the .303 British. These rifles are fairly common and inexpensive. As well, the ammunition should be available. It has the power and accuracy to hunt most large game in North America. I have shot a number of surplus arms and the .303 British is one of the most accurate. Surplus Mausers are common and are chambered for good rounds with ammunition available.

When choosing a calibre, select a non-magnum and something common such as the .30-06, .308 or .270. All three are very common and will take care of the hunting that you will be doing. A .338 magnum is nice, but it's hardly necessary for deer. Besides, the ammunition costs more than standard chamberings.

For people living in areas inhabited by large bears, a good, low-dollar rifle to use is the .338 Win Mag. I would go with that calibre because it has the horsepower for any bear situation, and since it has been around for over 50 years ammunition should be available and fairly reasonable in cost. Exotic and

very large calibres are both unnecessary and expensive.

Other guns are widely available and will be cheaper to buy though not as cheap as the ones mentioned.

As with everything else in recent years, ammunition prices have skyrocketed so grab your belt when you shop for rounds. With the .30-06 and .308, you might be able to buy some military ammunition to practice with. Try Shotgun News or Cheaper Than Dirt for some great buys. While good for practice, military ammunition is not suitable for hunting. That being said, it can be used for practice from various hunting positions.

Military bullets don't expand nor readily bring down a big game animal. Some states prohibit it for hunting, and with good reason. The other downside is the possibility that it could be corrosive, so clean your gun accordingly. Occasionally, you might be able to buy some at a gun show for a reasonable price. The tricky thing is finding good ammunition at an affordable price and having a reliable source, as well. Another thought is the military ammunition will almost certainly hit to a different point of impact to your hunting rounds, so a scope adjustment will be in order. That is true with most rifles. Different loads seldom hit to the same point of impact. However, factory

ammunition is a very expensive proposition unless you are King Midas.

What do you do, as you know that you need to practice and sight in your rifle? If you buy factory ammunition, stick to the basic ammunition containing the cup-and-core bullets. They have been in use for many years and continue to produce good results in the field. Most ammunition makers offer this type of ammunition and you would do well to use it.

The best and most practical way to obtain good ammunition is to reload your own. Contrary to popular rumors, it is not dangerous so long as you use a little common sense. The only downside to reloading is the initial cost of getting started. Additionally, if you don't pay attention to details, reloading might not be for you. The little details make the difference between ammunition that works and ammunition that doesn't. The initial investment for quality equipment is in the neighborhood of \$400.

Items that are not of quality make are not a bargain at any price. You do need some equipment, such as a press, scales, dies and a powder measure. Other smaller tools and at least one good reloading manual are necessary items to get you started.

Before beginning, ensure that you read up extensively on the subject. You might know someone who does it, which will put you up a step. Maybe they will let you use their equipment to see how it's done. You might be able to buy some used equipment at a gun show, but be careful that you don't get obsolete stuff for which you can't buy spare parts.

You will need to buy bullets, cases, primers and powder. There are various

catalogs, such as Midway, Huntington and Graff and Sons to shop in. To save money, buy in the largest quantities you can afford. If you have a buddy or two, maybe you can all get together and buy your items. As for bullets, all you need is the cup-and-core variety.

There are many fancy bullets on the market, but for deer-size animals they are not necessary. Most of the established ammunition companies, many of which have been in production for years and have a good track record, produce common cup-and-core bullets.

Some of the fancy slugs can cost \$2 apiece, which will jack up the cost tremendously and are not necessary. In quantity, you can buy cup-and-core bullets for less than \$0.50 each by doing some shopping.

Cases can be loaded several times, unless you overload them. If you buy the powder in eight-pound kegs and primers by the sleeve (5,000) you will save some bucks. If you can't swing a sleeve of primers, buy them by the thousand, which will save you some money versus a pack of 100. Some companies, such as Remington and Winchester, offer bullets in bulk and they are good buys. They are the regular cup-and-core bullets and they will kill any deer that ever walked, given good shot placement.

If you feel that you need more penetration, buy a heavier bullet and that should do the trick. There is no need to buy exotic bullets. Once you get going, your ammunition costs will go down to a fraction of factory fodder, which will allow you to practice more and that is always a good thing. Another upside about reloading is the satisfaction of

making your own ammunition and harvesting a deer or other animal.

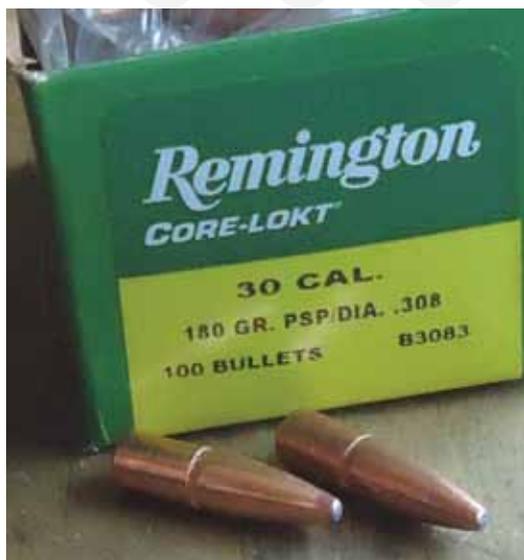
Another advantage to reloading is you can produce reduced recoil loads. You can take a .30-06 or .308 and load .30-30 bullets in them to the same ballistics as a .30-30 and they will work well. There are some factory-reduced recoil loads, but they cost as much as the regular rounds. When you have a good load worked up, buy a quantity of the components so you have a supply over a period of time. Due to various events, it can be difficult to get certain supplies and if you have to change brands there is a possibility that you have to start overdeveloping a load. Besides being annoying, it adds to your cost.

If you have a larger calibre rifle, such as a 45-70, you should give serious consideration to cast bullets. They are effective and if you cast your own they will cost next to nothing. Cast bullets can be used down to about .30-calibre and be effective on deer, but you might have to work with it more than a jacketed load.

Since we are trying to save money, we will stick mostly with deer. They are the most common large game animal hunted and most provinces have public lands available at no cost.

With this thought in mind, we will stick with public or private land if you obtain permission to hunt there. Always be sure to obtain permission to avoid a costly mistake. Some provinces might require written permission from a land owner prior to hunting there, so check out the laws to avoid a fine.

If you are going on an unguided hunt, you need to scout around the area prior to the hunting season. Spend as much time as possible looking for trails and rubs,



LEFT: Core-Lokt bullets have worked well for many years. **RIGHT:** Ammunition for the .30-06 might be available at army surplus stores, as well. With skyrocketing bullet prices, be sure to shop around.

plus any other signs that may abound out there. If you are into tree stands, take a portable and determine ahead of time which tree or trees you are going to use. Actually climb the tree to see the view you will have during the season.

Always have more than one tree - if you are on public land, another hunter might beat you to your selected stand. Always have a plan B or even C when hunting on public land, that way you will have a place to go. To be successful, you need to plan on putting some time into this and plan on some walking.

If you can walk that extra mile into the isolated areas your chances of success will increase. Be sure to have an exit strategy in case you are successful. If you shoot a deer and can't get it out due to lack of planning, you haven't accomplished anything. A little thought plus some gear to help with that will go a long way. Having a companion is always a good idea in case something happens or you have to drag out a trophy. Like every other aspect of the hunt, you don't need to spend a lot of money for that gear.

I also would invest in some blaze or-

ange clothing, even if it isn't required by law. That might be the best investment you will make.

Keeping these thoughts in mind will make your hunt an enjoyable and affordable experience. In the last few years, pigs have been multiplying and spreading out, which might be a good opportunity for an inexpensive hunt. They are a major nuisance in some areas, as they destroy crops and spread diseases. Another upside is pigs are clever and fast. They will present a worthwhile challenge to any hunter. A decent-calibre rifle with a heavier cup-and-core bullet will do the job.

If you hunt in an area that requires a guided hunt, it will cost more but it will enhance your chances of success, especially in an area that you are not familiar with. Some areas and species require a guide service either by law or common sense. To cut cost you might have the guide work with more than one hunter at a time. While cutting on cost, success rates may drop somewhat. There are some options, such as a semi-guided hunt, which may work out for an experienced hunter who knows how to take care of themselves.

If you are looking for a guide service, pick up a couple of hunting magazines and shop around. There are many services that offer hunting and most of them are good, however, there are a few bad apples so careful shopping is beneficial. You can ask questions and expect good answers. If they are not responsive, go elsewhere.

References are another way to determine if this is the business you want to hunt with. You should spend some serious time checking them out to avoid the headache of paying for a bad hunt. When you are satisfied, you should know all of the costs, including licenses and travel, in addition to everything else. Be sure to have a good idea as to what to expect in regards to weather and shooting conditions. You should let the outfitter know your physical condition and any special dietary needs if applicable. If possible, take an extra firearm in case your first one breaks. It happens. The last thing you want on a hunt is a surprise. Everything should be understood up front in order to have an enjoyable and productive hunt. ●



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For me, the Remington 870 shotgun invokes fond memories from my youth. As well, I am fascinated by the rich history Remington has played in manufacturing quality firearms for sportsmen, law enforcement agencies and armed forces around the world.

