

CANADIAN FIREARMS JOURNAL

MAY/JUNE 2018

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CANADIAN ***FIREARMS JOURNAL***

May/June 2018



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MISSION STATEMENT

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

Dry firing with mom isn't a typical teen activity, but it's what happens in the Wilson family. On this month's cover, Chelsea works on position, aiming and trigger squeeze while Heather watches and coaches. Dad saw the photo opportunity and grabbed the image. All that practice was necessary because the entire family, including Chelsea and her sister, Paige, were preparing for an African safari. The training of these young shooters is chronicled in the article *Kids On Safari* elsewhere in this issue. 



Canadian Firearms Journal

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From The Editor's Desk

Al Voth

Springtime & Bill C-71

By the time you get this issue of the *Canadian Firearms Journal*, most of Canada should be well into the spring season of shooting and hunting. And the content we have for you this time will help with at least some of those firearm-related pursuits. But before we get into the fun content, I need to note the not-so-fun content coming from the legislative front.

Bill C-71 has just been introduced into the House of Commons. It's a piece of legislation that will be a household name among firearm owners by the time you read this. But within a few days I have to submit the material you'll read here to our production team, so they can do the layout and get it to the printer. Therefore, you won't find a lot of C-71 content here yet. However, we've held the Vice-President's Message open long enough for Blair to take us through the basics

of that bill. For rapid updates, stay tuned to the NFA's website, Facebook page and be sure to subscribe to the *Daily Media Report*, which is sent out via e-mail. However you do it, stay informed and make sure the appropriate Members of Parliament know your opinion.

And while you're taking political action, canvas your friends and family who are firearm owners and encourage them to take out a membership in the NFA. The price is incredibly reasonable, the benefits are great and it's one of the best ways there is to exercise political clout. If every gun owner in Canada were a member, the politicians would tremble at the thought of us being displeased with their legislative arrogance. Then, when you've done all that, go shooting and exercise your common-law right to firearms ownership and use.

If it's raining, well then you can enjoy some of the content we have for you here. We've got gun and gear reviews ranging from politically correct shotguns to black rifles. And since spring is actually rimfire season, there's also some rimfire content for you. We don't want to leave out handgunners, so Josh Judson takes us through the basics of shooting a handgun accurately. Be sure to also check out Kevin Wilson's story about preparing his young daughters for an African safari. That's what I call bringing the kids up right! And if you need more good news, read about International Barrels Incorporated, a new Canadian company that is ready to supply your next super-accurate custom rifle barrel.

So, you see, there's lots of good news too, and it's a pleasure to share it with you in the *CFJ*. It's your magazine. 





President's Message

Sheldon Clare

Global & National Concerns



your MP that background checks are an ineffective, feel-good exercise, which do nothing to prevent bad actors from getting access to firearms, and merely provide another roadblock to the law abiding.

The World Forum on Shooting Activities (WFSA) AGM was held concurrently with IWA Messe in Nuremberg – it's the European equivalent of the SHOT Show – and there were many exciting new products on display. Of more interest to me was the report at WFSA of increased attention being given to UN working groups on the *Arms Trade Treaty*, Program of Action on small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Small Arms Control Standards by anti-gun NGOs. There is a huge imbalance in the ratio of anti-gun to pro-gun NGOs at UN meetings, but especially at committee working groups. These NGOs are pressing hard to have UN initiatives harmonized into a single UN small arms control regime, aimed at civil disarmament. As the only Canadian present, I reported on our current political situation, recent Canadian research and statistical data, as well as on our efforts in promoting a positive image for firearms owners. Firearm writer, editor and media personality Tom Gresham was awarded the WFSA prestigious Ambassador award and gave a riveting speech on the history of firearms control in the US. He closed with a message familiar to NFA members that there must be "No Compromise" in defending our rights. He was proud to wear the No Compromise pin I gave him.

In short, our rights are under attack again, and we must ensure that our erstwhile political friends don't waver in their support. As well, with an election looming next year, it is time to get involved in a political party, select good candidates and make your views known. Never apologize for being a firearms owner, and never accept that someone else's evil behavior has anything to do with you or any firearm.

As I advised you in my letter late last year, our rights are yet again under attack. It is readily apparent that any new firearm control measures will be an emotional reaction to bad behaviour. As usual, gun control won't be based upon peer-reviewed research. The prevailing research in Canada (Langmann 2012) is clear that none of Canada's gun control laws from 1978 to 2010 have had anything to do with changes in crime rates, or criminal activity. Even so, it seems we are to be subjected to the latest in government gun control. Which, as a reaction to incidents in the United States, is another example of the Americans sneezing and Canadians getting

the cold.

The Liberals have variously come out in favour of banning handguns, and despite the concerns voiced by some of their rural MPs, they may be seeking such things as enhanced background checks to target mental health issues, and perhaps additional restrictions on semi-automatic firearms. It is the case that the vast majority of people with mental health concerns are neither dangerous to themselves nor anyone else. Background checks are no predictors of future behaviour, and merely serve to dissuade people from seeking help for fear of getting a firearm prohibition. It is important that you make it clear to

Message du Président

Sheldon Clare

Inquiétudes au niveau international et national



Comme je vous ai avisé dans mon message de fin d'année, nos droits sont encore en péril. Il est évident que toute nouvelle mesure de contrôle des armes sera une réaction émotive vis à vis de mauvais comportements. Comme d'habitude le contrôle des armes ne sera pas basé sur le résultat d'études sérieuses évaluées par des pairs. L'étude actuelle prédominante au Canada (Langmann 2012) indique que les lois Canadienne sur les armes à feu n'ont eu aucun effet sur les taux de criminalité. Cette étude a analysé les données couvrant les années 1978 à 2010. Malgré cette preuve nous allons encore devenir les victimes du contrôle des armes de la part du Gouvernement. Il réagira en conséquence des incidents qui se sont déroulés aux États-Unis, un autre exemple où les américains éternuent et nous attrapons un rhume.

Les Libéraux ont fait planer plusieurs options telles que bannir les armes de poings. Malgré les inquiétudes exprimées par leurs députés des régions rurales, ils vont peut être demander une vérification policière plus approfondie

pour y inclure les problèmes de santé mentale, ou bien ajouter des restrictions sur les armes semi-automatiques. La majorité des gens qui souffrent de problèmes de santé mentale ne sont pas un danger pour eux même ou autrui. Les vérifications policières ne peuvent pas prédire des gestes posés dans l'avenir. Elles ne feront qu'empêcher les gens d'obtenir de l'aide par crainte d'être soumis à des interdictions de posséder des armes à feu. Il est important que vous contactiez vos députés pour qu'ils comprennent que les vérifications policières sont inefficaces et sont conçues pour donner un faux sens de sécurité aux citoyens, rien de plus. Ces vérifications n'empêchent pas ceux qui veulent faire du mal d'avoir accès à des armes à feu, elles ne sont qu'un autre obstacle pour ceux qui sont respectueux des lois.

La réunion générale du WFSA (Forum mondial des activités de tir) a eu lieu en même temps que le IWA Messe à Nuremberg (c'est l'équivalent du Shot Show aux États-Unis), plusieurs nouveaux produits y étaient exposés.

Mais ce qui m'a intéressé d'avantage c'est le contenu du rapport émis par le WFSA. Selon ce rapport les ONG anti-armes portent beaucoup attention aux groupes de travail de l'ONU à propos du Traité sur le commerce des armes, le Programme d'Action sur les petites armes et le International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS). Les ONG anti-armes occupent beaucoup plus de place dans ces groupes de travail et aux réunions de l'ONU par rapport aux groupes pro-armes. Ces ONG exercent une énorme pression envers l'ONU pour qu'elle harmonise ses initiatives et qu'elle crée un régime de contrôle des armes unique qui vise le désarmement civil mondial. J'étais le seul Canadien présent. J'ai fait la description de notre situation politique actuelle. J'ai présenté les résultats des études Canadiennes récentes ainsi que les statistiques s'y rattachant. De plus j'ai fait valoir les initiatives que nous avons pris pour promouvoir une image positive des propriétaires d'armes à feu. M. Tom Gresham, personnalité médiatique, éditeur et écrivain au sujet des armes à feu a reçu le prestigieux prix Ambassadeur du WFSA. Durant sa cérémonie il a présenté une allocution captivante sur le contrôle des armes à feu aux États-Unis. En terminant il a répété une phrase bien connue des membres de l'ACAF, que nous ne devons faire aucun compromis (No Compromise) lorsqu'il s'agit de défendre nos droits. Il a été très fier de porter l'épinglette "No Compromise" que je lui ai donné lors de l'événement.

Nos droits sont hélas encore en péril et nous devons nous assurer que nos amis politiques ne changent pas d'idée. De plus, en prévision de l'élection Fédérale de l'année prochaine, c'est le temps de vous impliquer dans un parti politique, choisir de bons candidats et faire valoir votre point de vue. Ne vous excusez jamais d'être propriétaire d'arme à feu et n'acceptez jamais que les gestes atroces commis par autrui vous sois imputés ou à toute arme à feu. 🇨🇦



Vice-President's Message

Blair Hagen

C-71 Is Upon Us



This bill empowers firearms bureaucrats with even greater powers to employ firearms licence revocation and refusal schemes.

The Liberal gun bill that has been promised (threatened) since that party formed government has finally manifested itself. Riding on the controversy over recent high-profile shootings in the US and a remanufactured firearms controversy in Canada, the government decided the time was right to foist its renewed anti-gun agenda on Canadians.

First and foremost, remembering the immense controversy and national embarrassment associated with their *Firearms Act* of the 1990s, the Liberals feverishly assert there is no firearms registry associated with this bill. Well, truth be told, there is a new registry of rifles and shotguns, and here's how it works:

All sales and transfers of rifles and shotguns are controlled by the Canada Firearms Centre under this legislation. C-71 imposes a mandatory firearms licence validation with every transfer of a rifle or shotgun, including all business and private transfers. Today, that validation takes place by physically presenting a valid licence, or if this is not possible,

by supplying the data from the licence in order so that it can be verified by the seller with the firearms program.

Under C-71, this is replaced by an approval process that must be performed by the firearms program. Whether at a business or simply between licence holders, approval is required or else a criminal offense has taken place. Transfer approval is either granted, delayed or refused by the Canada Firearms Centre, with a reference number issued for each successful transfer.

A reference number. Like for the transfer of a handgun. So, although owners of rifles and shotguns would not be required to hold little paper registrations for their property, like under the old firearms registry, by law the firearms centre will demand to know when rifles and shotguns change hands, whose hands they change, and how many rifles and shotguns a licence holder either transfers or accumulates. And how will they determine a non-restricted rifle or shotgun is being transferred? What other

data will be collected?

Plus, the RCMP have secured copies of the pre-2012 universal firearms registry, and C-71 mandates that the registry data will be provided to Quebec for the establishment of the provincial rifle and shotgun registry there.

The agenda is three-fold. First, encourage the establishment of provincial gun registries. Second, control and collect data federally on the transfer of rifles and shotguns through the firearms program, and third, combine data from the pre-2012 registry and collate this data against the list of firearms licence holders in order to re-establish a national universal registry in the future, when it is politically expedient. So much for Liberal claims of no new firearms registry. Do they really think Canadians are so obtuse or trusting that we can't see this?

The Liberal Bill C-71 once again bans 14,000 legally owned semi-automatic rifles (Swiss Arms and certain models of the CZ 858) that were previously banned by the RCMP firearms centre back in

2014. The Conservative government of the day reversed that ban with their Bill C-42 and the rifles returned to their former classifications – non-restricted or restricted by barrel length. That RCMP firearms reclassification power play was stopped in 2015, and the minister of public safety, via Bill C-42, was empowered to return those rifles to their original classifications and stop other RCMP reclassifications. However, C-71 changes those rules, ending that ability, and once again the rights and property of Canadians lose.

Gun ban bureaucrats have inventive ways of justifying their actions. Some guns, they claim, are variants of other firearms prohibited by previous legislation. Others are "easily converted" to auto fire, they claim, and must be banned. However, when asked hard questions about those assertions they clam up tighter than a drum, claiming that any explanation would be a danger to public safety.

This is an old game in Canada, and at the core of the progressive gun ban agenda of the *Firearms Act* and firearms program. Register, restrict, prohibit, confiscate. The RCMP firearms program is, of course, accountable to no one, even the Liberal government which has

disavowed any responsibility for the firearms reclassification agenda. It's not their fault, you see. It is the RCMP, and aren't they the real experts anyway? Unfortunately, nobody votes for RCMP firearms bureaucrats.

Thirdly, and most importantly, this bill empowers firearms bureaucrats with even greater powers to employ firearms licence revocation and refusal schemes. Presently, bureaucrats can perform a five-year background investigation with information gleaned from firearms licence applications and renewals. Under C-71, that changes to a lifetime. Any incident in your past can now be used as justification to refuse a firearms licence.

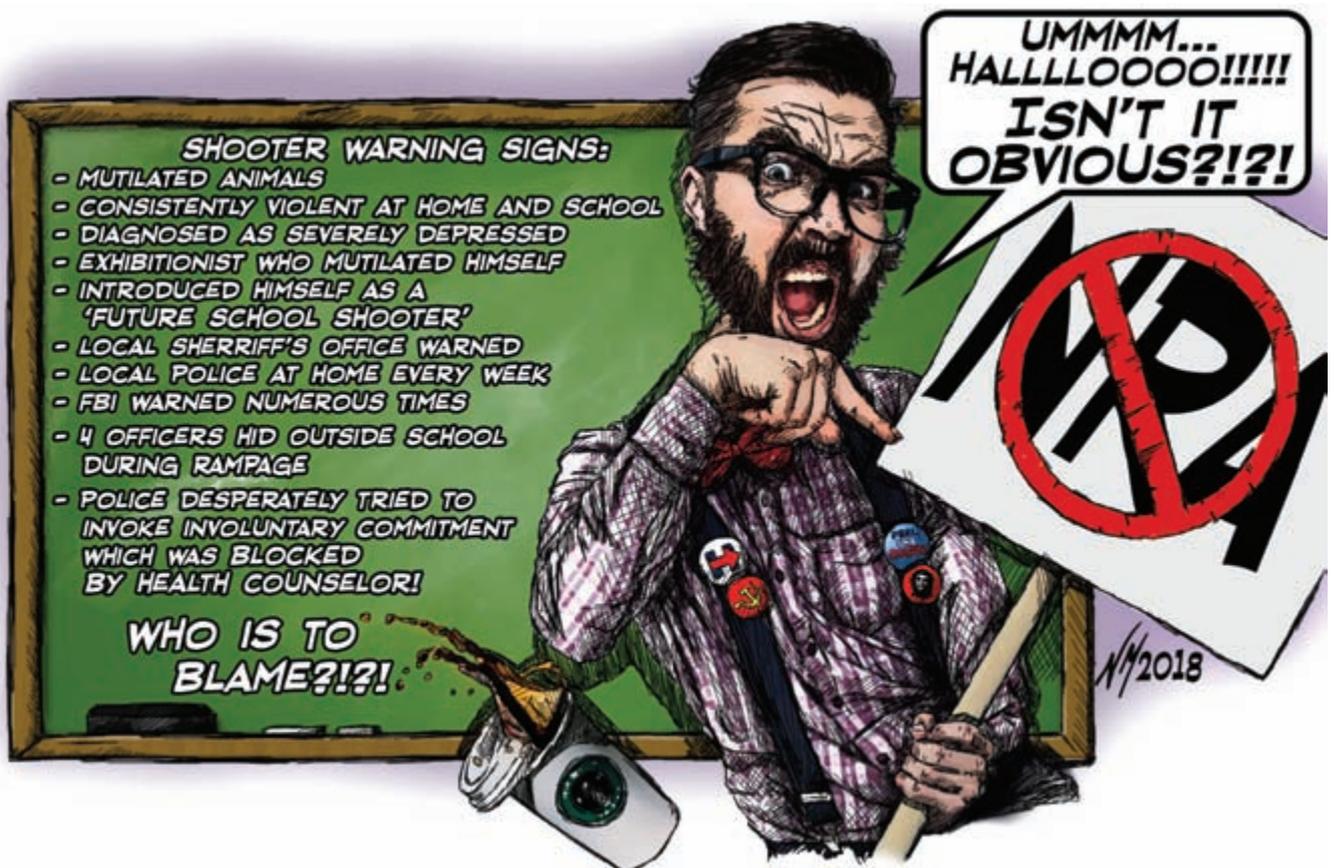
Many Canadians have challenges in their lives for all kinds of reasons. Real life is complicated and messy. People make mistakes and learn from them. People experience rough times for which many seek care or counselling. For many, it is a lifetime challenge.