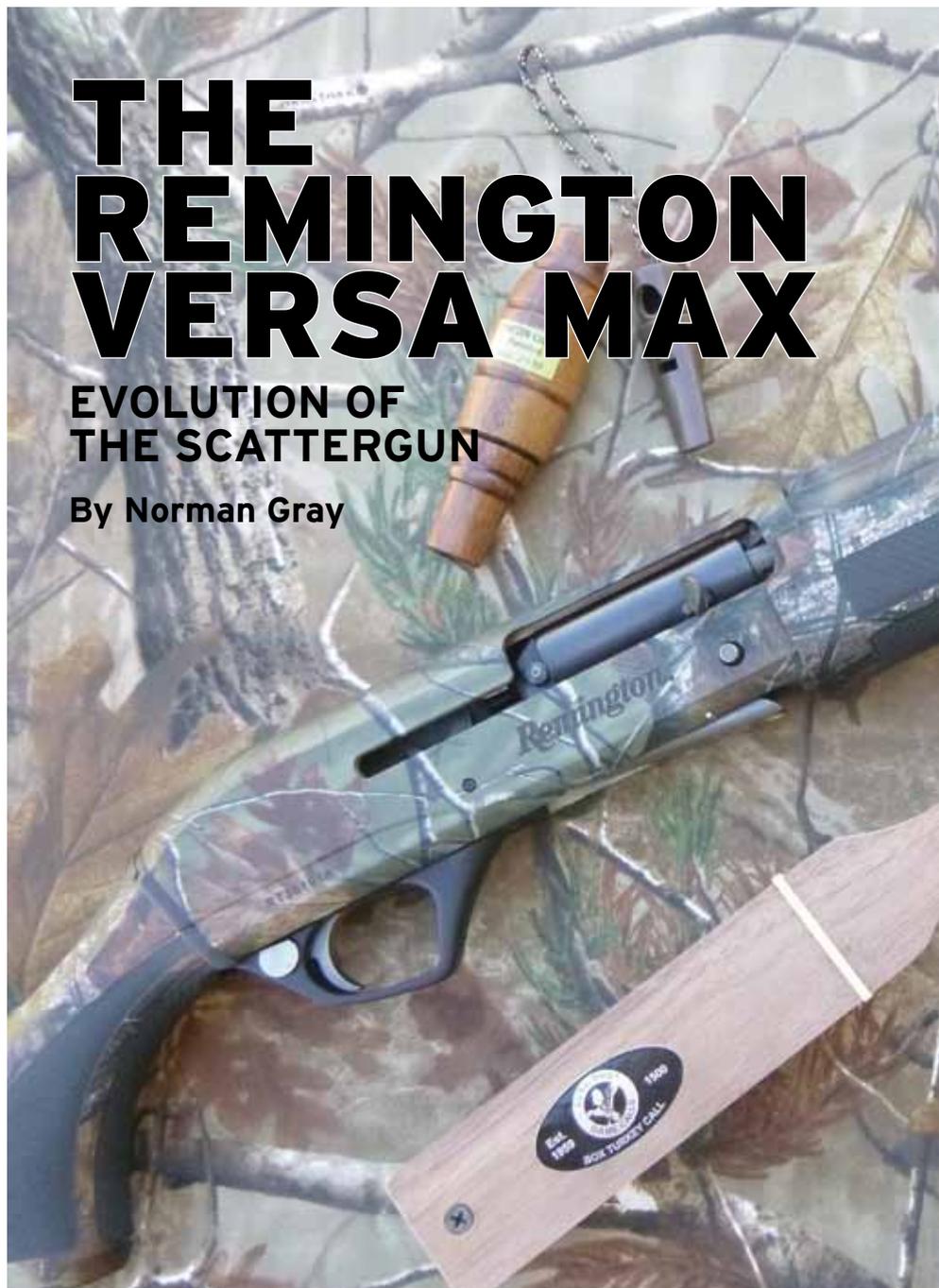
If you ask most any sportsman what Remington is best known for producing, more than likely his response will be the Remington 870 shotgun and 700 Series rifle. Remington firearms can be found in homes, police cruisers and military armories, a solid testament to their 190-plus years of firearms design and manufacturing. Brand-loyal owners will enjoy the ammunition Remington manufactures in their favourite firearms for hunting and target practice. And while Remington is based in the US, their products are shipped to over 55 countries.

Two particular Remington models have achieved a virtual cult-like status among owners. The first is the well-known Remington 870 pump-action shotgun, which has faithfully served on the front lines in the military and in law enforcement communities for years. It has been used to hunt afield for nearly a half century and more than 10 million have been manufactured.

The 700 Series rifle, designed in 1962, has seen more than five million rifles roll off the assembly line, in 40-plus calibres and over 900 SKUs. And while there are other successful Remingtons on the market, you must agree their lineage is well-founded and deserved, but, as the saying goes, time marches on.

Remington engineers are moving rapidly into the next century, with new innovations in firearms manufacturing and materials and the Remington Versa Max is that forward thinking.

The heart of the Remington Versa Max is its gas system. The VersaPort gas pistons and seven gas ports self-regulate based on the length of the shell. A short shell allows the most holes to be exposed, which enables more gas to cycle the action. When using three-and-a-half-inch magnums, all but one hole is covered because the load is powerful enough to easily cycle the action. The gas system allows the shooter to fire any type of two-and-three-quarter-inch to three-and-a-half-inch shot shell and the end result is a flawless operation. This, in turn, creates a buffer effect that reduces the felt recoil, down to that of a 20 gauge in some cases. Additionally, it is self-cleaning, which gives you less down time, wear and tear and fewer parts. What does the VersaPort do for



THE REMINGTON VERSA MAX

EVOLUTION OF THE SCATTERGUN

By Norman Gray

you? More time hunting, less time worrying about your shotgun.

Remington's newest semi-automatic shotgun offers the sportsman a dependable shotgun for all hunting and sporting uses. The Versa Max comes to you in Remington's green hard case, which protects your Versa Max while in the field and holds your owner's manual and accessories. The case includes four Wingmaster HD (High Density) Remington choke tubes in Flooded Timber (improved) Over Decoys (modified) Pass Shooting (full) and Turkey/Predator (extra full.) Also included is a choke tube wrench, which accommodates a three-eighths ratchet drive, very handy should

you need to break loose a stuck choke tube. Also, a stylish trigger lock that covers the entire trigger, complete with two keys. It also comes with a three-sixteenths Allen wrench for the cylinder plugs so you can remove the gas pistons and stock, as well as a magazine plug, which reduces the 3+1 (two-and-three-quarter inches and three inches) to 2+1 (three-and-a-half inches.)

The HI-VIZ Sight key slides between the first and second ring under the light pipe sight, which allows you to remove it and change the colour to personalize the shotgun to your taste. It comes with a green sight pipe installed (of course) and you get a white and red sight pipe



At roughly 8.2 pounds, the well-balanced Versa Max is easy to handle, shoulder and acquire targets with the factory fibre optics. I have always liked the switch from the standard bead sight to fibre optics for clarity and their natural radiance in the field.

The Versa Max utilizes a synthetic stock and forend with grip panels, strategically placed to aid in a firm hold in all weather conditions.

The receiver is drilled and tapped with four screws for installing a Weaver style or Picatinny rail to employ your favourite sights.

The trigger guard is large enough to easily deal with gloved hands and the safety is enlarged to transition from safe to fire by feel. There are also redundant safety measures built into the Versa Max that require no input from the user, as long as the shotgun is in good working order.

The trigger broke between seven and eight pounds and gives a firm but smooth release. Directly beside the trigger guard is the cartridge release. When activated, it will release a shell from the magazine without firing the gun or allow you to lock the bolt open manually. You may also pull the bolt handle back and eject the unfired shell from the chamber and replace it with another type. Simply drop in the new shell, push the bolt release and load the shell into the chamber. This is a useful feature if you are hunting in multiple seasons for different game that require distinct shot sizes or the use of slugs. The bolt release is located by the bolt handle. Pushing it will release the bolt from its locked-open position.

Ahead of the foregrip is the magazine cap, which has a sling swivel to match the one located on the stock. Turning it counter-clockwise will allow you to remove the magazine spring retainer and plug (the device which limits the amount of shells the shotgun magazine can hold.) Simply push down half an inch and turn clockwise to remove it. Exercise caution as the spring is under tension. The amount of field stripping you do is in accordance with your skill and confidence with firearms. The simplest method is the easiest - just remove and clean the barrel. If you choose to go further, all the advanced procedures for additional disassembly are covered in the supplied operator's manual. I will go over the basic field stripping, starting with placing the shotgun on safe and unloading all ammunition from the magazine and chamber and standing it upright on the recoil pad.

as well. Three spacers to change the length of pull of your stock from 14-and-a-quarter to 15-and-a-quarter inches and three sets of screws that measure one-and-three-quarter inches, two inches and two-and-a-quarter inches so you have the correct length screw for the LOP spacer used. Two stock cast plates adjust the heel drop and cast to fit your shooting style. Heel drop can be adjusted from two to two-and-a-half inches and cast adjustment can be made either left or right a quarter of an inch.

The Realtree HD AP Camo pattern was applied spot on with no visible wrinkles, as one would expect from Remington, and the fit and finish on all the parts

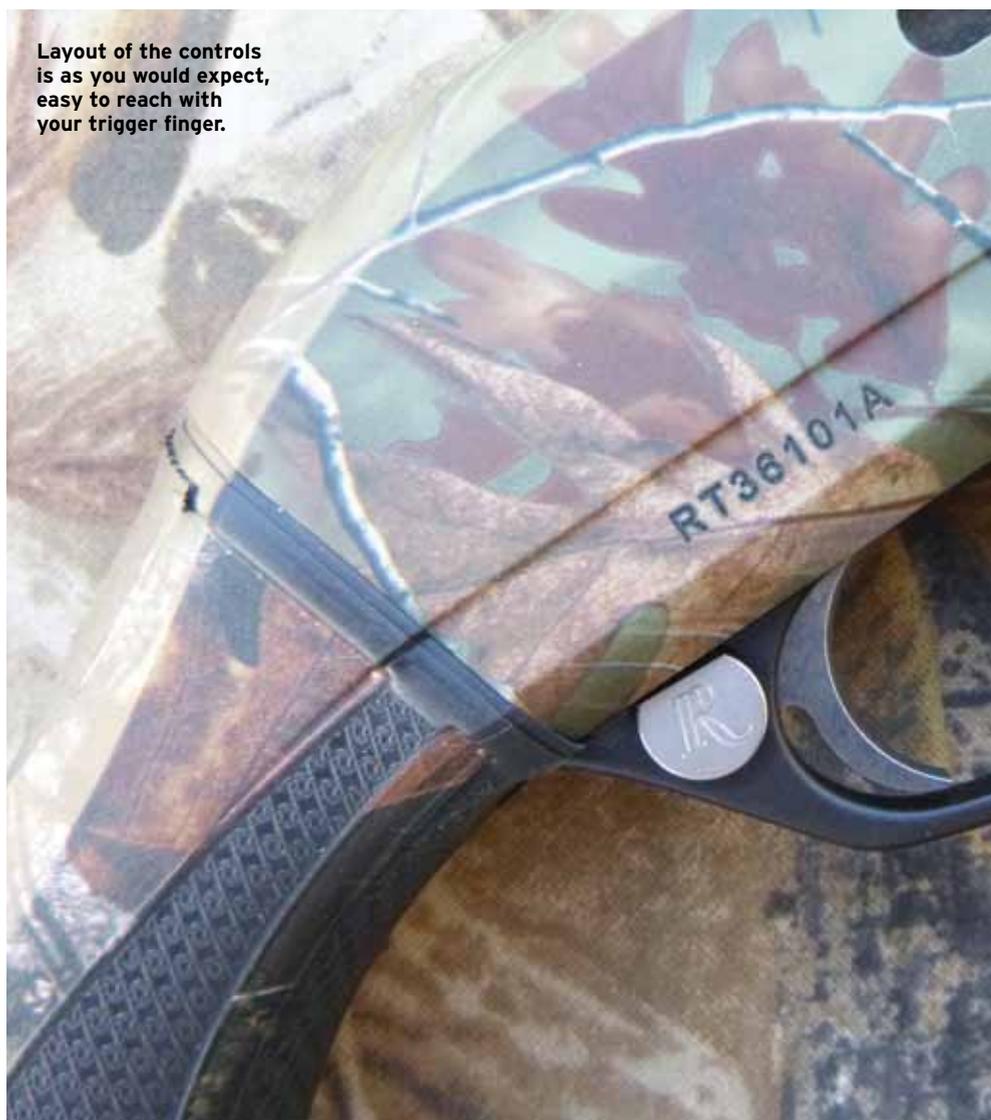
was tight, even after shooting over 500 shells from two-and-three-quarter-inch field loads to three-and-a-half-inch turkey loads.

As a general rule, I don't clean my test guns until I'm finished testing, to see if I experience any firearm-related stoppages. In this case, I did not. The four choke tubes screwed in and out very easily, even after shooting many rounds and only using the supplied choke tube wrench or by hand. The barrel's vented rib has a small bead used for aligning on the sight pipe for accurate shots. I like this feature on shotguns and have personally found it helps my accuracy with birds of all types, including the clay kind.

The bolt should be in the locked-back position after unloading. Detach the magazine cap. Next, remove the foregrip by moving it upward and off, then remove the barrel by pulling it upwards. Then take out the gas plugs and pistons using the supplied Allen wrench. This allows you to clean the Versa Max, but if a more thorough cleaning is desired you may remove the bolt handle and bolt and disassemble it, along with disconnecting the trigger assembly. No further disassembly is authorized beyond this point, except by the factory or authorized repair facility.

Shooting the Versa Max is fun, and with field loads recoil is soft and easy for anyone to handle. Shooting a round of sporting clays with a group of friends sold the Versa Max on my friend's younger son, who shot an improved score with the firearm than he did with his own shotgun. Did I mention he fell in love with it and wanted his dad to buy him one of his own? I also wanted to use a revolutionary optical sight a good friend recommended to me that's fairly new to the market. Red Ring is an optical sight designed especially for shotguns and is installed on any shotgun rib that measures between five and 11-and-a-half millimetres. Best of all, when you install it there is no calibration or sighting in. Just go out and shoot, it's that simple.

What the Red Wing sight does do is help you become a better shooter by eliminating some of the basic problems associated with shotgunning. The sight is parallax free (parallax means the difference between the view of an object as seen through the picture-taking lens of a camera and the view as seen through a separate viewfinder.) This sight automatically adjusts the intensity of the ring according to the available light, which is known as spot-metering. It uses a built-in range finder to let you know if you should take the shot, thus helping you take more game or hit more



Layout of the controls is as you would expect, easy to reach with your trigger finger.

clays. The sight sits low on the rib and adds very little weight, so balance is not affected, and if it becomes dirty in the field or range it can be washed off with fresh water.

The sight comes ready to install out of the box, complete with all the mounting hardware including four spacers, two clamps and one Allen wrench. It took me all of five minutes to install, as

I had to change clamps and they recommend re-tightening the clamps after about 25 rounds, so you don't donate it to someone else shooting after you. Turning the sight off and on is as simple as two buttons and after registration you can USB interface with your PC for more advanced settings. Even the battery is easy to change and MSRP is \$899 for the sight.

Ammunition brand	Gauge	Length (inches)	Velocity	Ounce shot	Shot	Hits
Remington Nitro Turkey	12	3	1,210	1 7/8	5	5
Hornady Heavy Mag Turkey	12	3	1,300	1 1/2	5	7
Federal Premium Turkey	12	3	1,300	1 3/4	5	1
Winchester Supreme Turkey	12	3	1,300	1 3/4	5	0
Hevi-Shot Magnum Blend	12	3 1/2	1,200	2 1/4	5, 6, 7	21
Kent Ultimate Diamond Shot	12	3 1/2	1,200	2 1/4	5	8
Remington Nitro Turkey	12	3 1/2	1,300	2	5	11

All factory turkey loads were fired from the Remington Versa Max with the Wingmaster HD extra full turkey choke at 30 yards. Number 5 shot was used to test consistency among all the loads for purposes of pattern testing. All factory ammunition was fired from a hunting position and test results reflect this Versa Max. Other Versa Max shotguns will pattern differently, so you must conduct your own pattern testing before hunting.



Model: Versa Max Realtree
Order number: 81054
Status: Available
Gauge: 12
Capacity: 3+1 (two-and-three-quarter inches and three inches) to 2+1 (three-and-a-half inches)
Barrel length: 26 inches
Chokes: 4 Wingmaster HD (High Density)
Chamber: Three-and-a-half-inch 12 gauge
Extractor/ejector: Spring-loaded ejector
Overall length: 47 15/16
Weight unloaded: 8.2 pounds
Weight with ammo: About 8.6 pounds
Stock: Black rubber overmolded grip panels (stock and forend)
Drop at comb: One-and-a-half inches (adjustable)
Drop at heel: Two-and-seven-sixteenths inches (adjustable)
Length of pull (LOP): 14-and-a-quarter inches (adjustable)
Action: Auto-loading
Barrel type: 4140 hammer-forged steel with nickel-plated bore
Receiver finish: Realtree AP-HD Camo mil spec hard anodized (MIL-A-8625F)
Front sights: HI-VIZ interchangeable
Rib: Tapered target style (taper 10 millimetres to seven millimetres)
Warranty: The Versa Max two-year warranty platinum service plan
Remington HQ: Remington Arms Co., LLC 870 Remington Drive P.O. Box 700 Madison, NC 27025-0700
Canadian consumer services/parts and service: 1-866-662-4869
Phone: 1-800-243-9700
Fax: 1-336-548-7801
E-mail: info@remington.com

From mild to wild, Remington has seven models of the Versa Max that will fit your style, starting with the Realtree HD AP Camo, Waterfowl, Synthetic, Sportsman, Tactical and the Zombie Gargoyle Green or Zombie Pink Explosion, the last two of which are based on the tactical model. The synthetic model is a universal black Versa Max, while the Sportsman offers the consumer a cheaper alternative, thus eliminating or changing six features, making its MSRP \$1,025.