In recent weeks, since the advent of this legislation, I have been contacted by Canadian veterans and organizations asking what this legislation will mean to them. Many of our veterans have been and are being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many of them hold firearms licences and registrations

for employment purposes or simply to exercise their right and cultural tradition of firearms ownership and use.

All Canadians who aspire to lawfully own and use firearms are suspect to the firearms bureaucracy, but veterans even more so due to their demonization in Canadian mainstream media and popular culture. Veterans, especially those being treated for PTSD, are considered walking time bombs by the Liberals, media and firearms bureaucrats. Actually, we all are. Everyone who holds a firearms licence is considered a danger to public safety by the Liberal government and the RCMP firearms program.

I've been given to using a simple explanation for Bill C-71 lately. If passed, things will be like they are now – times five. C-71 simply ramps up the civil disarmament agenda and puts in place mechanisms to reverse the minor reforms effected under the previous Conservative government. The long gun registry is back, gun bans are back (or more accurately never went away) and roadblocks in the firearms licensing system will be increased. The Liberal government has made it clear where they think Canada's gun problems lie: with law-abiding gun owners. You and me. 🚩





Preserving Our Firearms Heritage

Gary K. Kangas

The Other Mounted Police



Calgary City Police Mounted Unit.

I can sense the gasps of disbelief from various readers. What is the author thinking? There is only one mounted police, the RCMP. Of course, it was better known in the early days as the Northwest Mounted Police, then from 1904 to 1920 as the Royal Northwest Mounted Police.

It's true, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has existed since 1873, however, there were and are territorial mounted police units that predate the RCMP by many years. Early police forces in various Canadian jurisdictions had mounted components to secure vast regions. The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, formed in 1729, is the oldest civic and territorial police force in North America, and would have had mounted members from the beginning. The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary's mounted unit was made official in 1873, then disbanded in 1894, only to be re-constituted in 2003. The Ontario Provincial Police is the second oldest dating to 1792, and their mounted

component to 1845.

Even civic mounted police forces date to the mid-1800s. The oldest is likely the Victoria City Police Mounted Unit dating from 1858 to the 1920s, with a sporadic history to modern times. The Halifax City Mounted began in 1869 and continued to 1905, Montreal Mounted 1885 to date, Toronto Mounted 1886 to date, Vancouver 1908 to date, Dartmouth 1925 to date, Calgary 1978 to date and Hamilton 2010 to date.

HORSEBACK GUNS

The firearms of these lawmen on horseback is so varied it sometimes is impossible to trace. The RCMP, of course, is the most accurately documented. Their first long guns were the Snider Enfield two band .577-calibre rifle, along with the Snider .577 carbine. In 1876, the NWMP were cutting edge with the new 1876 Winchester chambered in the then-new and powerful .45-75 rifle cartridge. Its

period of long and faithful service ended in 1914. The RCMP then adopted the Lee-Metford short magazine carbine in 303 British, serving from 1914 to 1920. A firearm that was well liked with both the mounted and dismounted, it was the last shoulder arm to be made general issue.

RCMP handguns begin with the first model Adams chambered in .450 Adams, a gate-loading six-shooter with an exposed ejector rod. The unprotected ejector side rod was easily damaged, and it was not a good sidearm for mounted troops. Their period of service was 1874 and 1875. The second model Adams was then adopted with a different type of ejector mechanism, comprising a rod contained in the centre of the base pin. The best feature of this revolver was its double-action. Interestingly, diary accounts indicate a number of members purchased Smith & Wesson No. 3s in .44 Russian for everyday service use. In 1883, the NWMP began to phase out the second model

Adams and replaced it with Enfield revolvers in .476 Enfield. Although it served until 1905, the troops were not impressed. It had difficult extraction, the barrel release was not well made and being a frail top-break, accuracy was sub-standard. In 1904, the force adopted the very large and stout Colt New Service chambered in .455 and the powerful .45 Colt. This swing-out cylinder, six-shooter would serve the force with distinction until 1954 when they adopted the Smith & Wesson Military and Police in 38 Special. That revolver held sway until the later part of the 20th century when semi-auto pistols were adopted.

The civic mounted forces from the very early days used various muzzleloaders, then Navy Colts and British percussion revolvers. In the cartridge era, Adams, Enfields, Colts, Smith & Wessons, and Webley RICs appear to be the revolvers of choice.

In the BC Police, from the mid-1800s to 1900, some official firearms were issued to the constables that were sworn officers and called Provincials. They were supported by members they appointed, and who were called Specials. The Specials situation was one of BYOG (Bring Your Own Gun). The research on what they brought is murky, with few sidearms easily identified. But there are documented diary accounts of Navy Colts, Colt Dragons, Smith & Wesson No. 3s, Webley RICs, Bulldogs and various pocket pistols. A specific and well-documented carry gun was that of John Kirkup, a Victoria City Policeman who was in the Mounted Unit and carried a five-and-a-half-inch single-action Colt in .44-40. Kirkup, in the mid 1880s, became a BC provincial policeman and continued to carry his Colt.

As the 20th century dawned, police forces nationwide began to standardize to some degree, adopting the Smith & Wesson K38 in large numbers. The BC Police in the early 1920s favoured the Smith & Wesson large frame .38-44 using the super 38 Special ammunition which was the precursor of the 357 Magnum. In the post-millennium era, all the mounted police use semi-auto pistols. Smith & Wessons, Sig Sauer P229s, Glock 17s and Berrettas have been commonly issued firearms.

RECOLLECTIONS

The mounted units hold a special place in the memories of their members. The following is a personal vignette by Constable Peter Ryan, retired, of the Vancouver City Police.

"I had a wonderful 28-year career in what some of us referred to as the CFL,



Constable Peter Ryan and Challenger on the beach at Stanley Park.

Constable for Life, club. I made the decision to stay involved in operational policing instead of going the administrative route through promotion. Through the years, I worked patrol in all areas of Vancouver including undercover, VIP security for presidents and royalty, intelligence and many other specific duties.

"I have to say I had a varied career that was challenging as well as a lot of fun, but the best position I had in the VPD is the six years from 1988 to 1994 that I spent in the Mounted Squad. I made it my goal to be transferred to this squad. I had riding experience previously and furthered that with private riding lessons. To be transferred into the squad you had to take their training on your own time, and 'had to pay your dues' in advance.

"There were eight officers and a sergeant, and we split it into two 10-hour shifts, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Our stables were in Stanley Park, which was our main area of patrol, but we did patrol downtown and other areas of the city as required. Stanley Park covers 1,000 acres of land, with roads, 200 kilometres of trails, an eight-kilometre seawall and a number of unofficial trails. It receives eight million visits a year and is enjoyed by tourists and locals alike. A Mounted Squad officer is kept very busy.

"Before you can head out on patrol each day, you have to get your trusted steed groomed and prepared. Get the horse out of the paddock, bring him into the stables, brush him up, trim his mane, clean the hooves and check for damage and make sure the shoes are not loose. Feeding the horses and cleaning the stalls is done by the stable attendants most of

the day, with officers doing it on the afternoon shift. Then it's saddle up the horse, tack up and away we go.

"Our mounted duties were as varied as the users of the park. Our priority was to keep people who used the park safe and ensure their time in the park was enjoyable during the day and at night. We would enforce traffic laws, ticket speeders, enforce park bylaws, investigate crimes and arrest the odd criminal, all from horseback. I have chased down a few people in vehicles and on bicycles that thought they could outrun a horse! They were wrong!

"A true public ambassador, a police officer on horseback is a wonderful community liaison officer. Approachable and congenial, people feel comfortable coming up and asking questions and requesting a photo. I am sure there are 1,000s of photos of my horse and me all over the world."

Peter joined in the era of the Smith & Wesson M&P 38 Special and wrapped up his career carrying a Berretta 9mm. As an author, one of my most enjoyable interviews was an extended lunch with Peter. His recounting tales of daring do, exciting chases, getting stuck in a swamp, he and his horse being grazed by a bus and his pleasing interactions with the public were highlights. A professional policeman on a well-trained, capable horse working as a team harkens back to the real old west and our firearms heritage. 🗡️

Sources: The *Canadian Encyclopedia*, Calgary City Police Website, retired Constable Peter Ryan, *Small Arms of the Mounted Police*

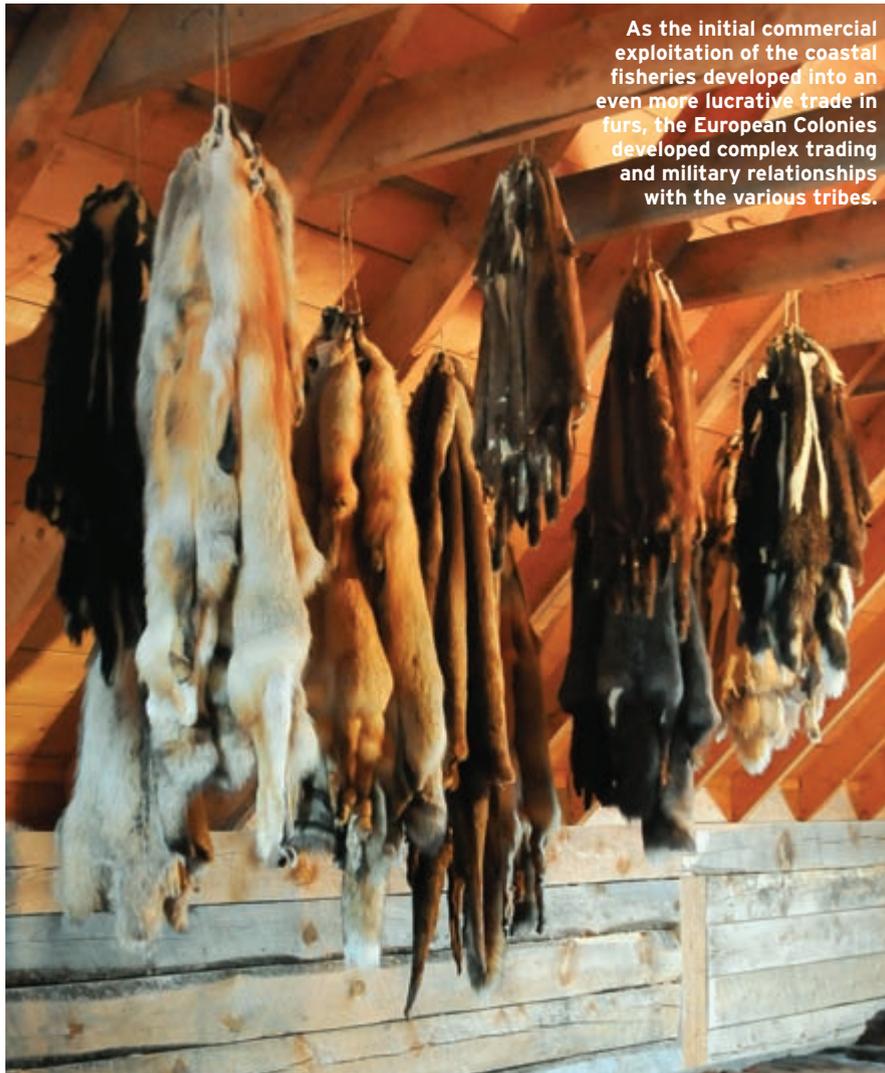


Politics & Guns

Bruce Gold

Canadian Culture – Indigenous Roots

This is the first installment in a three-part series on Canadian culture and guns – Editor



As the initial commercial exploitation of the coastal fisheries developed into an even more lucrative trade in furs, the European Colonies developed complex trading and military relationships with the various tribes.

EUROPEANS & FIRST NATIONS

European settlement of North America began with a decline in Spanish power that opened the sea-lanes to the New World. France established Quebec (1608), England established Albany (1614) and the Dutch established New Amsterdam (1624). These colonies carried the national rivalries of the Old World into the New World. Over time, they would transform the rivalries and tribal relations of the indigenous population. In both worlds, military and economic competition created a confusing array of treaties and shifting alliances. Warfare between groups was endemic in both worlds, and the ultimate determination of who controlled what was based on armed strength, with sovereignty decided by the right of conquest. As the initial commercial exploitation of the coastal fisheries developed into an even more lucrative trade in furs, the European colonies developed complex trading and military relationships with the various tribes.

The French, as they moved inland up the St. Lawrence River, established close trading relations with the Hurons of the Great Lakes. This agricultural tribe already had trading relationships with the hunter-gatherer tribes to their north and quickly adapted to the profitable role of middlemen in the fur trade. The tribe's trade relationship with the French to the east and other tribes to the north, south and west dominated the French fur trade in the Great Lakes region until the tribe was destroyed by the Iroquois in 1648.

The Dutch in New Amsterdam and the English who took over their colony in 1644 used the Hudson River as their route into the continent, soon establishing relationships with the Iroquois Confederacy. The Iroquois Confederacy, despite the looseness of the confederation and its tendency to not act in unison or engage in internal quarrels, was a major political player for over a

To understand our culture, we must understand the past that shaped us. History performs this function and is one of the great systems of knowledge. Unlike ideology, it's based on actual events. People ignorant of history are easily duped with "plausible" stories devised to misrepresent the past and the present that came from it. Indigenous history is currently being reimagined by Progressives who, following the tradition of Rousseau's Noble Savage,

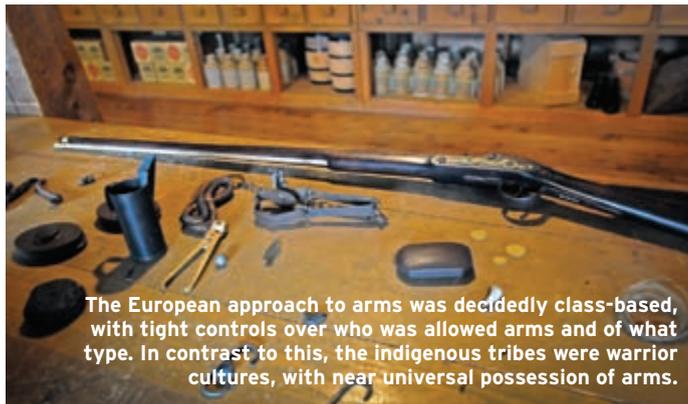
want to distort it into an unmitigated criticism of western civilization. A more realistic understanding of our history recognizes both the cultural clash and cultural fusion that resulted from the interaction of a technologically superior European civilization and the Stone Age tribes of the New World. This is a history where indigenous individuals and groups, like the newly arriving European individuals and groups, both lost and gained.