Then into the Tactical Versa Max with its high performance features like a Picatinny rail, forward barrel-clamp side rails and an extended 8+1 magazine and IC and Tactical Extended Choke Tube. For the coming zombie apocalypse, Remington gives you your choice of green or pink in the Tactical model for laying waste to any walking dead that ventures into range.

Now don't let the Realtree HD pattern fool you, because the Remington Versa Max can wear many hats. I

haven't encountered a great number of people who are wealthy enough to buy a different shotgun for each season. Some appropriate camouflage tape, duck or goose loads and the changing of a choke tube and you're ready for the marshes because the Realtree pattern is only the outside of the shotgun. But if you are a die-hard duck, goose or turkey hunter, then pick the shotgun or pattern that suits your passion.

If you plan on hunting many different types of game, a black Versa Max may be in order, but however you look at it you will be using one of Remington's best built shotguns that will give you many years of service and will most certainly be the envy of your son or daughter.

I would highly recommend the Remington Versa Max to anyone who enjoys a quality auto-loading shotgun. If I had one in my youth, there would be a lot less birds in this world. The Versa Max proves that no matter how far into the future we get, advancements in materials and technology can teach an old dog new tricks and shotgun technology has advanced to great heights.

The next time you're out and about at your local gun shop, take a look at the Remington Versa Max and see if it's right for you. Or maybe you know someone that owns one and they will let you hunt with it. Either way, you will not come home without birds because the shotgun failed to uphold its end of the deal.

SOURCES

Remington: Versa Max HD AP Camo
Red Ring: Shotgun Sighting System
Sure Shot Game Calls: 1500 Box Turkey Call
Remington Nitro Turkey
Hornady Heavy Magnum Turkey
Winchester Supreme HV Turkey
Federal Premium Turkey Loads
HEVI-SHOT Magnum Blend
Kent Ultimate Diamond Shot

www.remington.com
www.redringsight.com
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www.hevishot.com
www.kentgamebore.com

Point Blank

Chris McGarry

Winning The Culture War A Significant Step To Regaining Ancient Freedoms

For any average, taxpaying citizen who has at least an inkling of common sense, it isn't out of the realm of possibility to consider just how a simple, though indispensable, piece of wood and steel - one which has had a significant stake in forging many great nations, including Canada - has become the object of deep prejudicial scorn, as well as outright hatred and revulsion. Yes folks, I'm referring to the firearm, a practical tool no more lethal than your garden variety pitchfork, hammer, chainsaw or jerry can of gasoline. So why, then, has this quiet, innocuous implement, which left by itself is incapable of committing horrendous acts of mayhem, received such a heaping dose of bad press over the past three or four decades?

Whatever happened to the days when kids could just be kids without Soviet-style political correctness throwing a wrench into their fun?

An ancient adage of history proclaims that human beings, out of a sheer will to survive, become quite adept with whatever tools (and I use the term literally) are readily available in their respective environments, whether they be guns, bows and arrows or spears. A few centuries ago, long before the modern, technologically advanced society we enjoy today, our ancestors fled the hardship and rigid class systems of Europe for promise of riches and opportunities in the New World.

Frequently arriving with little more than the clothes on their backs, these rugged, enterprising individuals braved harsh winters and scorching summers in a still fairly lawless land and the ability to use a firearm to hunt for food or for protection against wild animals quite often meant the difference between life and death. In many areas of the US and Canada,

this way of life - partially, at least - lasted well into the 20th century. In those times, when a shooting tragedy did occur, the general public didn't scream for tighter gun laws. The tool, as we've been discussing, was still used by a majority of the population.

With such a culture of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility having been commonplace for what seems like forever, it begs the gigantic question: what massive, catastrophic event caused a vicious backlash against gun ownership in modern western society? This counterattack, for want of a better word, didn't swoop in like a thief in the night, but rather infiltrated the populace incrementally. But there are definitely two major factors at play here, both of which rode on the heels of the post-Second World War world: television and mass migration to urban areas. While their descendants had been entertained by exciting works of fiction or possibly radio shows, the Baby Boomers were the first generation to be raised watching shoot 'em up westerns and police dramas that featured a plethora of gunplay. As generations of Canadians settled into urban centres, people increasingly became disengaged from our nation's colonial, rural past. As if change had come through a sudden 180-degree turn, the minds of many ordinary, everyday citizens became programmed to believe that the only purpose of guns is to kill and injure people.

Fostered by a predominantly leftist media and a movie industry that promotes gun violence, yet condemns safe and responsible firearms ownership, a virulent anti-gun sentiment has seeped into almost every faucet of Canadian society - from the courts right down to the local newspaper. To see how horribly out of control this blatant, though exceedingly unnecessary, tirade against an inanimate object has gotten, one need only look at Jessie Sansome, the hardworking, Kitchener, Ont. father who was arrested when his four-year-old daughter drew a picture of a gun (gasp!) with a crayon in the kindergarten class. As of recently, many post-secondary institutions across the country have denied the right of pro-firearms organizations to form on their property. In Quebec, one particular school has gone so far as to prohibit even the discussion of firearms or related topics citing public safety concerns.

And unfortunately, this madness is not confined to our side of the 49th parallel. In March of this year, an Oregon man was arrested for merely having a conversation about guns on a public bus.

In another incident, a first-grader in Maryland was suspended from school for (get this!) shaping his little hand into the shape of a pistol.

Whatever happened to the days when kids could just be kids without Soviet-style political correctness throwing a wrench into their fun?

While gun owners bemoan the problem, we're often at odds as to what the solution should be. In fighting against the antigun backlash that seeks to strip us of our ancient rights and freedoms, education and cold hard facts are what we must use to turn the tide of public opinion.

A return to basic firearm safety classes, once common in our public schools, would be a great apparatus to teach impressionable youngsters guns are not evil, dangerous tools. Already, public education campaigns launched by such gun-rights organizations as the National Firearms Association have been instrumental not only in changing the way people think but growing interest in the sport as well. As well, it would be most beneficial for parents to teach their children the truth about firearms and what violence and action that plays out on the TV or movie screen is mere entertainment.

There is no denying the fact that the fight to regain our freedoms is a much larger part of a culture war as much as it is a political battle. And like any war, the successful formula for winning this particular conflict will be to win the hearts and minds of the people.

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Shaking Out A Martini

By Al Voth

The distant splat of a solid hit drifted back to me as I watched another gopher catch six inches of air and turn himself inside out. However, my pleasant thoughts about Sierra's 40-grain .22 Hornet bullets were interrupted as I levered the action open and watched the back third of a cartridge case eject into my palm.

A lot of times, if you get one-third of something you've got plenty - one of my wife's rhubarb pies, for example. However, one-third of a cartridge case isn't good, and this had been happening enough lately to cause unkind thoughts about the person who originally designed that tapered Hornet case. To deal with the problem, I'd started carrying a ruptured case remover in my ammunition bag. I found it now and brought the front two-thirds of the case out to rejoin its mate.

I had to use my case extractor twice more that day and many more times over the summer. By the time the gophers went down for the winter, I'd decided it was going to hibernate too - permanently.

Three weeks later, on the morning of a nearby gun show, I broke the news to my wife.

"It's time for a new gopher gun," I said. "With very sensible loads I'm only averaging six reloads from a case. If the case had less taper, like maybe a .22 K-Hornet, I'll bet I could double case life."

She didn't look convinced.

"Think of all the money I'd save on brass," I tried.

"Enough to buy me a new outfit, I'll bet," she replied.

Rats, caught again.

"Absolutely," I said, weakly.

"Great." She drained the last of her coffee and got up from the table. "I'm going shopping. Have fun at the gun show."

My wife should be a hostage negotiator.

There are many ways to hunt gophers. At one end of the continuum is the casual shooter with an inexpensive rimfire. The other end of the spectrum is occupied by the technical shooter who sets up a portable bench rest and piles on equipment with a net value higher than the truck he drove out in. I've done both and my favourite method these days falls somewhere between those two extremes.

Gophers (technically ground squirrels) are small critters, so an accurate rifle is a must; but ranges aren't long. That means any of the smaller centrefires are ideal, especially when the shooting volume is high, as it often is. Small cases, such as the Hornet, burn small amounts of powder. Therefore, the cumulative effect of the noise, heat and barrel wear is significantly less on both the shooter and his firearm. With a rifle light enough to carry, I like to wan-

der the fields with nothing more than a backpack loaded with ammunition, water and other essentials, including a bipod shooting rest that allows sniping from a sitting position. With that kind of a set up I'm completely mobile, yet steady enough to make longer shots.

For the last few years I'd been shooting a Martini Cadet, which fulfilled my needs perfectly. I found it at a gun show, where the owner explained to me that it had originally been a rimfire.

"Somebody converted it to centrefire," he explained. "And reamed out the original chamber to .22 Hornet dimensions, and built the stock, too. I'm not taking credit for the stock."

We made a deal.

Actually, the stock isn't bad. It's just that the design is a little different. It's fairly well executed, right down to the curved brass butt plate. However, the stock is the reason a friend calls it "Al's pimp gun." Personally, I think the stock is just different. That's all, just different. And although this gun served me well for at least three years, that tired old barrel meant a simple re-chambering to the K-Hornet wasn't worth it. A new gun, or at the very least a new barrel, was in order.

The small Martinis like mine always seem to get a lot of interest at gun shows. So I put mine in the truck, leaving it behind the seat, ready for use as

trading material. Since truth is sometimes the rarest shooting accessory available at a gun show, I determined ahead of time to warn any buyers about the rifle's brass appetite. That way I could still look someone in the eye even after I sold them the rifle.

Halfway through my first trip down the aisles, I stopped to look at the offerings of a west coast gunsmith. A Douglas .17-calibre stainless barrel blank caught my attention. Why not re-barrel the Martini to 17 Ackley Hornet? That should be a great gopher calibre. And if I re-barreled I wouldn't have to worry about finding a creative way to tell someone about the Martini's brass appetite. Besides, the Martini was cute.

"I brought it in for a customer who changed his mind," said the barrel's owner.

When I told him about my tentative plans for a 17 Ackley Hornet, I saw his eyes go misty.

"I used to have one when I lived in Calgary," he told me. "I sold it when I moved because we don't have any gophers on Vancouver Island."

I asked him about brass life and he assured me it was far better than the standard Hornet. He told me about a calibre with a low noise level, long barrel life, great accuracy, no ricochets and easy brass forming. When he'd finished praising the virtues of the necked down Hornet, he added, "I still have a reamer. I'll fit and chamber it for you at a reasonable price."

"Thanks, but I do my own barrel work," I countered.

"Buy the barrel," he replied, "and I'll lend you the reamer."

I reached for my wallet. I had a new varmint rifle on the go.

While waiting for the reamer, I took care of other necessities, like dies. Todd Kindler at The Woodchuck Den in Ohio had RCBS in stock and some credit card info started them in my direction. His confirmation of everything the barrel seller told me was comforting news. A .17-calibre cleaning rod, case trimmer pilot and reloading components were available locally.

By the time I got the old barrel off the Martini and turned down the new barrel to a medium varmint contour, the reamer showed up; that still left chambering, fitting, polishing, refitting the forend and drilling and tapping for a scope. Since my day job has always been government work, I just naturally work slowly, so that took me until Christmas to complete.



After careful planning and using all of the knowledge available, the author was able to put together a superb varmint gun for himself.



With family commitments and coyote season to take up more time, it was February before I had the mini-Hornet in shootable condition. With the chamber now cut and dies in hand, the next step was to manufacture ammunition. This meant forming cases. Everything I'd read suggested case-forming dies are essential, but I tried it without them anyway. Guess what? Case forming dies are essential.

When I finally found some I got a case of sticker shock, but considering their specialized nature the price really is reasonable. However, I'm fortunate enough to have a lathe so I elected to make my own. After some preliminary measuring, I suspected it was possible to get by with one homemade die; something to step the neck down from .22 to a midpoint somewhere around .20 inches. I turned one out in a few hours, marked it with metal stamps and polished it inside and out.

I tried the case forming sequence I'd speculated on and this was one of those rare times when a plan actually worked. Starting with fired .22 Hornet brass, I ran cases into a .22 Hornet sizing die with the neck expander removed. That brought the outside neck measurement to .232 inches. A quick trip into my homemade neck-sizing die stepped that same dimension down to .205 inches;

and finally, a full-length size in a .17 Ackley Hornet sizing die, complete with decapping stem and neck expander. To date, my case loss has been zero during forming, and that's without annealing. After fire forming, the cases needed a light neck reaming and trim.

With a shiny, new, stainless steel barrel, the Martini needed a change of glass as well. A sale on Bushnell scopes provided a 5-15X that looked good on the Martini. With a lifetime warranty and individually tested to withstand 375 H&H recoil levels, I had no doubt it could take a Hornet's "punishment."

It didn't take long to establish a load of 9.4 grains of Lil' Gun behind a Hornady 20-grain V-Max as a good load for fire forming brass. And so, with a batch of ammunition ready, I ventured out to spend a couple of hours at a nearby gopher colony, forming cases.

Things started well; the accuracy was okay and the lack of muzzle lift from the little Hornet allowed me to see hits and spot misses. Additionally, the terminal effect of the hits was excellent, so I was content. Halfway through my box of 100 rounds, the wind became a little gusty and my hit average began to drop dramatically. By the time I was done, it was downright dismal.

With a feeling of disappointment at the Hornet's ability to handle even mild

breezes, I retreated to my basement where I cleaned and reloaded.

At the next opportunity, I was out again with another 100 cases to fire from. It turned out to be a repeat performance: good accuracy early in my shooting and a steady deterioration as I approached the end of the 100-round box. Only this time there was no wind. Slowly, a light came on in my dim brain and this time I stopped with 90 rounds expended. The next day found me at the rifle range with those left over 10 rounds. I pinned two targets at 100 yards and settled into the sandbags, giving five of those rounds my best effort. The optics of the Bushnell scope made it easy to see the .17-calibre holes. What I saw developing confirmed my suspicions.

This time I hadn't cleaned the Douglas barrel after the previous day's shooting and the target showed a random splattering of bullets. Can you picture a four-inch group from a precision varmint rifle? Ugh! Sticking with my plan, I ran a bronze .17 calibre brush through the bore and followed with some dry patches. Then I fired five more rounds. A quarter neatly covered all five holes. Unlike my .223, which shows no significant accuracy deterioration after 100 rounds, this .17 insists on being clean.

After going through that little exercise, a couple of neurons in the back of my brain connected and reminded me I had once read that about all .17s. The trip home from the range was detoured for a stop at the local gun shop where I picked up a .17-calibre Bore Snake. It's become a constant companion of the Martini. Now, whenever there's a lull in the action, it gets a trip through the bore. Sure, a cleaning rod will do the same thing, but for my style of hunting, which means no shooting benches and staying mobile, it's an ideal way to field clean the Martini.

With a good supply of fire-formed cases, it was now time to do serious load development. My previous experience with the 22 Hornet had taught me that Hodgdon's Lil' Gun was a great powder in this tiny case. I'd already used it for fire forming with good results, and reached for it again now. My research indicated that somewhere around 10 grains of Lil' Gun was the maximum and should launch Hornady's 20-grain V-Max at gopher eviscerating velocities, so I focused my efforts in that area.

Initial groups of around one inch weren't exactly what I was hoping for, but they showed promise. It wasn't until I started playing with overall length and seating the 20-grain V-Max into the

There are many ways to hunt gophers. At one end of the continuum is the casual shooter with an inexpensive rimfire. The other end of the spectrum is occupied by the technical shooter who sets up a portable bench rest and piles on equipment with a net value higher than the truck he drove out in.





Since most of the gophers the author has taken were shot at about 100 yards, he keeps his scope sighted in for that distance.

rifling that the magic happened and groups shrank close to the half-inch mark. Things looked good on paper, so I loaded a bunch of ammunition with this recipe and called my gopher-hunting buddy, suggesting it was time for a field trip. We'd just secured permission to hunt a new pasture and wasted no time getting there. After checking with the landowner, we went to work, eager to evaluate this new rifle/ammunition combination. There were as many gophers as the farmer had reported and we piled up empty brass over the course of a morning. The verdict: impressive! Those little bullets generated mist as red as their tips well beyond 100 yards, and the absence of recoil made for a great show through the Bushnell scope. Accuracy was excellent and misses were never the rifle's fault as long as I ran the Bore Snake through the barrel every 80 rounds or so.

When we'd finished working over this farmer's pasture, we followed his directions and moved west. He'd told us his neighbour down the road had a problem too. We drove west, uncertain we'd recognize the place with the problem, but when we'd driven the required two miles we immediately saw a lone rifleman standing in a field of eight-inch high canola. I stopped my truck on the road and walked in to talk with him. The amount of crop damage I saw on the way amazed me. When I reached him, the chirp of gophers surrounded us and, just like the Whack-A-Mole game, little

brown heads popped up and down everywhere. This rifleman had the weathered face of a farmer and the frustrated visage of a man with a cheap rifle and too many varmints.

Introductions were exchanged.

"Go on back to the house and have an iced tea. Don't worry about a thing. We're professionals," I said in my best Stallone voice. "We'll take care of this."