Within a few decades of settlement, a gun culture with widespread use and possession of firearms was well established in Canadian indigenous and settler communities.



century. This alliance of tribes (the Five and later Six Nations) soon realized that the advantages of the fur trade required control over more territories and their fur-bearing resources. Backed by the Dutch, and later the English, the Confederacy launched a series of wars to eliminate competition from their neighbours. They destroyed Huronia in 1648, the Neutral Nations and the Erie in 1656 and the Algonquin Confederacy in 1675. In 1680, the Iroquois made war on the Illinois to prevent them entering into trade with the French. Despite their success in eliminating the Hurons as fur-trade middlemen, they could not prevent the Ottawa, a more western tribe, from continuing the Huron's domination of the fur trade in the Great Lakes Basin.

In 1668, a new contender emerged as the Hudson Bay Company opened a trade route through Hudson Bay. They quickly established trading relationships with the Cree and Assiniboin. The Cree and Assiniboin then used their guns and trading advantages to dominate their competitors, the Dakota Sioux, Gros Ventre and Blackfoot to the southwest and the Athabaskan tribes to the north.



The European approach to arms was decidedly class-based, with tight controls over who was allowed arms and of what type. In contrast to this, the indigenous tribes were warrior cultures, with near universal possession of arms.

By the 1740s, the French had established a relationship with the Crow Indians of the upper Missouri River and were using them as middlemen in the western trade with the Shoshoni. By the 1750s, French traders on the Mississippi were supplying the Comanche with guns, enabling them to drive the Spanish from what is now northern Texas.

A DIFFERING ATTITUDE TOWARD ARMS

This brief recounting of our early history demolishes the myth that we are and have always been a peaceful, unarmed nation. It also reveals the disrespectful lie that the indigenous tribes were mere victims and helpless pawns. Our actual history demonstrates that the indigenous tribes were quick to see the advantages of the new situation and turned both the new technologies and the new

commercial opportunities to their own advantage.

One of the differences between the European and indigenous culture was their attitude to arms. The European approach to arms was decidedly class-based with tight controls over who was allowed arms and of what type. This was also reflected in the restrictive class-based hunting laws in Europe that effectively prevented the common people from hunt-

ing. These restrictions on arms soon gave way to near universal armament as the realities of warfare and the necessity of hunting forced changes on the new settlers. In contrast to this, the indigenous tribes were warrior cultures with near-universal possession of arms.

The first battle involving firearms and Indians was fought in 1609 at Ticonderoga, where the Mohawks (part of the Five Nations) were defeated by the French and their allies. This battle was recorded by Samuel de Champlain, who noted the immense moral effect of firearms against tribes that had never seen or heard of such a thing. The actual firearm involved was the arquebus, a heavy, clumsy weapon that required the use of a lighted wick or match to set off the powder. This weapon, with its need for a constantly burning wick, was ill

suited for North America.

The North American need to hunt (open to all classes of society) and the need for effective arms for warfare drove an intense demand for better weapons, and as a result the flintlock was adopted sooner than it was in Europe. The flintlock, with its ability to be instantly ready without the need for a burning wick, made it possible to conceal oneself and was much more resistant to rain. Captain Myles Standish, the Plymouth Colony's military leader (1621), was noted for his early adoption of this improvement. These advantages led to the near-universal adoption of the flintlock, the latest and deadliest military technology, despite it costing three times as much as a matchlock. Within a few decades of settlement, a gun culture with widespread use and possession of firearms was well established in both indigenous and settler communities.

These developments made the flintlock the most important trade item available, since it held the key to success in both the fur trade and in warfare. By

the 1660s, virtually all Iroquois warriors had armed themselves with a musket. The indigenous population quickly learned to insist on the best quality arms and were quite capable of playing off traders in rival colonies against each other. In 1643, the Mohawk launched a war against the Dutch, but spared the Dutch settlements that continued to sell them guns, a good example of how military strategies could impact bargaining power and trade.

This mix of trade and military competition was particularly awkward for the French settlements. It was in their interest to deny the Iroquois arms due to them being a mortal threat to the colony. However, they also wanted to arm the Iroquois and keep them strong, so they would block the Ottawa from trading with the English colonies where they could get much better prices.

CONCLUSION

We can see from this short examination that an armed society with the everyday use of arms was established in our earliest colonial period. This was in conflict

to the prevailing European cultures of strict arms controls and the treatment of arms as a class-based privilege. However, it was very much in accord with the armed cultures the settlers found on their arrival. In Canada, we can see the continuation of this armed culture in our First Nations. The First Nations have aggressively defended their right to arms and the right to hunting in the courts and in political debates. In Canada, the tradition and culture of an armed citizenry was established in our earliest colonial period and continues to the present day. 🇨🇦

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INCREASING FIREARMS OWNERSHIP

A sure sign of who's winning

BY CHRIS MCGARRY

The early 1990s were a dark period for gun owners in Canada. Following the Polytechnique shooting in 1989, both major political parties, spurred on by immense pressure from gun control organizations and a public apparently hungry for increased firearm restrictions, passed bills C-17 and C-68. Anti-gun legislators enacted these measures hoping they would put major stumbling blocks in the way of legal firearms ownership, thereby discouraging people from getting into the shooting sports, and ultimately weakening the power of the firearms community.

Well, here we are some 25 years later, and the grand social experiment thrust upon Canadian society by progressives hasn't had near the desired effect it was intended to have. Lawful firearms ownership in this country is increasing, not decreasing, while crime rates continue to fall.

Obviously, Canadians weren't deterred by the burdensome licensing requirements of the *Firearms Act*, which subject gun owners to mandatory safety train-

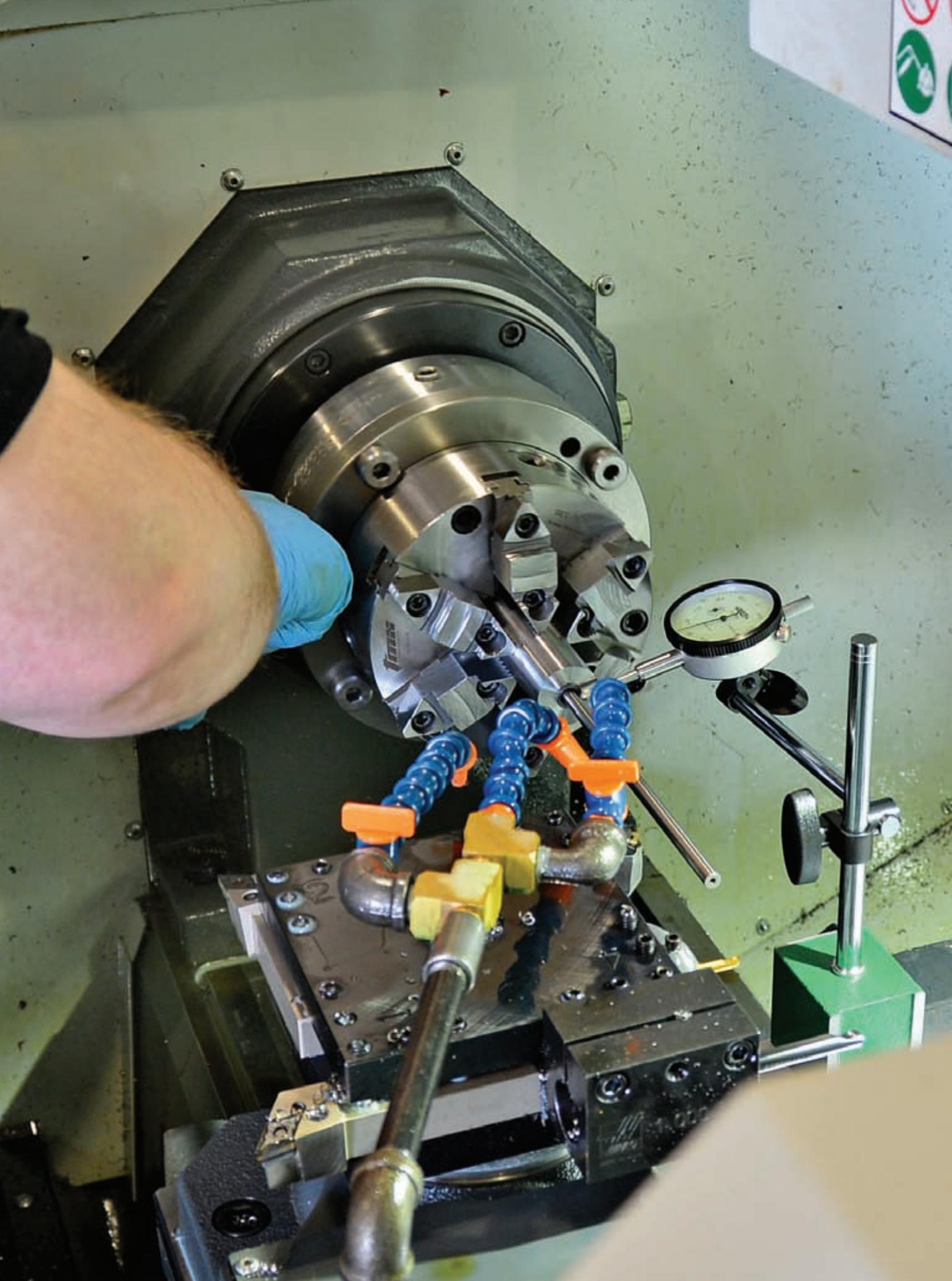
ing, a string of regulations that violate the constitution, as well as daily background checks. No, instead of allowing these draconian measures to dissuade folks from partaking in an activity that is a natural right, Canadians bit the bullet (no pun intended) and jumped through the hoops. This is exactly what the firearms community in Canada needed to do in order to become stronger and eventually lobby a future gun-friendly government to repeal all, or most, of these onerous regulations.

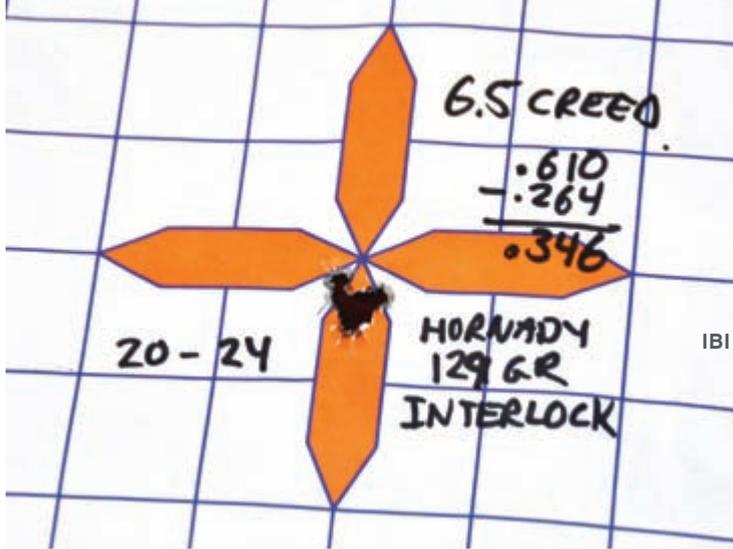
Why has firearms ownership increased? It's a known fact that many people are anti-gun not because of any particular agenda, but out of fear and ignorance. Some antis and many more fence sitters have quickly changed their views after spending a day at the range with friends. These people, in turn, have become gun owners. Access to social media and alternative news has also played a major role in swaying public opinion with regards to firearms. Additionally, shooting sports are growing in popularity, despite decades of demoni-

zation of firearms by the mainstream media.

The numbers speak for themselves. According to a report from the Eastern Ontario Shooting Club published on Jan. 5, 2018, during 2017, firearms imports in Canada reached \$131.7 million. Furthermore, the value of rifles imported from the United States was a staggering \$43.2 million. One thing is certain: as increasing numbers of Canadians embrace the shooting sports, hunting and this country's rich firearms heritage, gun owners become a stronger force to oppose any gun control legislation governments will try to attack us with.

And it isn't just Canada that is seeing an increase in civilian firearms ownership. Despite gun control laws even more stringent than Canada's, firearms ownership is increasing in Australia. A recent article on an Australian news site reported Melbourne alone has 80 gun shops that are constantly busy. At the end of the day, more firearm owners mean more folks joining the fight to preserve our ancient rights. 





INTERNATIONAL BARRELS INC.

Canada's first high-volume, custom barrel maker

BY AL VOTH

Barrel making has a long and rich history in Canada, beginning in the era of the flintlock when it was common for gunsmiths to make their own barrels. After all, having to order barrels from a European supplier meant at least a six-month delay. And that was if the trade winds were favourable. If they weren't, or the ship bearing either the order or the supply ran into trouble, it could take much longer.

It's interesting to note that this situation can still be in effect. Because, if a shooter wants a custom barrel from one of the major US makers like Benchmark, Krieger, Shilen or Bartlein, the wait can easily be six months. Of course, now bureaucracy is the biggest problem, not communication or shipping speed. And while some entrepreneurs are stocking US-made barrels in Canada, if they don't have what you need, it'll be like waiting for a schooner from England.

ORIGINS

That's a situation some Canadian investors saw and determined to correct. The result is International Barrels Incorporated of Chilliwack, BC. And as the name suggests, they are in the barrel-making business. They began by purchasing the machinery and tooling needed to make high-quality, button-rifled barrels and hiring the people to do the work. Over the last year, they've been setting up machinery, training and perfecting their technique. They

are now in production and I was able to visit their shop in March of this year to see them in operation.

I counted seven people working at IBI, and it was Ryan Steacy, the leader of that team, who gave me the tour.

As you might expect, my first question to him was about what they were hoping to accomplish. Ryan said, "We want to build Canadian barrels that are affordable and of very high quality. And we want to be able to deliver them in a timely manner. Canada has some fine barrel makers, but they are one-man operations. They make great barrels, but often can't meet demand. That leaves shooters looking for US-made barrels. We want to replace those American products."

"Can you walk me through your process here?" I asked. And as we zig-zagged through the shop to where the steel stock is delivered, it was obvious none of the staff were sitting around waiting for orders to come in. The workload at each station suggested they were going to be busy for a while.

PROCESS

"We're filling an order for a high-end rifle manufacturer," said Ryan, in response to me pointing out the workload. "We're in the middle of producing 1,900 barrels for them, so things are a little hectic."

When we reached one of the rear doors, he pointed to rows of round

steel bar. "We're only doing stainless so far. It's 416R steel and comes from a German mill. We get it in long lengths and the very first step is to cut it to the lengths we need for whatever we're building at the time."

We walked deeper into the shop and he showed me their deep-hole drill, or gun drill. "This machine will drill two barrels at a time, at a rate of about one inch per minute," said Ryan. "The longest we can handle right now is 27 inches. However, we're setting up a Pratt & Whitney drill that will give us the capability to do up to 48 inches."

Ryan went on to explain that the drilling is done undersize, and then the barrel is reamed to get a precise internal diameter, with a much smoother finish than a drill leaves behind. But that's still not smooth enough for them, so each barrel is also lapped using the traditional method of a lead plug embedded with abrasive. That lapping process takes 20 to 30 minutes. "We get a good internal finish that way," said Ryan, "but it's too slow. So, we've invested in a Sunnen industrial hone. It's on the way to us now and will be the only one in Canada. The quality of finish it'll be able to produce and the tolerances it can hold are incredible."

Once the bore is acceptably smooth, straight and uniform, it's ready for rifling, with button-rifling the only process currently in use at IBI. This involves pulling a carbide button, which

All barrels are stress relieved by carefully controlled heating in this specialized oven.





Ryan Steacy leads the team at IBI.

bears a negative image of the rifling pattern, through the bore. As the button is pulled through, it is also rotated to produce the desired twist rate. "We're trying to make 5R our standard rifling pattern," said Ryan, "with whatever twist rate the customer specifies."

Ryan then pointed to a large, round oven next in line to the rifling machine. "The rifling process may introduce some stress into a barrel," he said. "And we need to get rid of that. So, we run all barrels through this oven, and a computer-controlled cycle of heating which removes those unwanted stresses. Once the barrels cool, they are ready for a final lapping, so it's back to the lapping station they go. And if they pass inspection after that, they head for the CNC lathes where they are profiled, threaded and perhaps even chambered if that's what's needed."

OPTIONS AND PRICING

"Do you install barrels on customer's actions?" I asked.

"As a rule, we don't. We make barrels. We much prefer you have your gunsmith install the barrel. But we do make pre-fit barrels, for rifles that use a barrel-nut system. If you have one of

those and the right tools, a customer can install their own barrel."

Ryan is a four-time Canadian National Champion in service rifle competition and uses ARs exclusively in that competition. So, I asked him about AR barrels. "Absolutely, we make AR barrels," he said. "In fact, competition shooters of all stripes are one of our major target markets. Some of the best shooters in Canada, in many disciplines, already have our barrels on their guns, for this coming season."

"What about options and cost?"

"Right now, we only have the tooling to make barrels in .224, 6.5mm, .308 and .338 bore sizes. We'll be expanding to 6mm and 7mm soon, and then on to others after that. But growth always takes time and we don't want to rush and risk sacrificing quality. Accuracy is paramount to me, and we won't sacrifice that.

"As for price, a fully profiled blank that is unthreaded and unchambered is priced at \$419. A pre-fit for a barrel-nut gun that's ready to headspace and install is \$599. And that's also the price for a fully finished and match-chambered barrel. Of course, we have dealer pricing for gunsmiths and others who buy

in quantity. As we build up our inventory, if we have it on the shelf, delivery will be a day or two. Delivery time for a custom barrel order is going to be around four to six weeks, depending on how busy we are."

And judging by what I saw and heard, I expect IBI is going to be very busy. They've made a significant investment to become the first high-volume, custom barrel shop in Canada, and that's not a minor accomplishment. As they grow in experience, machinery and tooling, I expect they will be able to compete handily with the largest, most famous American barrel makers. They are a welcome addition to the Canadian firearms industry and fully deserving of our support and patronage. 🍷



International Barrels Inc.

Website:

www.internationalbarrels.com

Phone: 604-674-6972

Address: Chilliwack, B.C.



GUNS UNDER A GRAND

Clay-busting shotguns for the rest of us

BY JEFF HELSDON

Anyone who has shot clay targets has likely taken a few covetous looks at the specialized shotguns of serious competitors. The hefty four- or five-figure price tags are intimidating, for sure. For example, Lawry Shooting Sports, which only deals in trap, skeet and sporting clays guns, lists four guns on their used rack as I write this. These guns start at \$4,500 for a used Kolar skeet gun set, \$10,000 for a Winchester skeet set and top out at \$15,900 for a Kreighoff trap gun. And those are used guns! More common are the Brownings and Berettas that come with a price tag of “only” several thousand dollars.

It all begs the question, “Will an expensive gun improve your scores, or does it just stroke the ego of the owner?”

If competitive shooting is your game, it’s no coincidence those who shoot thousands of shells, and win, use a sport-specific shotgun. Those high-end guns typically feature adjustments which allow a custom fit to the owner and are made to take the rigors of shooting tens of thousands of shells a year. The good news is competitive shotguns don’t have to cost four figures. Many are available for less than \$1,000. These guns may not be on par with their counterparts costing ten times more, but they are great starters, and some are solid guns that will easily handle shooting thousands of shells per year.

THE DIFFERENCES

Before delving too far into the quest for a sporting gun, it’s important to realize the difference between trap, skeet and

sporting clay guns.

A key difference is that trap guns shoot high because targets are always on the rise. Often, 70 per cent of the shot will hit above the point of aim and 30 per cent below. Some guns are even 80/20. Field, skeet and sporting clays guns shoot flatter – that is, half the shot falls above the point of aim and half below.

Also, trap guns often have a Monte Carlo stock, longer barrels (the actual length of which is dependent on it being a break-action, semi or pump) and tighter chokes. Single-shot trap guns are common, but are unheard of in skeet or sporting clays because of the need for multiple shots. Monte Carlo stocks are an option on skeet guns and are less common on sporting clays guns. A skeet gun always has open chokes, while sporting guns need interchangeable chokes for the variety of shots on a course.

Ported barrels are common on many guns these days.

“Most sporting clays guns are ported so there’s less muzzle rise,” Aaron Cummins, Browning Firearms product manager, explained. “In the field, the shooter doesn’t want porting because they may or may not be wearing hearing protection and porting makes shooting louder.”

Shotguns can also have floating ribs to negate any change in the point of impact from the barrel heating faster than the rib, adjustable stocks, different sights, extended choke tubes to facilitate quicker changes and up-graded wood and engraving. A wider rib, which creates a better sighting

plane, is another popular option. And while guns under \$1,000 don’t necessarily have all these features, they can have some of them. Here’s a quick look at few contenders in this lower price range.

STOEGER

The Condor Competition is a versatile, Brazilian-made, over-under designed to be at home on a sporting clays range, trap field or skeet field. It has automatic ejectors, AA-grade walnut on the stock and forearm, ported barrels, selective barrels and a gold trigger. It even has an adjustable stock and a little bit of engraving on the receiver. The Condor comes with two flush-mount choke tubes and six extended chokes for easy changes. It is available in both 12 and 20 gauge.

The Grand is a single-barrel shotgun designed for trap shooting. It has an adjustable comb, a trap rib and AA-grade walnut stock. Imported by Stoeger Canada, both the Grand and the Competition retail for under \$1,000.

The Stoeger Model 3000 Sporting is another option under \$1,000. This semi-automatic has an inertia drive system and a 30-inch barrel. It comes with sporting features such as extended knurled target choke tubes, an over-sized target bolt handle and bolt release. The gun is shipped with improved cylinder, skeet 1 and skeet 2 chokes. The polymer stock is built to take an optional recoil reducer.

MOSSBERG

The 930 Pro-Series Sporting is a semi-auto based on Mossberg’s 930 series. ▶

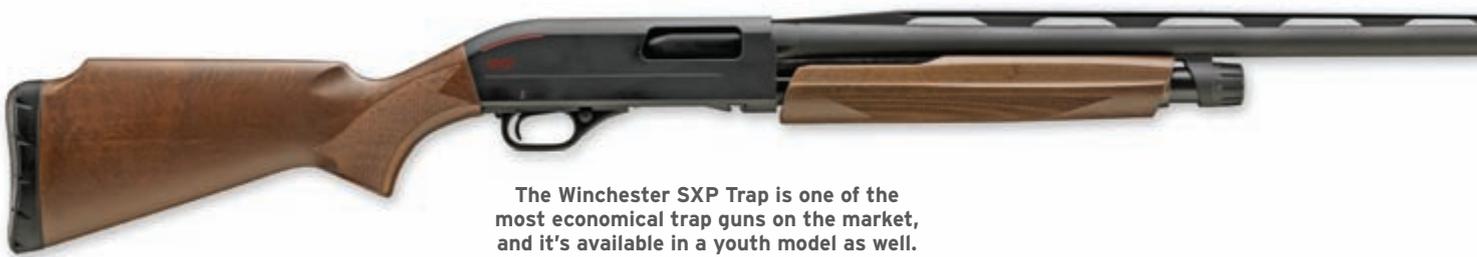


Serious competitors need a shotgun which will withstand tens of thousands of shots every year, for many years, but the casual shooter doesn't need that kind of durability.

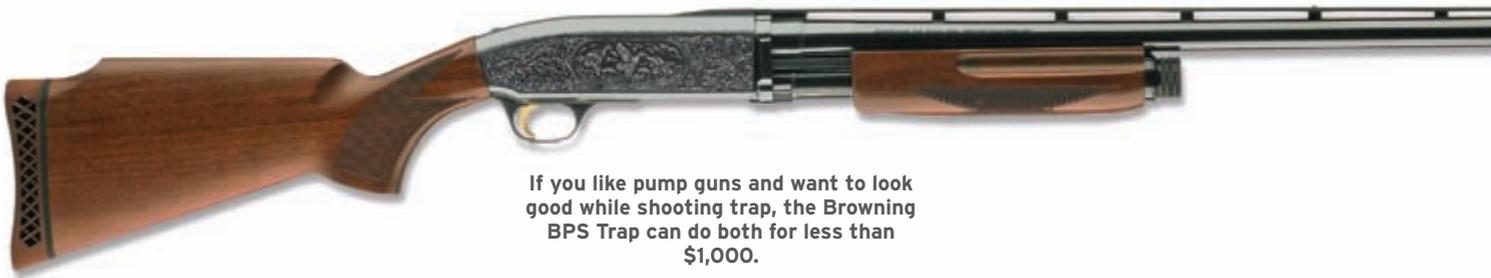




The Mossberg 930 Pro-Series Sporting offers the recoil-reducing benefits of a semi-auto.



The Winchester SXP Trap is one of the most economical trap guns on the market, and it's available in a youth model as well.



If you like pump guns and want to look good while shooting trap, the Browning BPS Trap can do both for less than \$1,000.



The Stoeger Condor Competition is one of the few over/under competition guns available for under \$1,000.



Mossberg's Linda Powell described the evolution of the gun. "With the success we had developing the JM Pro-Series shotgun for 3-gun competition, we knew we had a work-horse semi-auto. It's extremely reliable, very comfortable to shoot, with a soft recoil impulse that makes it easy to get on the next target. We knew if we paid attention to the details and sought out the right advice, we could also develop a gun that would be perfect for clay target shooting."

Mossberg employed assistance from Gil and Vicki Ash of OSP Shooting Schools. They are experts in the art of teaching others how to break clay targets. "With their help, we developed a new stock and forend for the 930 that ensures the 930 Pro-Series Sporting points naturally for most shooters right out of the box," Powell said. "The stock also has an adjustable drop spacer system that provides shooters with the ability to fine tune the fit of their shotgun, so shooters that need more or less drop can adjust the stock as needed."

Powell said the key to breaking targets is ensuring a gun fits properly. She believes Mossberg has accomplished that, producing a gun that fits most people well out of the box, but can be fine tuned for each individual shooter. The 930 Pro-Series Sporting retails for just over \$1,000, but a little selective shopping might find one under the grand mark.

ATA

ATA produces several Sporter models in both its semi-automatic and double-barrel line. This Turkish company recently changed importers and there was some uncertainty as to which models would be imported from the company's extensive line at press time.

The Venza, which is the company's gas-operated, semi-automatic line, features a Sporter with either 28 or 30-inch barrels. The barrel



and receiver are a unique grey colour and the adjustable stock is grade 2 walnut. The gun retails for about \$900 (price provided by Tillsonburg Gun Shop).

The NEO inertia semi-automatic line also features a sporting gun. This line has more features, such as stock shims and an optional recoil reducing system, which can be inserted into the stock. Pricing was not available.

WINCHESTER

The SXP Trap carries on the tradition of the Model 12 trap as a pump competition gun. But the SXP differs from its predecessor in that it's more economical. It is back bored for optimum shot patterns and the bolt and other internal parts are plated with black chrome. The rib is pure trap gun, being a wide 5/16 inch, with a fibre optic front sight and ivory mid bead. The SXP also features Winchester's Inflex recoil pad and is available with either a 30 or 32-inch barrel. At less than \$600, this is one of the most economical trap guns on the market.

Billed as a gun for youth shooters getting into the sport, the SXP Compact is much the same gun, but in a smaller package. The Monte Carlo stock offers a 13-inch pull, and the barrel is only 28 inches.

BROWNING

Yes, you read it right – a Browning trap gun for under \$1,000. At \$950, it just made my cut, but the Browning BPS is a lot of competition gun for the money. This is a trap gun through and through, not a general sporting gun. At present, there isn't a sporting version available, although a Micro version is manufactured for youth and others with shorter arms. The Micro has a shorter length of pull and a 28-inch barrel. Featuring a walnut Monte Carlo stock, engraved receiver made from one steel block, magazine cut-off, a HiViz Pro

Comp fiber optic sight and a middle bead, it comes with a 30-inch barrel in the full-size version.