He left and we proceeded to look after the gophers. Personally, I never knew gophers liked canola that much. Parallel to the road and 50 yards into the canola, the utility poles of a power line created a row of uncultivated islands that stretched for half a mile. Every pole and the area immediately around it had to be avoided by the farmer's machinery and these had become varmint high-rises, with smaller settlements - condos if you like - radiating out from them. The crop around these areas was chewed down to the dirt. We traveled the field's edge and shot canola-munchers the rest of the afternoon, alternating between the 17 Ackley Hornet and rimfires.

The Martini saw action almost every weekend for a month and it wasn't long before that old devil, case head separation, raised its ugly head again. And primer pockets started to get loose, too. That's what detectives call a clue. My loads were too warm. I immediately backed off to 9.7 grains and ran with that for the rest of the summer.

Brass doesn't last forever, and mine is no exception. I'm not getting the 12 loads

per case I'd hoped for, but I am getting around 10, and that's a big improvement. And with more accuracy, less ricochets and better terminal performance, it's been a winner of a project.

So far, I figure about 3,000 gophers have been sent to that big canola field in the sky by this Martini in its new configuration. Most were shot near the 100-yard mark and that's what I keep the rifle sighted in for. I've found if I set the Bushnell at 10X, a standing gopher is perfectly bracketed by the crosshairs heavy top and bottom posts at 100 yards. Obviously then, if he fits between the centre of the crosshairs and one post he's double the distance, 200 yards, and so on. That means the scope can do double duty as an effective rangefinder. And as a bonus, when the scope is set at 10X, bullet strike at 300 yards is exactly at the top of the bottom post. While I have shot gophers at that distance, I figure it's about the practical limit for this little cartridge.

As I write this, Hornady has legitimized this wildcat into the .17 Hornet. The dimensions are a little different from my Ackley Hornet and the two won't interchange. However, ballistic performance is identical. I expect it'll be another year before we see dies and brass in Canada and I'll likely re-chamber to the factory version when that happens. That means I have one more summer to save enough money to buy the wife's new outfit. Then the cycle starts again.

Canada's National Firearms Association announces that elections will be held for the Board of Directors. Interested parties should submit a nomination form and a short (200 words) biography and statement of intent to the National office no later than October 1, 2014. Nomination forms are available for downloads at www.nfa.ca.

In accordance with the Bylaws, a total of six nominations are sought for the following position:

15. The property and business of the association shall be managed by a board of directors elected from the following electoral regions as described below:

Electoral Area - **Directors to Elect**

- 1 Alberta – Northwest Territories & Out-of-Canada
- 1 British Columbia – Yukon
- 1 Manitoba – Nunavut
- 1 Newfoundland – Labrador – Maritimes
- 1 Ontario
- 1 Quebec
- 1 Saskatchewan

a. Each of the above would form one electoral area when electing its director(s). Out-of-Canada members will vote as part of the Alberta membership. The combinations above shall apply until such time as those specific provinces and territories develop sufficient membership to form separate electoral areas.

b. Each electoral area containing at least 5 percent (5%) of the voting members of the association on September 1 of an election year is entitled to elect one, but only one director. Each electoral area containing at least 10 percent (10%) of the voting members of the association on September 1 of an election year is entitled to elect two, but only two directors. A voting member may vote only for candidate(s) in the electoral area in which he or she resides.

c. A province, territory or Out-of-Canada grouping may form an electoral area when dividing the electoral area it is part of will mean that both of that province(s) and/or territory or grouping each have at least 5 percent (5%) of the voting membership of the association. Provinces and territories not having sufficient numbers to form an electoral area will be combined with an adjacent province or territory as determined by the board of Directors.

Directors must be individuals, 18 years of age or older at the time of the election, with power under Canadian law sign contracts.

16. Directors shall be elected by surface mail, electronic mail, or secure call-in telephone ballot of voting members for a term of 2 years, except as noted below:

a. An electoral area with 2 directors shall elect one each year, except in the first year in which these bylaws come into effect at which time all directors will be elected. The director, from an area with 2 directors, having the second highest number of votes will serve a one year term and that directorship will be up for election for a two-year term in the subsequent election. In the event of a tie, the matter will be determined by a draw. The directors for Saskatchewan and Manitoba-Nunavut will likewise be the first elected as a one year term so that about half of the board of directors is subject to election each year.

b. A candidate for an office of director must reside, when nominated, in the electoral region represented by that director and must be nominated by two voting members, who must also reside in that region. Each nomination shall be delivered to the secretary of the association by October 1 of the election year. The secretary shall provide to each voting members by November 1 of the election year a ballot listing the names of the candidates for his or her electoral region. It shall be a single, transferable, preferential ballot. Voting members shall return their ballots by December 1 of the election year to the accounting firm designated by the board of directors to count the ballots. Each candidate or his or her designated scrutineer may observe the counting of the ballots. The ballots shall be counted on the first business day after December 1, and the directors so elected shall take office forthwith.



Nomination Form for Office Director of Canada's National Firearms Association

Nomination Form for Office of Director of Canada's National Firearms Association

Candidate:

Name: _____ NFA Membership Number _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-Mail: _____

Candidate Profile: The candidate must provide a good quality digital photograph and a typed electronic 200 word biography that outlines his or her experience and reasons for wishing to serve as a director of Canada's National Firearms Association.

Date of Birth: _____

How long have you been a member of Canada's NFA?: _____

Do you have power under Canadian law to sign legally binding contracts? YES/NO

Do you have a criminal record for which you have not received a pardon? YES/NO

I accept the nomination to run as a director for Canada's NFA.

Candidate's signature: _____ Date: _____

We the undersigned members in good standing of Canada's National Firearms Association wish to nominate _____ for the position of director.

Nominators

Name: _____ NFA Membership Number: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-Mail: _____

How long have you known this person? _____

Nominator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ NFA Membership Number: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-Mail: _____

How long have you known this person? _____

Nominator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return form to:

Mail:
Canada's National
Firearms Association
P.O. Box 49090
Edmonton, AB
T6E 6H4
Fax:
780-439-4091

Women & Guns

By Gary Mauser

"There are some ideas so absurd that only an intellectual could believe them."

- George Orwell

Rape is a serious problem. Each year, tens of thousands of women in North America are raped. Some of these rapists are civil servants, even police officials; others are doctors, teachers. Women often face worse conditions in other countries. The Arms Trade Treaty is typical of the United Nations (UN) approach: disarm civilians through more gun laws.

India

In India, for example, gangs of men have attacked and raped vulnerable women, both locals and tourists. India has strict gun laws, but they have not protected women. Instead, these restrictions have contributed to their defenselessness. Would punishing rapists more severely protect women or should women be empowered to defend themselves?

The result of UN-encouraged strict gun laws is dis-

armament. The Swiss Small Arms Survey estimates that civilians in India own only four guns per 100 people. This is quite low compared with Canada, with 30 per 100, and the United States, with 89 guns per 100.

The *Arms Act of 1959* and the *Arms Rules 1962* of India prohibits the possession and transport of firearms unless under a licence and this is a very stringent process. The Indian government has a monopoly over production and sale of firearms. Acquiring a handgun licence has become next to impossible. Such bureaucratic complexity makes it difficult for all but the best-connected people to own firearms. Not only does this make guns expensive, but bureaucrats can profit from the complexity. Corruption in India is rampant. A study conducted by Transparency International in 2005 found that more than 62 per cent

of Indians had firsthand experience of paying bribes to get public officials to act on their behalf.

A few high-profile cases illustrate the situation in India. Earlier this year, a gang of men raped a Danish tourist in New Delhi when she got lost and asked them for directions. Another woman was beaten and gang-raped in 2012 when she and a male friend were riding in a private bus in Delhi. There were six others in the bus, including the driver, all of whom raped the woman and beat her friend. The woman later died of her injuries.

Mass protests led to a judicial committee being set up to study public suggestions for the best ways to provide quicker investigation and prosecution of sexual offenders. Unfortunately, these are not isolated cases. Rape in India is the fourth most common crime against women.

According to the *National Crime Records Bureau 2013 annual report*, 24,923 rape cases were reported across India in 2012. As in North America, few rapists use firearms.

There is no doubt that the rule of law is tremendously important in creating a safe environment for citizens in any country. The police play a crucial role in maintaining the peace by arresting and charging dangerous offenders, but individuals (women as well as men) must take reasonable precautions and be permitted to defend themselves if necessary. Without police, courts and prisons, society would be a lot less safe. Low crime rates do not mean there's no violent crime. Even in low-crime countries, the police cannot be everywhere all the time.

Had the Indian women been armed, they would have been able to resist their





In cultures where rape and assault are a common occurrence, women should be allowed to defend themselves.

attackers. The mere possession of a firearm could have averted these attacks. In almost all cases of armed self-defense, the gun is not fired. Merely showing the gun is sufficient to stop an attack. Gangs of men scatter when facing armed resistance. Unfortunately, their government has long since disarmed these women.