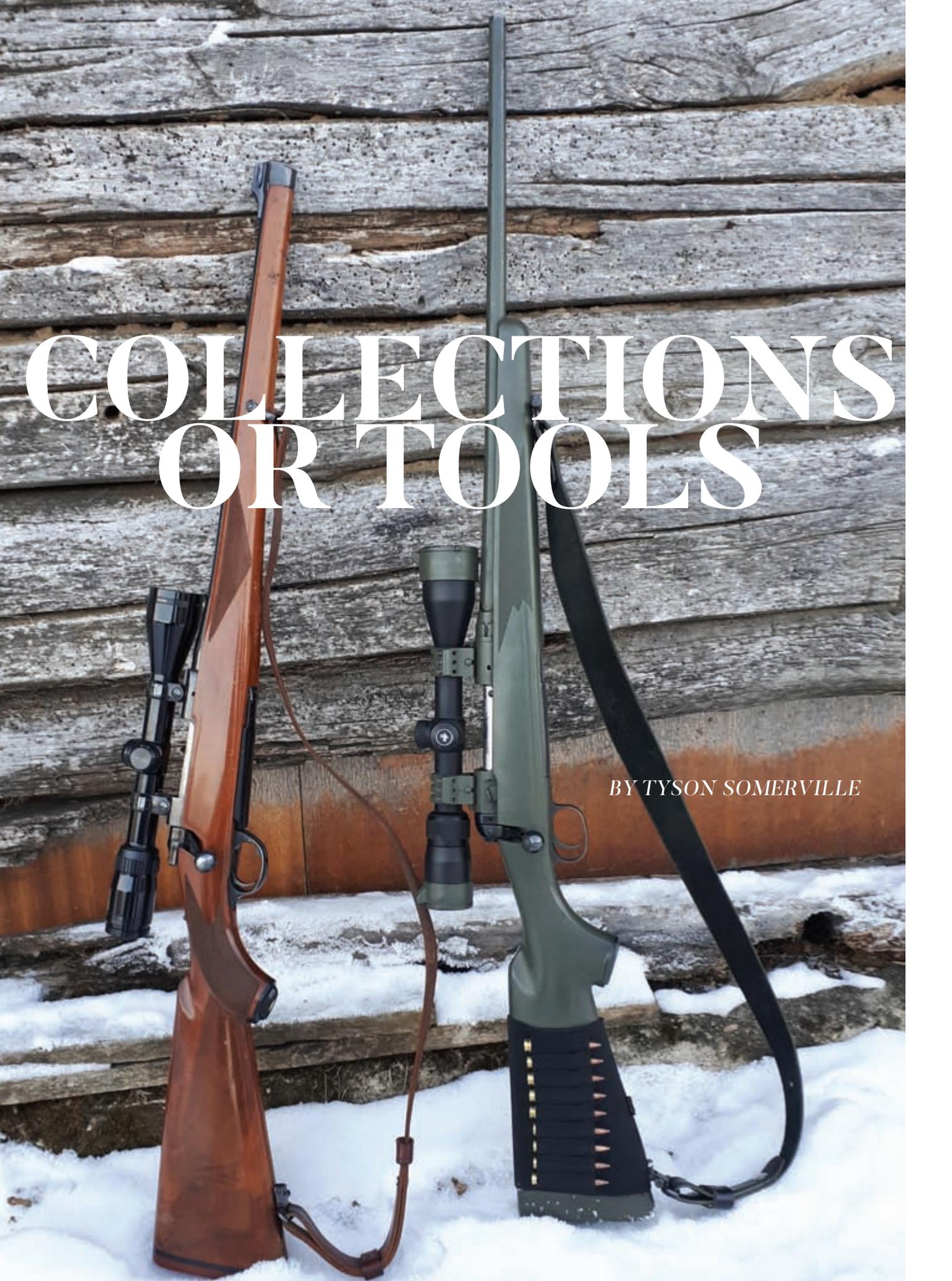
SHOOTING THE CONDOR

My initial intention was to test both a trap model under \$1,000 and a sporting gun, but availability challenges limited me to only the former. So, I put the Condor Competition through the paces at my local trap range.

The gun pointed nicely and fit well. I made some adjustments on the comb before leaving home and must say, it never bit me in the cheek once. When I shot a lot of trap, I used a Model 12 that I could break more targets with, but it did like to bite me in the cheek occasionally. I was impressed with the felt recoil from the Condor – or lack thereof. I shot both one ounce and 1-1/8-ounce shells and didn't notice recoil with either. I'm not sure whether to attribute that to the porting, the recoil pad, the heavier weight than a Model 12, or a combination of all of the above.

The wide rib made for an excellent sighting plane, but it was missing the mid bead many competition guns have. I didn't have any heat dispersion after 50 targets, but it was a cooler day. I struggled a little with finding the impact point, expecting the gun to shoot higher than it did, but that's common with a new and unfamiliar gun. Overall, I was impressed with the way this shotgun handled. It's a great starter gun, but probably not ideal for serious competitors.

Which is not to say that all these guns can't handle thousands of rounds. At one time, pump guns were very common trap and skeet guns. They all demonstrate you don't have to break the bank to become a better shot, and money spent on shells can pay greater dividends than investing five figures into a gun. 🍀

The image shows two rifles leaning against a rustic log cabin wall. The cabin is constructed from horizontal logs, with a section of corrugated metal siding visible near the bottom. The ground is covered in snow. On the left is a wooden rifle with a black scope and a brown leather strap. On the right is an olive green rifle with a black scope and a black leather strap. The title 'COLLECTIONS OR TOOLS' is overlaid in large white serif font across the center of the image.

COLLECTIONS OR TOOLS

BY TYSON SOMERVILLE

I was recently at my friend Brad's house for what turned out to be an unsuccessful coyote hunt. While there, I realized we both have 243 Winchester rifles that are very different firearms, almost comically so. Mine is an old Ruger M77 International that I purchased many years ago and have babied ever since. Brad's is a spray-painted Savage Model 11 that I doubt has ever seen the business end of a bore mop. It got me thinking: to him, that gun is a tool, a dedicated truck or quad gun. It's not meant to be pretty, it's meant to perform. To me, my gun is a work of art, or a piece of history and something that needs to be taken care of. I handload for it, clean it after every use and show it off proudly. I even went out of my way to find a high-gloss scope for it, to match the bluing. I have a real soft spot for its full length Mannlicher stock, even if it likely is the cause of my two MOA groups.

This topic of tools versus collectibles got me thinking about other people I know. My brother, for example, is more minimalist. You see it in his home, with his sparse and well-placed furniture. My house has the cozy and full feel of a used book store, or a hoarder's garage, depending on your taste. Our interior design styles are also reflected in our gun collections. My brother owns about half-a-dozen guns, all with different and

specific purposes. I, on the other hand, own nearly 30 firearms. I love to find an obscure calibre and research it thoroughly, so I was tickled pink when I received my great grandfather's Savage 99 in 250-3000 (now referred to as 250 Savage). It debuted in 1915 in the Model 99 and was able to deliver an 87-grain bullet at 3,000 feet per second, hence the 250-3000 designation. I hope to use it on a deer this coming fall, for old time's sake, but plan to use a modern, well-constructed 87-grain bullet.

Needless to say, rarities and oddities find an easy home in my safe. One of my first guns was a Savage 29B rimfire 22 LR. I found it in pieces in my father's garage, with a few bits missing. I managed to round up what was needed and turn it into a wonderful little rifle. Its iron sights and oiled wood stock are a stark contrast to my brother's Ruger 10/22 in a Tapco stock with all kinds of bells and whistles bolted on. Both are great guns, but I wouldn't trade him.

Many of my firearms seem to represent a strange optimism. Perhaps I read too much Capstick, but years ago I got it in my head I needed a 375 Holland and Holland for my "someday" trip to Africa. I ended up getting my hands on a CZ 550 magnum with a beautiful wood stock. It was one of the only guns I could find that had iron sights, a requirement for my

romanticized version of a safari rifle. I'm still saving for that trip and the opportunity to chase a big daggaboy through the brush. But truth be told, I think my gun is worth more than I've got in that piggy bank.

I know I am not alone in my craziness. I once had a friend tell me he hates using a new deer rifle for hunting. He likes to have an old one, preferably one that he's already shot a deer with. I totally understand the need to have a rifle with some good deer-hunting mojo to it. It's a strange kind of worry when you take a new deer gun into the field. What if it doesn't know what it's doing? I also once worked with an old man that said, "I don't collect guns, I collect works of art. Roy Weatherby is my favourite artist." I dare you to take a look at a Lazermark and tell me he's wrong.

So, what happens to people like us? To people who have a penchant for all things obsolete, forgotten, broken or bruised? To be honest, it's our spouses and our wallets that suffer. I know I have never turned down a cheap gun in need of restoring. My collection has now justified its own room in our home. Maybe we can't let these guns go because they remind us of ourselves, old relics the world has deemed obsolete and moved on from. Or maybe we are just hopeless romantic contrarians who read too many books. 🏹

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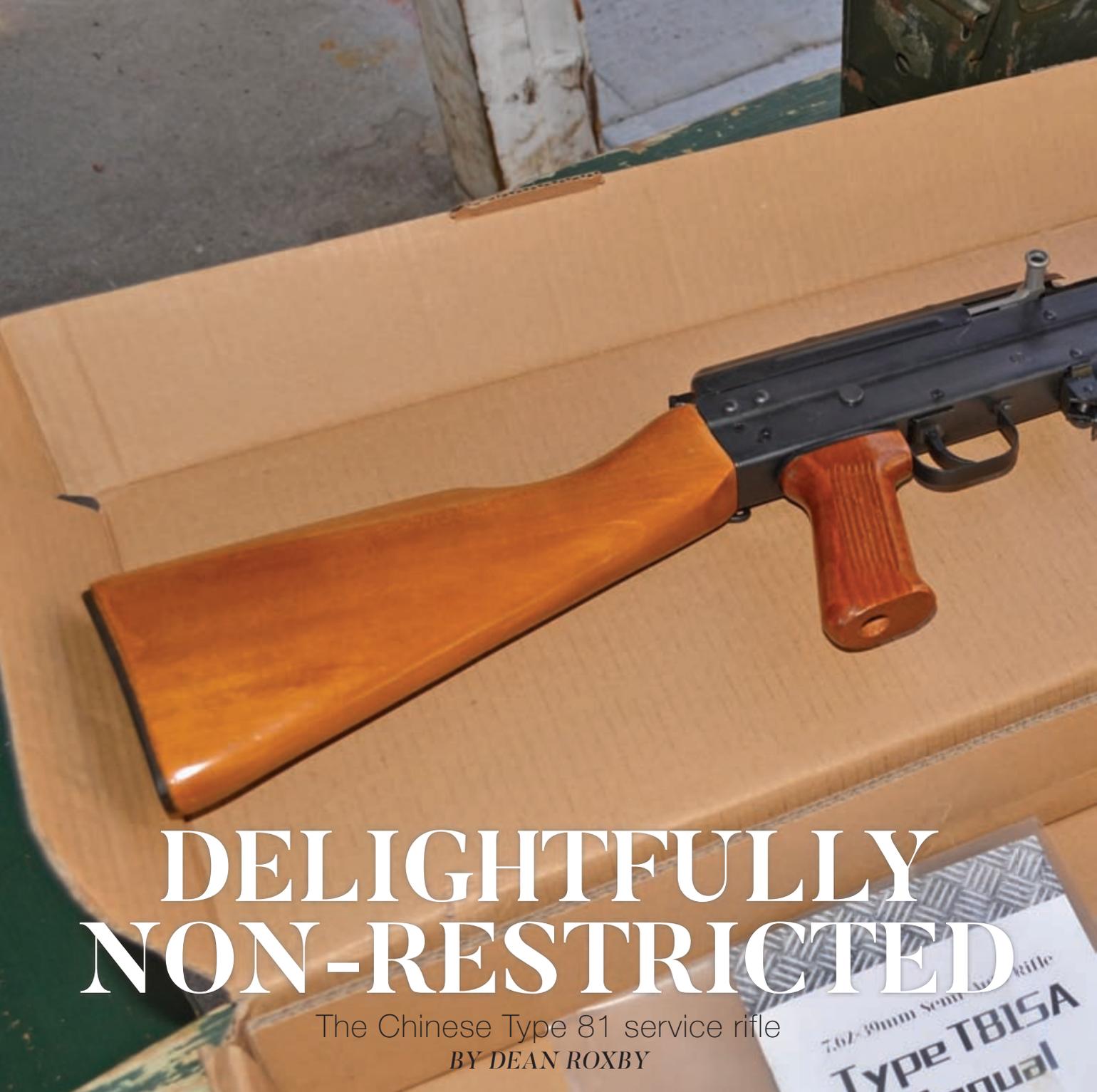
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DELIGHTFULLY NON-RESTRICTED

The Chinese Type 81 service rifle

BY DEAN ROXBY

If you've always had a burning desire to own an AK-47 rifle, the Chinese Type 81 rifle now being imported by Tactical Imports may just fit the bill. As most are aware, almost all variants of the AK-47 are banned in Canada. The Type 81 rifle, on the other hand, is delightfully non-restricted!

ORIGINS

The origins of this Chinese rifle go back several decades, to when the PLA (Peoples Liberation Army, or Chinese

armed forces) were using their own licensed copies of the Soviet AK-47, known as the Type 56 assault rifle. The Chinese felt that the AK-47/Type 56 was not as accurate as it could be, and so began the process of designing a better service rifle. As the Chinese were already building the Type 56 rifle, as well as a copy of the SKS-45 (known as the Type 56 Carbine, based on year of adoption), the new design copied heavily from both previous guns. The result of this design exercise was the short-lived

Type 63 rifle. Believing they could make further improvements, the Chinese went back to the drawing board and created the Type 81.

Besides being the service rifle for the PLA for many years, the Type 81 also saw service around the world. It was used by several southeast Asian countries and many African nations. The list is literally A to Z, as Algeria and Zimbabwe are or were users. In China, it has been replaced by the Type 95 bullpup rifle, but it is still used by reserve forces and the



Peoples Armed Police.

NOT AN AK

At first glance, the 81 looks a lot like a standard AK, but closer examination reveals significant differences. From the outside, the most apparent difference is the lack of the uniquely shaped AK safety lever. The 81's safety is just above the pistol grip, on the left side of the receiver. Like an AR-15 safety, it is a small, rotating piece. It differs from the AR-15 in that fire is forward and safe is

to the rear. Naturally, there are numerous other minor differences, as well, as this is its own design. Other visual differences include a longer barrel, and distinctive rings upon the barrel. These are for launching grenades that slip over the barrel. The front sight base is also set further back from the muzzle, compared to the average AK. This is to allow the above-mentioned rifle grenades to slip on more securely.

Going inside, we find the Type 81 is a short stroke system, rather than the

long stroke operation of the AK system. The AK system has a long, one-piece operating rod, piston and bolt carrier. The entire unit travels back and forth to feed rounds and eject spent cases. In comparison, the Type 81 gas system has a separate piston that moves only a short distance rearward to cycle the action. The rationale for this is that there will be much less reciprocating mass slamming back and forth, affecting accuracy. This was one of the design requirements originally set out by the PLA. They



A comparison of internals, with the Type 81 above, AK variant (Finnish Valmet M78) below. Note the long forward extension on the AK bolt carrier. Here the Type 81's forend has also been replaced with the quad rail accessory.

Besides being the service rifle for the PLA for many years, the Type 81 also saw service around the world.



wanted an improvement in semi-auto accuracy and full-auto controllability. The reduction of weight bouncing back and forth, along with thicker material used in the receiver, accomplished this goal. The official requirement at the time was an accuracy standard of 1.78-inch R50, meaning that 50 per cent of the hits fall within a 1.78-inch diameter circle at 100 metres.

The bolt looks very much like a typical AK bolt, with two large lugs, and fits into the bolt carrier in a similar way. The bolt carrier is a bit beefier on the Type 81 in the immediate area of the bolt. It is much shorter than an AK-style carrier as it uses a separate piston and operating rod, as noted above. This is similar to the SKS-45 system. Be aware that this gun has a floating firing pin, so choose your ammunition carefully. With no firing pin return spring, it is possible to have the rifle fire as the bolt slams the cartridge into the chamber. This can happen with commercial ammunition with soft primers. Military ammunition has harder primers to prevent this. Definitely do not put a round in the chamber, then allow the bolt to slam closed.

Unlike most AK-based rifles, the Type 81 has a bolt hold-open device. This is

a welcome improvement. After the last round is fed from the magazine, the magazine follower pushes upwards on the hold-open device, which in turn holds the bolt carrier to the rear. Speaking of magazines, the Type 81 mags are similar to, but not the same, as an AK mag. It is possible to convert an AK mag to work in the Type 81, but it does require the removal of some metal around the feed lips. A Google search gets numerous videos showing how. Of course, the rifle comes with two proper Type 81 mags to get you going right away. These are 30 rounders, blocked to five rounds.

OPTIONS

The rifle I tested has a fixed wood stock, as shown in the photos. There is also a folding stock version available. In Chinese service, the folding version was originally intended just for paratroopers. However, the folding stock version soon became the standard design for the PLA. The stock, which folds to the right side, is made of sheet metal stampings with a plastic cheekrest. The pistol grip and forend are made of wood, giving it a classic look. For those wanting a modern, tactical appearance, a black, anodized, aluminum quad rail can be ordered. The

quad rail features Picatinny mounts all around and appears well designed and made. It assembles from two main parts and an internal barrel clamp, all held together with set screws. Three different sized Allen keys are provided.

Incidentally, the included manual doesn't explain the upper forend removal procedure very well. I did a quick Google search to find a much better explanation on YouTube.

QUALITY

The fit and finish of the rifle varies greatly, especially the wood parts. It is purely functional wood, with no thought given to fine figuring, as expected on a military-style gun. The areas that contact your hands and cheek all are smoothly sanded and sealed with a semi-gloss finish. The inletting, however, looks like it was done with a chainsaw. These areas are not visible until you take it apart, so it isn't a huge deal breaker for me. It did happen to make the lower forend removal a bit sticky, though. The wood caught on the metal the first time I took it off. On and off several times cleared it up nicely.

The receiver is made up of several stamped steel parts riveted together, along with two machined trunnion parts. The stamped parts have been deburred of rough edges, and the forged and machined parts such as bolt, carrier, trunnions, etc. are also completely free of machining burrs. Most steel parts have a basic utilitarian black finish. Not beautiful, but perfectly functional. Just what one would expect from such a rifle. Both the barrel and the gas system are chrome lined. And that gas system features a two-position gas regulator; three, if you count the closed position.

Shooting it was uneventful, as it functioned fine. I found the magazines stiff to load, but they worked great. I wasn't able to do any serious accuracy testing, so I can't report on that aspect, but I can tell you the gun generated a lot of interest from other shooters.

There was a bit of a ruckus raised on one of the forums about bent receivers shortly after the Type 81 first showed up. While at SHOT last January, I was able to discuss this with Tactical Import's manager of operations, Neil Stephens. He stated they only had one rifle that was truly out of spec. All the rest are fine. The first shipment of 1,000 units sold out very quickly, but they are expecting a second shipment soon. If AKs are your thing, consider the Type 81 as a worthy substitute.

Importer: www.tacticalimports.ca 



PROPER PISTOL SHOOTING

Tips & techniques for handgun accuracy

BY JOSH JUDSON

Many new shooters are of the opinion that pistols are barely accurate enough to hit a target beyond 20 metres. But what if I suggested that not only is the average pistol capable of hitting a standard IPSC target past 20 metres, but also that you can consistently hit that target at 100 metres and beyond. "Impossible!" you say? Not so. With the right pistol shooting techniques, you can quickly go from zero to a 100-metre hero.

Let's look at several basic techniques that should increase a beginner's accuracy by a significant margin. Experienced shooters should already be aware of these techniques; however, when they miss, it's likely because they failed at one of these basics. As with any firearm, take all of the safety precautions necessary, including but not limited to: proper muzzle control, repeatedly checking that your firearm is safe when you are not firing, and keeping your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.

MUSCLING

Too many people learn gun handling from television. It's the old "monkey see, monkey do" scenario. You see that guy pulling the pistol down after every shot as if to compensate for the apparent massive amount of recoil his pistol has. But if you're learning from this actor, you will definitely be muscling the pistol in an attempt to compensate for recoil. This is a big no-no.

In my experience, muscling the firearm is one of the biggest detriments to marksmanship, and the hardest to get rid of when teaching new shooters. Believe it or not, the best thing you can do for your shooting ability, and to increase your accuracy, is to let the recoil happen. Don't fight it. Once you master this and other skills down the road, you will learn that you can use your muscles to compensate for recoil, but by staying stiff, not pulling down for every shot. Start off by letting your arms be more like half-cooked spaghetti – not too flimsy, but not too stiff. As you pull the trigger, focus on pulling it slowly so that you are unsure when the pistol will fire. This will keep you from either consciously, or subconsciously, attempting to compensate for the recoil and



A properly centred, high grip allows for recoil control and ensures recoil is straight into the arm.



Proper sight alignment.



The support-hand fingers should all be below the trigger guard and on top of the shooting-hand fingers. Keep a medium grip strength and stiff wrists.

ruin the shot. Practice this until it feels natural. This can be done by dry firing, but it's most effective with live fire because part of getting over this issue seems to be getting used to the sound of a pistol discharging.

PROPER GRIP

A proper grip is the foundation for making an accurate shot. Incorrect muscle tension in the hand can pull the pistol in any number of directions, but most commonly will pull your shot left, or left and down for right-handed individuals. The following applies to a right-handed shooter, so simply reverse if you are left-handed. Start by gripping the pistol with your right hand. Make sure that the top of the rear of the grip is nestled in the web of your hand, between your thumb and forefinger. The pistol's barrel should align with your arm, with the web of

your hand pushing as high as possible without getting in the way of the slide. This centred high grip allows for recoil control and ensures recoil is straight into your arm. It may feel unnatural at first, but you'll get used to it. The fingers of your right hand (minus your trigger finger, which should be outside the trigger guard) should be below the trigger guard and pushing upwards against it.

Now wrap your left hand around your right hand. The fingers of your left hand should all be below the trigger guard and on top of the fingers of your right hand. The placement of the thumbs will differ depending on whether you are shooting a semi-auto, or a revolver. For a semi-auto, your left thumb should rest below your right thumb and protrude slightly forward with both thumbs being on the left side of the pistol. The palm of your left

thumb should fit nicely in the curve of your right thumb. For revolvers, your left thumb should wrap over your right thumb behind the hammer, to prevent it from being near the cylinder. The goal is a "not too tight, but not too light" grip on the pistol. Just enough to keep control while firing, but no more than that (remember, no muscling). Too tight a grip will likely result in you shooting to the left, and too light of a grip will result in the pistol jumping around in your hands. Keep your wrists firm. You now have a proper grip.

PROPER SIGHT ALIGNMENT

Sight alignment is the next step in the sequence of delivering an accurate shot. It's a simple concept, but keeping the sights aligned during the entire course of firing a shot is difficult for most new shooters. For our purposes here, let's focus on the sight shape and

Proper trigger finger placement, with middle of the tip of the index finger on the trigger.



not the dots, bars or other coloured “doodles” that appear on many sights and vary from manufacturer to manufacturer.

The front sight should appear in the centre of the notch in the rear sight, with an equal amount of light on both sides. Make sure the top of the front sight is at the same height as the top of the rear sight. Your point of impact will usually be just above the top of the front sight, although it can vary from pistol to pistol. And then, most importantly, you want your eyes to focus on the front sight, not the target. Your target should always appear a little blurry in the background. Now, you need to keep your sights aligned the entire time you're pressing the trigger, not just until you are ready to pull the trigger. Then, with your sights aligned, it's time to move on to trigger pull.

TRIGGER PULL

Proper trigger pull is relatively simple. The middle of the tip of your trigger finger should be what contacts the surface of the trigger. Do not use the first joint in your trigger finger, as this will usually result in pulling the shot right. The goal is to pull the trigger straight back. With your finger resting properly on the trigger, slowly but consistently pull back on the trigger while focusing on keeping your sights aligned and on

target until the pistol discharges. If you watch your sights while dry firing, it's easy to see if you're doing it right. Perfecting a trigger pull takes practice and may even require finger strengthening exercises for some people, especially if they use handguns with a heavy trigger pull.

COMBINING TECHNIQUES

If all of these techniques seem a little overwhelming, try mastering them one or two at a time until you can combine them all together. Remember, proper hand placement for grip, not too tight but not too light of a grip, wrists firm, middle of the tip of the trigger finger on the trigger, and focus on your sights to keep them aligned, level and on target the entire time you're pressing the trigger. Once you have these techniques mastered, you'll notice an improvement in accuracy.

As time goes on, your skill will increase and your ability to make a quick and accurate follow-up shot will come naturally. There is always room for improvement, so constantly be assessing your technique and diagnosing your issues. If you work at constantly fine tuning these principles, it won't be long before you're consistently ringing steel at 100 metres. That'll put a grin on your face and earn you some envious looks. 🍷

Troubleshooting Tips

Here are some quick troubleshooting tips. Again, these are for right-handed shooters, so substitute right with left if you are a southpaw.

If you're shooting left and low, you are likely anticipating the shot and pushing the pistol with your right hand. If you are just shooting left, it is likely that your grip is too strong. Many people “white knuckle” the pistol without realizing it. So, even though you feel like you aren't gripping the pistol too hard, you may be doing just that. If you are shooting low, you are probably trying to compensate for recoil, either consciously or subconsciously. Try dry firing the pistol to train your brain not to pull down at the last second. Mixing a dummy cartridge into a magazine of live rounds will quickly confirm whether this is your problem.

If you're shooting to the right, it's either trigger finger placement, or pulling the trigger too hard and fast.

If your pistol keeps having malfunctions (stove piping or short stroking), you may need to tighten up your wrists.





UPGRADING A RUGER 10/22 TAKEDOWN

Magpul's X-22 Backpacker stock
BY LOWELL STRAUSS

It was September in a northern Saskatchewan forest and I was cruising a well-worn game trail in search of elk. The thunder of wings made me jump, as a ruffed grouse flushed and landed on a nearby spruce. Only five metres and the lack of a rimfire rifle separated me from a fresh meal. I've lost track of the number of times I wished I'd had a rimfire rifle in my pack, not only to occasionally fill the frying pan, but as a survival tool should the need arise.

The ideal backpack rifle must meet several key criteria. First, the rifle should easily slide into a daypack, which narrows the selection to a folding or takedown gun. Next, light weight is important, suggesting synthetic stocks are the best choice in this department. Also, shooting a grouse in the head wastes none of its meat, meaning accuracy is vital. And finally, reliability is essential, because a gun needs to go bang when you pull the trigger!

THE CHOICES

I agonized over the specs and reviews of various folding and takedown guns, and began favouring the Ruger 10/22 Takedown. Then Magpul released two different stocks, the Hunter X-22 Takedown and X-22 Backpacker, to fit that rifle. And that sealed the deal! Both stocks are available in one of four tactical colours: black, flat dark earth, olive drab green and stealth gray. While I like them both, the X-22

Backpacker is the clear choice for a lightweight, packable gun. Magpul stocks and accessories, including optic mounts and sling attachments, are available as aftermarket products, and anyone can install the stock thanks to its drop-in design.

Tactical Solutions (TacSol) manufactures precision rifles and accessories, including many aftermarket parts for the Ruger 10/22. TacSol's X-Ring rifle features the same footprint as the Ruger 10/22, making it essentially a sort of custom 10/22. It uses 10/22 magazines and either their own trigger group or one from Ruger, depending on the model. While the price point is higher on these rifles, they're precision built and loaded with premium features and accessories. Buy once, cry once. And since TacSol uses the Magpul Backpacker stock for their X-Ring Takedown rifle, it's the rifle featured in this review.

MAGPUL X-22 BACKPACKER STOCK

Together, the TacSol X-ring Takedown and X-22 Backpacker stock weigh a mere 1.7 kilograms (three pounds, 14 ounces), perhaps even less depending on your choice of rifle/barrel. Each 10-shot magazine weighs 56 grams – 90 grams when loaded. A 50-round box of 22LR ammunition with 40-grain bullets weighs 180 grams. A red dot optic weighs about 136 grams (the test rifle is equipped with the Vortex Crossfire and a low-profile mount). A full loadout including rifle, red dot, >



Transporting an assembled rifle on the pack's exterior allows for quick access or another option if the pack is full. The Vanguard Pioneer 1600 (shown here) includes a rifle sling for easy rigging.

magazines and 50-rounds of ammunition (stored in the stock) weighs 2.18 kilograms (four pounds, 13 ounces).

Not only is it light, but the X-22 Backpacker is also compact. With its barrel clipped into the stock, the rifle measures less than 50 centimetres long and about 16 centimetres wide, even with a low-profile red dot mounted on the receiver's rail. The rifle fits in the

56-centimetre-deep main compartment of a Vanguard Pioneer 1600 – a 26-litre daypack – with room to spare. It's like the pack was made for this combination. After the rifle is assembled, it can also be slung on the outside of the pack for quick access. Add a small survival kit, such as a lighter, pocketknife, a few metres of paracord, and you'll have the essential

gear to procure dinner, survive a night in the bush or signal for help.

Magpul has perfected the injection molding process for firearms furniture, and the X-22 Backpacker is no exception. Its polymer stock is precision made and fits the rifle's receiver and barrel perfectly. Internal reinforcements stiffen the stock, preventing the flex associated with poorer qual-



ity products. Attachment points for optional QD sling mounts allow users to customize how the rifle is carried in the field. The ergonomics of the stock's pistol grip allow for a firm grip on the rifle, while promoting good trigger control. Using the pistol grip, snugging the rifle into the shooter's shoulder is easy, while its non-slip rubber butt pad helps keep it in place.



An extra, waterproof, storage compartment in the pistol grip has enough room for small survival items like a lighter.

Optics Options

Most Ruger 10/22 and TacSol takedown rifles include adjustable iron and/or fibre optic sights. These open sights are great for close-range targets and keep the total rifle weight to a minimum. For pinpoint precision, adding an optic aids in shooting at longer ranges. A rimfire riflescope mounted on the receiver is OK but adds extra weight, making a red dot sight a good choice for this platform. Its illuminated dot is easy to see on dark targets and it adds the ability to easily track moving game animals. Optics mount on either the receiver rail or with an optional Magpul X-22 Backpacker optic mount on the barrel. In most cases, an optic will obscure the iron sights so it's a good idea to have the tools needed to remove them in the field should you need to use the backup iron sights.

A unique feature of the Backpacker is its hinged storage compartment in the stock. Depending on the configuration, it's large enough to store three 10-round magazines or one magazine plus a 50-round box of .22LR ammunition.

The soft case that ships with the Ruger 10/22 Takedown and the TacSol X-Ring Takedown rifle is handy for transport to and from the range, but it's too bulky to carry into the field. The Backpacker is designed for a (wait for it) backpack. The locking interface on the forend clips the barrel assembly to

the stock body for easy transport in a daypack.

The stock also doubles as a mini survival kit. An O-ring sealed, water-proof, storage compartment in the grip is large enough for a few essentials such as a lighter, a pocket knife or small multi-tool and a few extra .22LR cartridges.

CONCLUSION

The X-22 Backpacker fits all Ruger 10/22 Takedown rifles, as well as the Tactical Solutions SBX barrel. The choice is yours: upgrade an exist-

ing Ruger 10/22 with a Magpul X-22 Backpacker stock or buy one of the woods-ready packages from Ruger or Tactical Solutions using the Magpul 10/22 furniture. The X-22 Backpacker offers a minimalist solution for the hunter, trapper or backwoods traveler who wants to transport their rifle in an efficient, convenient package without compromising shooting performance.

This fall, the grouse are in trouble during elk season. My mouth is watering at the very thought of pan-seared ruffed grouse at the end of a long day's hike. 🍷

The X-22 Backpacker includes a hinged check piece with storage room for three Ruger 10-shot magazines.