United Nations

The UN treats women as pawns. Women are portrayed as helpless victims of worldwide violence who can be rescued by disarming civilians. This is patronizing and utopian. The solution lies in empowering women, not

vainly attempting to disarm men. It is naïve to passively trust government for protection. Government officials can be among the worst offenders. Women may well have reason to fear attack, even in Canada, but claiming they are helpless is misleading and insulting. Women, like men, if allowed to have the necessary resources, are capable of protecting themselves. Government should respect our natural rights and allow us to take the necessary steps to protect ourselves. Unfortunately, too many governments, including the UN, do not show adequate respect for the individual right of self-defense.

Instead of promoting restrictive gun laws, women would be better protected if the UN would energetically work to ensure that member states respected the universal human right to defend oneself from violence.

The *UN Arms Trade Treaty* rejects the existence of a universal right for individual self-defense. This dismissal underlies all UN disarmament instruments, and can be easily seen in the suggested "best practices" recommended by ISACS (International Small Arms Control Standard) for the UN Co-ordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA.) None of this should surprise because it is consis-

tent with the infamous Frey report that was endorsed by the UN's Human Rights Council back in 2006.

Barbara Frey, a Minnesota law professor, wrote a report on human rights and small arms that was accepted by the UN Human Rights Council as their guiding philosophy. According to this report, there is "(n)o international human right of self-defense ... expressly set forth in the primary sources of international law: treaties, customary law or general principles..."

Not content to deny the basic right, the UN Human Rights Council goes on to assert that, "Even if there

were a 'human right to self-defense,' it would not negate the state's due diligence responsibility to maximize protection of the right to life for the society through reasonable regulations on civilian possession of weapons." This may not sound like a threat to individual liberty, but in the hands of gun banners, "reasonable" restrictions can turn out to be pretty unreasonable, in fact. The mere complexity of regulations can keep people from having and using firearms. Add in an unsympathetic bureaucracy and liberty disappears wholesale.

According to ISACS, "Small arms are owned and used mostly by men; and young men make up the vast majority of perpetrators and direct victims of armed violence. Women carry a ... disproportionate burden of the direct consequence, since they are many times more likely to be a victim of armed violence than a perpetrator of it." This analysis is used to justify civilian disarmament.

ISACS argues, "It is reasonable for international human rights bodies to require states to enforce a minimum licensing requirement designed to keep small arms and light weapons out of the hands of persons who are likely to misuse them. ..."

Recommended licensing procedures include the following: minimum age of applicant; past criminal record including any history of inter-familial violence; proof of a legitimate purpose for obtaining a weapon; and mental fitness. Other proposed criteria include proof of proper storage and that licences be renewed regularly to prevent transfer to unauthorized persons.

Conclusion

Women may well have reason to fear attack, but the premise that they are helpless is false and patronizing. Disarmament does not provide safety. Women are

Women may well have reason to fear attack, but the premise that they are helpless is false and patronizing. Disarmament does not provide safety.



safer where governments respect their right to defend themselves. John Lott found that when right-to-carry laws were introduced, rapes fell by five per cent to 10 per cent. Unfortunately, governments can be a serious obstacle to women's safety and liberty. It is pernicious to claim that gun bans protect women from attack. It is absurd to believe that gun bans hinder criminals. Not only can government not protect vulnerable people, government is often the instigator of many attacks. No one should forget the massacres in Cambodia and Rwanda, or the continuing attacks on Christians and Jews in the Middle East.

Any woman who fears attack has a natural right to buy and own firearms to protect herself. A recent survey by the National Sports Shooting Foundation found that the primary reason American women buy

guns is self-protection. The top-ranking factors driving first-time gun purchases are home defense (87 per cent) and self-defense (76 per cent.) In Canada, women have to claim they are target shooters to buy a handgun.

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THE .17 WINCHESTER SUPER MAGNUM

BY JEFF HELSDON



WINCHESTER

VARMINT HE
HIGH ENERGY

NEW RIMFIRE CALIBER

17 WIN SUPER MAG
25 GRAIN, 2600 FPS

MADE IN USA ★ **WARNING:** AVERTISSEMENT: Gardez hors de la portée



The largest innovation in rimfire ammunition in years brings with it some fascinating developments in firearms, as well as the launch of a new cartridge.

Introduced in 2013, the .17 Winchester Super Magnum is the first rimfire cartridge to be produced in decades based on an entirely new cartridge. The .22 magnum, introduced in 1960, was based on an extended .22 shell. Decades later, the .17 Hornady Magnum was considered revolutionary, despite being based on a necked-down .22 magnum casing. The 5 mm Remington Rimfire Magnum, also based on the .22 magnum case, came and went in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The .17 Winchester Super Magnum is now the fastest rimfire load on the planet, leaving the barrel at a blazing 3,000 feet per second. It claims the title by being 600 feet per second faster than the .17 Hornady load, which formerly held the speed title for rimfire cartridges. That's faster than some .20-calibre centrefire loads, although the Super Magnum doesn't have the same energy because it's a lighter bullet. To say the casing for the .17 Winchester is entirely new is stretching it a bit, but it is entirely new to the firearms world.

"The story of the .17 Win Super Mag starts, of all places, with power tools," said Michael Turbyfill, of Winchester. "Winchester manufactures .27-calibre brass casings for nail guns. The .17 Win Super Mag cartridge is actually the .27-calibre nail gun cartridge necked down to a .17 calibre. At some point in the last few years, Winchester engineers connected the dots with the .27-calibre nail gun casing and our new .17WSM is now the world's fastest rimfire cartridge. It's a fascinating story. The beefed up .27-calibre cartridge allows for higher pressures and overall much higher ballistic performance than do the existing magnum rimfire cartridges."

Looking at Hornady and Winchester .17s side by side is akin to comparing a .300 Winchester Magnum to a .308 Winchester.

Loaded with a 20-grain bullet, the Winchester produces 3,000 feet per second velocity at the muzzle. For such a light bullet, wind drift is surprisingly less than with the heavier .22 magnum load. The velocity drops to 2,600 feet per second at muzzle with a 25-grain bullet.

The trajectory of the new load is where it really shines, losing only 4.1 inches at 200 yards when sighted in at 100. That is a significant improvement over both of the other rimfire magnum loads, which drop anywhere from 8.5 to 28.7 inches.

Ballistics gives the new Winchester more than 2.5 times the downrange energy of either the .17HMR or the .22WMR. It leaves the barrel muzzle with its 20-grain bullet producing 400 feet per second of energy, and 323 feet per second for the 25-grain bullet. That is an increase of nearly 50 per cent over the .17HMR and 60 feet per second more than the .22 magnum's most powerful load. While the .17HMR and .22 magnum have similar energy at 200 yards, the .17 Winchester retains more energy.

For this kind of innovation to come from Winchester is not surprising. The company owes its existence to rimfire. Its first consumer metallic cartridge was a large-calibre rimfire cartridge in 1866. Close to a century later, Winchester introduced the world to the .22 magnum.

Loads

The new bullet is initially offered in two different 20-grain bullets with a velocity of 3,000 feet per second and a 25-grain bullet at 2,600 feet per second.

With much of North America still challenged by ammunition availability, the .17WSM is not immune. Finding ammunition can be a bit of a challenge. If you find some, buy a few boxes.

"We're working as hard as we can to produce an increased supply of quality ammunition to meet our customers' needs," said Laci Warden, of Winchester. "As expected, these calibres have been very well received."

Savage redesigned a bolt action

The Savage B.MAG is a new gun from the swivels on the stock up.

"We were approached by the Winchester ammunition people," said Bill Dermody, Director of Marketing and Firearms for ATK Sporting Group. "They had been working on it for some time and needed partners to develop a particular type of gun."

At the time, Savage had begun a project to redesign and update its rimfire rifle. That morphed into building the B.MAG for the .17WSM. Dermody said, with the exception of a few screws, there are no parts in common between the B.MAG and Savage Mark II rimfire.

"We hadn't gotten too far along that we couldn't incorporate specifications for that cartridge," Dermody said.

Savage's engineers quickly identified a couple of issues, and one was the immense pressure involved. The .17HMR produced 26,000 pounds per square inch of pressure. The WSM pressure comes in nearly 25 per cent higher, at

33,000 pounds per square inch.

"Our system at the time was unable to handle it," Dermody said.

Like most manufacturers, Savage doesn't produce its rimfire guns with locking lugs like on a centrefire gun. That was an easy fix. The bigger challenge was the .17WSM rimfire primer, which needed to be stuck harder.

"Getting enough striking force was indeed a challenge," Dermody said.

A heavier spring on the firing pin was part of the solution. The other part was cocking the bolt on closing, as opposed to the norm of cocking the bolt on opening.

"It was necessary because you have more leverage on closing than opening," he said.

The B.MAG has a modern look, with molding into the grips on the forend and grip. The bolt handle has a unique look, with a design not to be mistaken for any other gun. The entire gun was built more robustly, to handle more pressure. A recoil pad eliminates any recoil. Savage's AccuTrigger is standard. A rotary magazine is different than Savage uses on most of its other rimfires.

Weighing in at 4.5 pounds, the gun is light. For those who prefer a heavier barrel, a heavy, stainless barrel version was introduced this year.