Ruger 10/22 Takedown – Tips & Tricks

There are a few details with the Ruger 10/22 Takedown that require operator attention, especially if the gun is new.

- New guns always shoot better when they're clean, or at least that's what I tell myself. So, field strip (according to the manual) your new 10/22 and give it a thorough cleaning to remove factory lube. Pay special attention to the bore and the bolt.
- The Ruger 10/22 Takedown has an adjustable lock-up mechanism. Check barrel to receiver fit after it's installed for the first time. A snug fit between the barrel and receiver ensures optimum accuracy. The manual illustrates the step-by-step process, but for those of us who don't always follow instructions, here are the basics:
 - turn the adjustment knob to the right until it stops
 - install the barrel assembly
 - tighten the adjustment knob by turning it counter clockwise (left) until it stops against the barrel
 - remove the barrel and turn the knob a few more clicks and then reinstall the barrel. The final fit is subjective. Not too tight, not too loose, but just right.
- Check that the screws are snug without being too tight - over-torquing steel screws in an aluminum receiver can damage it.
- In the field, check the action and barrel for debris before installing the barrel. Include a .22 calibre pull-through in your pack, just in case.

A Ruger 10/22 with both a Mag-Rotor and an X-Press Mag Release installed.



MATADOR ARMS' RUGER 10/22 ACCESSORIES

BY LOWELL STRAUSS

Matador Arms, a Calgary-based company, manufactures a variety of aftermarket accessories for platforms such as the SKS, AR and Kriss – popular choices with Canadian shooters. The company also builds muzzle devices in many common sizes, and designs high-performance products that look great. Take, for example, their Fury Grip (recently featured in the CFJ). Now that's an AR-style grip that anyone would be happy to mount on their rifle. They also make two unique accessories for the Ruger 10/22.

MAG-ROTOR

Many shooters were shocked when the RCMP classified the Ruger 30-round magazine as a prohibited device. Given the rifle's popularity, there were a lot of unhappy shooters. Matador Arms devised a solution to this problem and they call it the Mag-Rotor. It's a simple device that couples three standard

Ruger 10-shot magazines together to facilitate faster magazine changes. The device holds three magazines in a star-shaped pattern, so that while one is latched in the rifle, the other two are held, ready to be loaded, at 120-degree angles just below the gun. No more fumbling for loose magazines in your pocket, the Mag-Rotor keeps them clipped together. And while rattling through 30 shots is not quite as fast with the Mag-Rotor as it is with the old (once legal) 30-round magazine, it's still darn fast.

X-PRESS MAG RELEASE

Magazine changes slow you down, especially when shooting against the clock. Finding and working that release always steals precious seconds. Matador Arms heard this need for speed and designed an extended magazine release that expedites mag changes. Called the X-Press Mag Release, it's milled

from solid aluminum, and thanks to its drop-in fit, no firearm modifications are needed to install the precision-made part on any Ruger 10/22. Once installed, finding and hitting the oversized paddle with the support hand's thumb drops the empty mag, and allows that hand to load a fresh magazine. With a little practice you can do it while maintaining focus on the target. And it's an ambidextrous design that works for right-hand shooters as well as southpaws. The X-Press Mag Release is large enough to use with gloves, something not easily accomplished with the factory release, and an important feature for Canadian shooters.

Bring the fun of speed and volume shooting back to the Ruger 10/22 with these two innovative products from Matador Arms. To find out more about these and other must-have shooting accessories, check out the company's website at www.matadorarms.com. 

Kids On Safari

Teens shooting their way to Africa

BY KEVIN WILSON





Guided by Etosha Hills Hunting, Paige was fortunate to take this fine springbok ram. In Namibia, there is no minimum age requirement for young hunters.



16.5" x 24" (40 cm x 61 cm)
Mule Deer
Splattering Target

LEAME

BRAND
SHEET

PASTI

Shooting, and hunting in particular, is a way of life in our home. I grew up with firearms in my home and there was a simple understanding of respect for them. Sadly, in our society things have changed. With the crescendo of media hype and less-than-appropriate shows, movies, not to mention video games promoting gun violence, a growing populous has a skewed view of these predominantly benign tools. That said, with proper instruction, in the right hands, firearms open up a world of opportunity and adventure. For our family, traveling to hunt is just that. In August 2016, my wife, Heather, and I took our girls to Namibia. Filming for Canadian Outdoorsman TV, we decided to bring our daughters. With the understanding that each of them would be allowed to take one animal, we had one condition – they would both be required to train and prove their shooting abilities before getting the final nod.

Where I live, young people must be at least 12 years of age and have passed a hunter training course to be eligible to hunt either big game or waterfowl. Our oldest, Chelsea, took her first ducks at 13 and her first big game animal – a six-foot, spot-and-stalk black bear – at 14. Heather and I have always been strict when it comes to firearms, but we also believe that shooting should be fun. The basic tenet of our teaching philosophy involves communicating the 10 Commandments of Firearm Safety, and beginning with the most basic of shooting steps, then progressively advancing our girls to longer distances and bigger guns.

Presented with the opportunity to hunt in Africa, our girls realized this would indeed be a privilege. As such, both eagerly agreed to our conditions and joined us whenever we went shooting in preparation for our trip. Following are the steps we took to equip our kids for their hunting adventure abroad.

SAFETY FIRST

Kids generally aren't all that focused. They sometimes fail to acknowledge consequences. In short, they can be unpredictable. Truth is, I know adults like that. As we've taught our daughters to safely handle and respect firearms, our methods have incessantly dwelled on safe practices. Without reciting the usual range rules, dumming it down for young people means controlling muzzle direction, keeping one's finger away from the trigger until ready to



Chelsea took a fine blue wildebeest with a 243 Win.

shoot, using but not relying on the firearm's safety, being certain of their target and wearing ear and eye protection. I'm proud to say that my girls are so diligent that they frequently think several steps ahead, reminding me of the expectations. It makes me smile. Frankly, I'd rather this than the alternative. Our standard bi-line whenever we handle firearms is, "There are no do-overs with guns. Mistakes simply cannot happen."

SKILL PROGRESSIONS

Both of my parents were teachers and I have a degree in physical education. I also have several teaching and coaching certifications. With my background, I've learned the importance of teaching through skill progressions. Indeed, having my girls start with the most basic of shooting skills then advancing to more complex shooting, in manageable, calculated steps, has been invaluable.

I was never big on teaching with pellet guns. In my mind, a firearm is a firearm. It has two purposes – to demonstrate

accuracy and to kill. For this reason, we started both girls at a young age with a rimfire. Like most of us, both my daughters started with a 22 Long Rifle (LR). An ideal platform, it has virtually no recoil and it's easy to handle. On each first outing, I took a plywood shooting backstop with paper circle targets, but I also placed swinging steel targets as well. Punching holes in paper is great, but nothing turns on a young person more than a visual response. Seeing a target swing when they hit it provides visual feedback, and that fuels the fire to shoot more. I always started them at 25 metres, then advanced to 50 metres. I'm not sure if they learned by osmosis – watching their parents shoot over the years – but each of them took to shooting straight away. Why? I think mostly because we removed as many of the potentially limiting factors as possible. Rather than using a shooting bench, I put a Harris bipod on their 22 LR. Right from day one, each learned to use a shooting rest whenever one is available. After all, the whole idea of shooting is >

Mom supervised closely as the girls became familiar with a 243 Win.



girls practiced mostly out to 120 metres. Using a TC Icon in 243 Win., topped with a Swarovski Z5 5-25 x 52, provided both the extra clarity to assist with target acquisition as well as the ability to dial up magnification as much as they needed at that distance. We told them we would discourage taking any shots over 200 metres in Africa.

PREPARING FOR ANYTHING

As the girls became comfortable and accurate with the centrefire, we had discussions around the possibility that an animal could get knocked down but get back up, requiring them to take one or more follow-up shots. In turn, we had them practice shooting and immediately chambering another round while maintaining their aiming point to be ready for a follow-up. After that, the next progression involved executing three consecutive shots while achieving a two-inch group, all within a 60-second timeframe. They each did this with unbelievable precision.

SUCCESS IN THE FIELD

Arriving in Namibia, both girls were more than ready. We didn't allow them to hunt right away. In our best judgement, we figured it would be best to acclimatize first. It wasn't until the fifth day that we decided to look for a springbok ram for Paige. Locating a small herd, we moved in for the stalk and at 185 metres, she settled in for the shot. Collapsing her ram on the spot, she grinned from ear to ear. When asked if all the practice was worth it, she replied with a simple, "You bet!"

The next day, her older sister had the opportunity to move in on a large herd of wildebeest, but after following them for nearly two hours, never providing a clear shot, they finally eluded her. By the end of the seventh day, she finally got her chance when she and our PH snuck in on a lone bull. Moving through the bushveld at 150 metres, when he stopped Chelsea capitalized with one well-placed, 95-grain Winchester XP3. Only offering a slight quartering toward shot, she tucked the bullet perfectly behind the shoulder. When I asked Chelsea what she thought of the whole experience, her beaming smile said it all!

As parents, we couldn't be prouder. Our girls continue to learn, and we persist in mentoring them. Most importantly, we now have confidence in both of our children's ability to handle firearms safely and shoot responsibly and accurately. 🏆

accuracy and a solid rest helps.

With that strategy in mind, whenever we shot the rimfire, especially for the first time, I would take them to a pasture where there was a potential to shoot gophers. If you want to hook young shooters, that's the way to do it. Both girls immediately became enthralled with gopher hunting. In fact, by the end of Chelsea's first shooting session, I actually watched her safely and accurately snipe them on the run.

Having mastered the rimfire, it was time to move up to something bigger. Chelsea had already advanced to the centrefire in preparation for her black bear hunt last spring, but with the Africa trip now looming, our challenge was getting Paige comfortable with it. Now, it's important to note that Paige only weighs 35 kilograms. She's a lightweight and for her to confidently progress to using the 243 Win on her own required several careful steps.

Understandably apprehensive, she

was initially concerned about the recoil. After careful discussion, we learned that it was a combination of the noise and fear of the recoil causing the concern. I will caution that it is important to know your child. I would never encourage pushing a young person to shoot any firearm unless it is their decision. With gentle encouragement, we offered that Heather could sit directly behind her and more or less cradle her while she shot. This was precisely the right move as it only took about five shots before Paige proclaimed, "I got this mom, I can shoot on my own."

To be clear, we didn't abandon her altogether. Again, recognizing the importance of small progressions, we literally kept a hand on her back at first, then gradually moved away with each shot until she felt and looked entirely confident.

Using both paper targets and poster targets of big game animals with the kill zones clearly outlined, each of the



TACCOM 2018

BY AL VOTH



If you organized a trade show geared towards the tactical and sport shooter, would anyone come? We now know that if you did it in Ajax, Ont., thousands of people would show up and they'd stand in line for at least an hour to get in the door.

That's a basic description of TACCOM 2018, the grand opening splash of Firearms Outlet Canada (FOC) on March 24 to 25. This retail store started two short years ago with a 1,500-square-foot space, which they quickly outgrew. An expansion took them to 15,000 square feet, including retail space, classrooms and a 25-metre range. They decided to celebrate the opening by asking their suppliers to set up booths showing off their products in a trade show format, run-

ning a big sale and giving away a pile of door prizes. It worked, and it's likely the birth of a new annual show for Canada's firearms community.

Fred Pellegrino, the driving force behind TACCOM and FOC, tells me 6,000 tickets were snapped up for the show, and the response was so encouraging they'll do it again next year. Obviously, they'll have to move it to a much larger venue. Of course, the NFA was there too, educating attendees about the latest threats to firearm ownership and freedoms. Overall, it was tremendously encouraging to see this high level of interest in the shooting sports in the middle of "905" country. It's definitely an event to put on your calendar for next year. 🍷





Team NFA

By Patrick Haynes

Advice For A New Competitor



As a shooting coach, I've supported athletes at all levels, competing across Canada and the world. Good and bad, it's safe to say that I've seen it all. Some shooting athletes are natural competitors and aren't phased performing in the spotlight. Other athletes can use some assistance. When asked, here is some of the advice I give to make sure every competition is a good experience.

SAFETY

First and foremost, safety is paramount. You must know and demonstrate safe operating practices at all times. It doesn't matter if you have great groups and your timing is impeccable. Unsafe practices will get you an automatic disqualification in just about every style of shooting competition, at every level. I've seen a North Korean athlete get an immediate disqualification at the World Military Shooting Championships because he failed to retain control of his pistol after it malfunctioned. Wherever you are and whoever you are, unsafe practices will get you sent home early.

RELIABILITY

Tied closely to safety is making sure

that your equipment is operating reliably and consistently. A firearm that is malfunctioning can be a frustrating, embarrassing distraction to your performance. In my experience, this is when people make out-of-character safety errors. They may flounder with clearing the firearm, not maintain their angles downrange or not keep fingers clear of the trigger. Under competitive pressure, simple problems can be multiplied and lead to mistakes.

To avoid this, make sure all your competition equipment is in the best possible state. You don't need to have the best gun on the market to compete; but, your gun must be the best it can be. I once watched a shooter using an older target pistol that seemed to be grouping erratically. I asked if I could take a look at it and found its barrel screw was loose. Tightening it allowed him to get back in the match, delivering great groups. Fortunately, only points were lost due to this oversight. Simple maintenance of your critical equipment should be an ongoing activity and warrants a quick review before going to the firing line.

Additionally, regularly practice your

response to malfunctions and know the rules about them. I've known athletes to use ammunition that did not work well in their pistols, for the express purpose of developing responses to malfunctions. Also, they would identify any relevant rule that an official might consider. Through repeated exposure, they reduced the mental and emotional impact of malfunctions. Their best responses became second nature. They could let go and carry on in their match as if the malfunction never occurred. Remember, there is a big difference between the theory and the application of a process. "Knowing" and "doing" are different, and at a competition you are definitely "doing."

ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES

Responding to malfunctions is tied closely to the next piece of advice. Between two athletes with equal technical skills, the winner will be determined by their responses to environmental variables. Beyond shooting well, you need to troubleshoot performance challenges and rapidly implement a solution. In most cases, all competitors will be facing the same challenge,



Ontario Outdoor Provincials, 25-metre Sport Pistol Event. Competitors scoring each other's targets. A great time to get pulled out of your lane.

but individual responses will impact the results. For instance, let's consider lighting problems. An unprepared athlete might shoot through it, be distracted and hope for the best. The other athlete will change lenses according to previous tests, remain focused and confidently complete the course of fire. Your response will dictate your results. Realistically, most challenges or distractions can be identified well in advance. Knowing this, you can build and practice tactics to respond confidently to most situations.

One proven method of learning how to handle challenging environments is to shoot wherever you can. I know athletes who tell me they will only shoot at ranges which meet their specific standards. Any range that is safe (really the only "go/no-go" criteria in my books) can provide a training opportunity. When you are competing regularly, you will be visiting different ranges, each with their own quirks. None will be identical to your home range, with your favourite shooting position and your friendly neighbourhood range officer. The variables are going to go way beyond looking and sounding different. You need to be able to identify the differences, find a similar environment in your shooting history and pull up the solution that you developed for that situation (which is why people keep shooting diaries). Again, instead of being distracted and wondering how to get past this challenge, you can adopt an attitude of "been there, done that," and focus on delivering your best performance.