Reception to the B.MAG has been good, with Dermody saying sales have been brisk.

New technology meets a classic

The Winchester 1885 Low Wall is steeped in history. Although Winchester's famous guns are the Model 12 and Model 1894, a case could be made that they owe their existence to the 1885.

John M. Browning designed a falling-block action single shot in 1878. For those not familiar with a falling-block action, a lever operates a solid breechblock that slides in grooves at the end of the receiver, and in front of a hammer. Today, the Winchester 1885 and Ruger No. 1 are the best-known examples of this gun, but the Sharp's rifle was also one. It is an action noted for being exceptionally strong.

In the beginning, Browning and his brother produced the rifles by hand in their shop in Ogden, Utah. Winchester vice president Thomas Bennett purchased the patent and design for the gun in 1883. Winchester engineers made a few minor tweaks and launched the gun as the Model 1885. Low Wall guns were produced for less powerful cartridges, and High Wall for more powerful cartridges.

This was the beginning of a relationship between Browning and Winchester that saw several innovative designs and guns that have become collector's items.

Known for its accuracy and strength, the 1885 was often used by Winchester to test its new cartridge developments.

Working with Winchester, Browning designed the Model 1894 and 1897 shotgun, which was a precursor to the famed Model 12.

The Model 1885 was produced until 1920, and was manufactured for use in more than 50 calibres. It was then reintroduced in the Winchester line in 2005.

For a gun known for its strength to shoot, the high-pressure .17WSM is a natural.

At the range

The Savage .17 arrived ready to go, scope and all, so it was just a matter of sighting it in to fire some test shots.

I noticed a couple of things at the range. One was the bolt took more downward force to close than a .22. This was to be expected. I was told this was necessary because of the higher pressures involved. The other thing I noticed was that with the scope on, the safety was in tight quarters. Personally, I didn't



With no recoil, this is a great cartridge to get youth into the shooting sports.

have a problem, but someone with large hands or with gloves on might.

The Savage was nice to shoot and didn't have any recoil. As expected, the noise was more than that of a .22. Savage's Accutrigger is smooth and has everything included on the gun's other models.

My best five-shot group at 50 yards was 0.519 inches. Throwing out the worst two, a three-shot group shrank to 0.308 inches. Of the five, there were two groups of two with the holes overlapping. Backing it up to 100 yards, the group was 1.11 inches. That shrank to under an inch for three shots. A dime easily covered the three shots.

I imagine that if I had the new heavy barrel model, my groups could have been even smaller.

It took a little more work to get the Winchester ready for the range. It arrived from the factory with a semi-buckhorn iron sight, as is expected for a gun of that vintage. To add a scope, the rear sight has to be tapped out after the ramp is removed. Winchester makes a base for the Low Wall, but I wasn't supplied with one. With a little improvisation provided by the staff at Goble's Firearms, aftermarket Weaver bases for the High Wall were made to work.

For those wanting to shoot this as a historic gun, the sights are appropriate, but predator and varmint hunters will want to add a scope. Although the procedure is not complicated, personally, I wouldn't want to tap the sight out of a \$1,200 gun for fear of scratching it. Plan on purchasing the Winchester scope base as well.

As a result of not having the bases, I couldn't conduct as thorough a trial as usual. Still, the 1885 impressed. At 25 yards, all five shots were in one cluster measuring .272 inches. Five shots at 50 yards grouped to .718 inches, but that shrank to .347 inches for the best three. Two of the three overlapped. I couldn't test the gun at 100 yards because of the scope base issues, and am sure I could shrink the 50-yard group

more if properly equipped.

As for shooting the gun with the supplied sights, it was just plain fun, with a sense of nostalgia. With a heavier barrel, it was easy to hold on target for either punching paper or plinking. Another positive is that the .17WSM is a great compromise between centrefire power and rimfire economy.

The only disappointment with the 1885 was that it was stamped Miroku, Japan on the side. Miroku makes some fine guns for Browning, but my disappointment was having an American classic made offshore.

The .17WSM is still new and Winchester is trying to keep up to demand for the ammunition. Don't let that stop you from buying either gun, but if you do stock up on ammunition.



Testing at the range showed tight groups and easy shooting. INSET: Introduced in 2013, the .17 Winchester Super Magnum is the first rimfire cartridge to be produced in decades based on an entirely new cartridge.

NFA Book Shelf

Bill Rantz

Guns of the Civil War

Guns of the Civil War

Author: Dennis Adler

Zenith Press 2011

Hard cover with dust jacket

Eight-and-a-half by 11 inches

340 pages, colour photographs

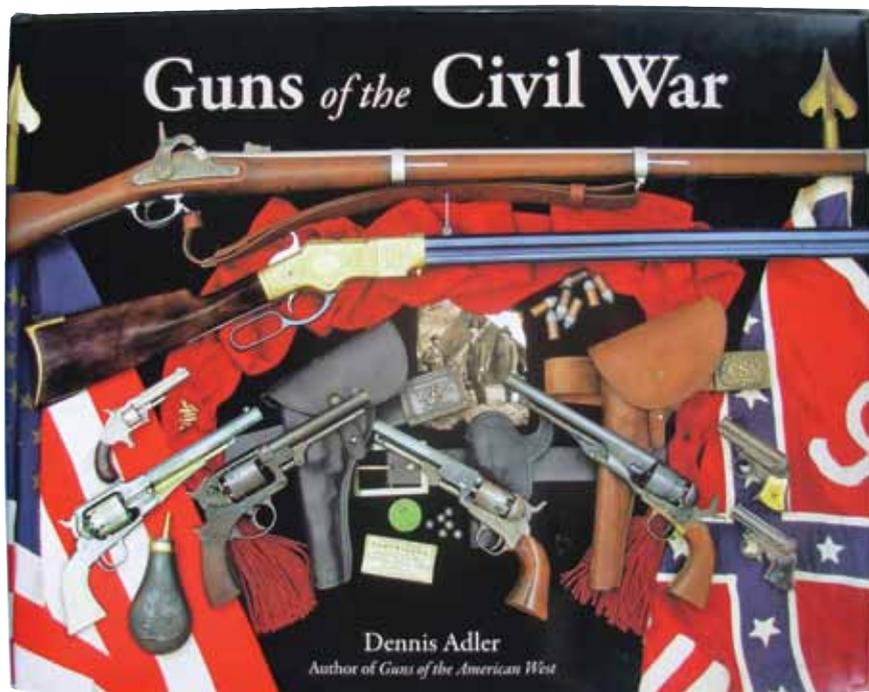
ISBN: 978-0-7603-3971-8

The American Civil War, which began in April 1861 and ended four long years later, has been the topic of a multitude of history books. Avid readers can discover the politics that lead to the bloodiest conflict on American soil, or analyze famous battles that raged between the Union and Confederate armies. Collectors of Civil War articles may easily locate reference books that describe, in detail, uniforms and accoutrements used by the soldiers on either side of the conflict.

Well-renowned and highly respected author Dennis Adler has written *Guns of the Civil War*, which relates the rapid development and manufacture of firearms to the historical aspects and progress of the Civil War.

Prior to 1861, the majority of industrial development had occurred in the northern states. The economy of the south relied extensively on agriculture and labour supplied by slaves of African heritage. When peace was shattered by the outbreak of the Civil War, both the north and south had to assess the firearms readily available and develop a strategy to arm their forces for the remainder of the bitter conflict.

Guns of the Civil War shares the evolution of firearm development during this era, through a combination of photographs and detailed text. Hundreds of firearms, manufactured by both well-known and relatively obscure companies, are shown in high-quality, colour photographs. Detailed captions accompany each photograph to explain the history or significance of that specific



firearm. Adler had access to prominent collectors, as well as the Rock Island Auction Company archives and acknowledges the support that they provided.

The reader will quickly appreciate that *Guns of the Civil War* provides the opportunity to view both rare and historical firearms that are not readily available to the average person. Whether your passion is single-shot Deringers, exquisitely cased Colt revolvers, Henry repeating rifles or Sharps carbines, you will enjoy the opportunity to view such fine specimens.

Adler chose to present his research in six specific chapters:

- **A Nation on the Verge of Conflict and the Guns at Hand**
- **Handguns of the Union: Arming a Nation at War with Itself**
- **Longarms of the US Military**
- **Confederate Arms**
- **A Litany of Foreign Arms**
- **Modern Reproductions and Replicas**

This format is effective, as each chapter contains sufficient enough information that *Guns of the Civil War* could have been published in several smaller volumes. Reading the entire book from cover to cover would be an enjoyable adventure, but most readers will likely research areas of specific interest. The index is easy to use and will direct readers to the exact page(s) where the sought-after information is located.

Whether you are a firearm historian, Civil War enthusiast, re-enactor, gun collector or retailer, *Guns of the Civil War* will be an asset to your personal library.

Guns of the Civil War lists at \$44 Canadian, but can be found online for under \$30 plus shipping. This represents incredible value, as the photographs, extensive research and quality of publication rivals many books sold at a significantly higher price.

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