KNOW THE RULES & COURSE OF FIRE

Lastly, while it may sound obvious, know and practice the course of fire beforehand. Many shooting competitions consist of events that follow prescribed formats, with standard timings and range commands. Practical events are built around a series of activities which can be combined in different

ways to form an event, using standardized rules and commands. Know these things beforehand. You shouldn't be trying to figure out match formats and rules while learning how to respond to competitive pressure.

So, at this stage, you've ingrained safe shooting, you know how to handle possible malfunctions and environmental challenges, your tactical responses are ingrained and you know the match format and rules. This has all been developed well before the competition and you should be confident about what you are doing. Match day is upon you, and that leads to a little more advice.

MATCH DAY

First, get a good night's sleep and show up early for the match. Being tired leads to poor decision-making. Rushing to get ready is a confidence killer. Both of these situations can and should be avoided. While amount of sleep and arrival times vary by competitor, you should practice and find what works best for you.

Second, stay in your lane. You are going to run your match according to your training and preparation. Other competitors can only interfere with your performance if you let them. While chatting with competitors beforehand, they might talk about their nervousness about a specific course of fire. That might distract you and make you nervous. Regardless, it is probably better to not engage with your competitors beyond small talk, if you talk with them at all. Avoid negative people at all costs. After the competition, meet with your friends to compare notes and share a few laughs.

Additionally, depending on the match, you might not want to watch other athletes perform. On more than one occasion, I've seen an athlete observe a new technique and try to implement it in their match. Rarely does this result in anything but disaster. Be confident in your training. Follow your plans and tactics. If you observe something

different, think about it afterwards and compare it to your technique. If it warrants further investigation, isolate the change and test it in training. Don't try anything new on the fly.

Similarly, watching other athletes could either make you overly confident or lose morale. You are competing to deliver your best performance and not to win or lose. An experienced athlete beating numerous novices is not a great achievement. Similarly, a new shooter losing to the current national champion is not failure. Your true competition is yourself. Once all of the performances have been delivered, the match officials tally and rank the results. You should gauge your success according to whether or not you delivered on your technique, according to your training. Can you improve against the athlete that you were yesterday? As you improve, so will your ranking.

Lastly, remain positive and have fun. Competition is about growth and being part of something bigger than yourself. With a positive mindset, you can see pathways to improvement. You will look forward to the competition and, more importantly, to implementing what you've learned into your training. If competition becomes work and it makes you miserable, you should consider backing off and thinking about why you participate. There is nothing wrong with being a recreational shooter participating in a great sport with your friends. Know why you are there.

You now have a brief summary on competition preparation. There is probably more advice that might apply directly for you; but, as a base, you would do well to try these out. A few words read at home won't make much of a difference in your shooting. Absorbing them and ingraining them into your training and competition routines will strengthen your performances over time. I look forward to seeing you at the range, performing at your best and learning from the experience. 



Point Blank

Gary Mauser

Rural Crime: Are Guns The Problem Or The Solution?



Rural Canada is gun country. Numerous surveys have found that many more households report owning (legal) firearms in small towns than in large Canadian cities. Perhaps surprisingly, StatsCan reported that violent crime and property crime rates were both higher in rural Canada than in bigger Canadian cities in 2016. If guns help keep people safe, how could this be true?

If, on the other hand, more guns mean more crime, the federal Liberals will be happy to blame rural gun owners for higher rates of crime in rural areas. The treatment of Gerald Stanley in the media after the killing of Clayton Bouchie suggests the campaign to demonize rural Canadians who own firearms has already begun.

RURAL CRIME RATES

To learn more about rural crime, I submitted a Special Request to StatsCan for detailed crime rates for 2003 through 2016 for Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) of various population sizes, as well as for rural regions, those too small to be classified as a CMA.

As can be seen in the table, crime rates, including homicide rates, were almost double in the smallest Non-Census Metropolitan Areas (3.2 per 100,000 population) compared to Canada's largest cities (1.7 per 100,000 population) between 2003 and 2016.

Why are crime rates so high in rural Canada? Could it be due to the higher

rates of firearms ownership? The facts argue otherwise, as I point out in a 2015 Mackenzie Institute paper. Firearms ownership is a positive social force because, typically, firearms are owned by law-abiding, religious, community-spirited, even patriotic citizens. Responsible gun ownership has a long and respected Canadian tradition. Like any tool, firearms can be misused, but they also can be used for socially valuable purposes, such as hunting and protecting one's family. Hunting has long been part of the Canadian heritage. Hunters not only provide food for their families, but also are the driving force behind habitat conservation. Target shooting does more than just teach accuracy skills, it is invaluable in raising children. Self-esteem requires more than just winning easy school contests; teaching children how to responsibly handle firearms builds character and contributes to young people learning self-reliance.

For many Canadians, such as farmers and rural residents, firearms are indispensable for defending animals or crops from predators, such as bears or wolves, as well as for keeping the community safe when the police may be hours away. Armed rural homeowners act as a deterrent to criminal activity, much as armed police do in cities. Moreover, in times of national threat, an armed citizenry can play an important role in defending the country from invaders, and historically they have done so.

Research shows that potential criminals

are deterred when a portion of the population is armed, while determined criminals or terrorists target gun-free zones. Researcher John Lott has demonstrated that this is indeed the case. Communities with high gun ownership, contrary to currently received wisdom, tend to be socially stable, have higher incomes and lower crime rates.

ABORIGINAL CRIME RATES

If guns do not stoke high crime rates in rural areas, what does? The causes are known but ignored by the media. The elephant in the room is that rural violence is driven by high indigenous crime rates. Quite frequently, victims and perpetrators are both Aboriginal. According to StatsCan, "Aboriginal" means a person who self-identifies as Aboriginal. This category includes both Metis and First Nations, and First Nations means a person is certified as a "status Indian," with a separate legal status.

Aboriginal people represent just five per cent of the total Canadian population, yet they account for 24 per cent of homicide victims and 36 per cent of those accused of homicide. In 2016, the rate of Aboriginal persons accused of homicide was 11 times higher than the rate among non Aboriginal people.

Rural Canada has a large Aboriginal population. Over half (57 per cent) of the First Nations Aboriginal population live in the western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC); western Canada has less than one-third (32 per cent) of Canada's entire population, according to the 2016 census. Sixty-one percent of Aboriginal people lived in a non-CMA, according to the 2016 census, but less than one-third of the Canadian population live outside a CMA. Saskatchewan provides an excellent example. Ten percent of the population of Saskatchewan is First Nations, but just five per cent in Regina and Saskatoon are First Nations.

In 2016, the Aboriginal homicide rate was 8.69 per 100,000 Aboriginal people living within CMAs, compared with a rate of 7.87 for those living outside of CMAs. Sixty-one percent of Aboriginal

people lived in a non-CMA in 2016, and 58 per cent of homicides involving an Aboriginal victim occurred in a non-CMA.

Of course, pointing this out is politically incorrect. It is far more convenient for Liberals and the police to focus on respectable Canadians who own and use firearms responsibly. More restrictions on firearms ownership and use mean higher levels of government employment (as well as higher taxes).

DO MORE GUNS MEAN MORE GUN CRIME?

If rural firearm ownership was driving homicide, then firearm homicide rates should be higher in rural Canada. Just the opposite is true. Knives are the weapon of choice outside of big cities. Not guns.

My Special Request to StatsCan confirmed that firearms are less likely to be used to commit homicide in rural Canada. In larger Canadian cities (CMAs), 33 per cent of homicides involve firearms, while everywhere else (non-CMAs) firearms are used in just 25 per cent of homicides.

CANADIAN HOMICIDE STATISTICS (2003-2016)

	% Firearms Homicides	% Knife Homicides
CMA	33%	32%
Non-CMA	25%	32%
Canada	31%	32%

In short, there are more households in small-town Canada with legally owned guns, but there are fewer murders with guns in those same places. At the same time, fewer households report legally owning guns in the big cities, but they have higher rates of gun murders, reflecting the greater activity of gangs in larger cities.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the stark cultural divide in rural Canada, any effort to improve policing services would require parallel tracks. First, response time for police must be improved in rural communities. The police are spread too thinly to

adequately respond to the high rates of serious crime. Secondly, government must work with Aboriginal groups to build community ownership and capacity, perhaps establishing additional tribal police forces. The deplorable living conditions on too many reserves suggest the rapidly growing numbers of First Nations youth are a cause for concern.

Western Canadian provinces already have complex strategies that target the problems of rural crime, including improved policing strategies, as well as perennial calls for closer consultation with indigenous communities. For example, Saskatchewan launched a \$5.9-million initiative Protection and Response Team (PRT) in 2017 to aid in the reduction of crime in rural areas. However, more is required. In both Alberta and Saskatchewan, ranchers are calling for better police protection by establishing looser rules for citizens to protect their private property, as the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities requested in 2017.

If Canadian authorities are unwilling to trust an armed citizenry to act responsibly, another alternative would be to re-establish armed auxiliary police in rural areas. The small numbers of RCMP officers could be bolstered by volunteers, acting under police supervision, who live in the communities they protect, and who are trained to meet police standards of firearms handling. Auxiliary police currently exist in western Canada, but they were disarmed decades ago. Now they just act as eyes and ears for the police. In rural areas, where police response time is measured in hours, this is insufficient. A request by the Union of BC Municipalities for the return of armed auxiliary police was rejected a few years ago by the BC government. It should be reconsidered. The key to rearming auxiliary police will be the RCMP attitude towards civilians with guns. Clearly, Aboriginal crime won't be reduced by cracking down on rural firearms owners or by implementing further restrictions on firearms. ❗

2016 Rates Per 100,000 Population	Non-CMA Under 10,000	Non-CMA 10,000 - 49,999	Non-CMA 50,000 - 99,999	Non-CMA 100,000 Or Greater	CMA 100,000 - 499,999	CMA 500,000 Or Greater
Violent Crime	2,319	1,224	1,048	1,251	984	858
Property Crime	5,238	3,042	3,397	6,025	3,256	2,923
Homicide	3.2	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.7

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Legal Corner

Guy Lavergne, Attorney at Law

Firearm Storage Rules For Individuals



There seems to be a large number of gun owners who are either ignorant of or do not rigorously follow the firearms storage rules.

Except for those of us who have had firearms since before the enactment of the *Firearms Act* (infamously known as Bill C-68), we have either attended the Canadian Firearms Safety course or, at the very least, successfully challenged the exam. Yet, unfortunately, there seems to be a large number of gun owners who are either ignorant of or do not rigorously follow the firearms storage rules.

At the outset, I wish to point out that these storage requirements are laid out in regulations enacted pursuant to the *Firearms Act*. As such, they have the force of law. There are two such sets of regulations, one for individuals, and one for businesses. This article will deal solely with the former.

WHEN IS A FIREARM STORED?

In order to understand and properly apply the storage rules, it is important

to understand what “storage” means. Per the Supreme Court of Canada¹, a firearm is in storage if it “has been put away for future retrieval,” irrespective of length of time. Storage does not need to be long-term or permanent. Nevertheless, the court added that “there are obviously circumstances where a short interruption in the use or handling of firearms would still constitute use or handling rather than storage.” The latter comment is likely about circumstances where, although use or handling has temporarily ceased, the person in possession of the firearm either: i) intends to resume use or handling shortly thereafter, and ii) continues to exercise control over the firearm. Obviously, the required level of control will vary depending upon circumstances, and the presence of other individuals who may gain access to the unsecured firearm is a factor to consider.

STORAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-RESTRICTED FIREARMS

Per the *Storage, Display, Transportation and Handling of Firearms by Individuals Regulations*:

- 5 (1) An individual may store a non-restricted firearm only if
 - (a) it is unloaded;
 - (b) it is
 - (i) rendered inoperable by means of a secure locking device,
 - (ii) rendered inoperable by the removal of the bolt or bolt-carrier, or
 - (iii) stored in a container, receptacle or room that is kept securely locked and that is constructed so that it cannot readily be broken open or into; and
 - (c) it is not readily accessible to ammunition, unless the ammunition is stored, together with or separately from the firearm, in a container or receptacle that

is kept securely locked and that is constructed so that it cannot readily be broken open or into.

The first requirement is easy and universal. Firearms must be kept unloaded at all times, unless they are in use.

The second requirement is about means of rendering the firearm inaccessible to third parties. There are three options: i) a secure locking device (traditionally a trigger lock); ii) bolt or bolt carrier removal; and iii) storage in a locked case or room that cannot readily be broken open or into.

The third requirement (i.e. “not readily accessible to ammunition”) is more difficult to understand. Its main purpose is likely to discourage the use of firearms for home defence purposes. Indeed, individuals who were able to gain quick access to firearms and use them for home defence purposes have been subsequently charged under s. 86 of the *Criminal Code*². There is a legislative void as to ammunition storage rules, and very few precedents as to what constitutes ammunition that is “readily available to the firearm.” From the few existing precedents³, the criterion is “how readily (i.e. quickly, easily) the ammunition and the firearm can be brought together.”

STORAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR RESTRICTED FIREARMS

The requirements for restricted firearms are even more stringent. They differ in that restricted firearms must be: i) rendered inoperable by means of a secure locking device, and ii) stored in a locked container or room, unless they are stored in a “vault, safe or room that has been specifically constructed or modified for the secure storage of restricted firearms and that is kept securely locked.”

STORAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROHIBITED FIREARMS

Storage requirements for prohibited firearms are the same as those for restricted firearms, except that if the prohibited firearm is an automatic firearm that has a removable bolt or bolt-carrier, the latter must be removed and stored in a different room, that is kept securely locked and that is constructed so that it cannot readily be broken open or into. The latter requirement does not apply if the firearm is stored in a “vault, safe or room that has been specifically

constructed or modified for the secure storage of restricted firearms and that is kept securely locked.”

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE RULES

Non-observance of the storage rules is a criminal infraction pursuant to s. 86 of the *Criminal Code*. S. 86 sets out two separate, but related, infractions:

CARELESS USE OF FIREARM, ETC.

86 (1) Every person commits an offence who, without lawful excuse, uses, carries, handles, ships, transports or stores a firearm, a prohibited weapon, a restricted weapon, a prohibited device or any ammunition or prohibited ammunition in a careless manner or without reasonable precautions for the safety of other persons.

CONTRAVENTION OF STORAGE REGULATIONS, ETC.

(2) Every person commits an offence who contravenes a regulation made under paragraph 117(h) of the Firearms Act respecting the storage, handling, transportation, shipping, display, advertising and mail-order sales of firearms and restricted weapons.

Subsection 86(2) is about contravening the rules set out in the regulations. Non-compliance with any aspect of the regulations is an offence. It creates what is known as a “strict liability offence⁴.” An accused must demonstrate that he used, at the very least, due diligence to comply. This means two things:

- (a) Inadvertent or non-intentional non-compliance, such as forgetting to lock the safe, is not a defence; and
- (b) a firearms owner is not at liberty to choose what he/she views as “equivalent means” to store a firearm. By way of example, an individual who stores a firearm in an unlocked box buried in a backyard may be charged and convicted under subsection 86(2), although it may objectively be more securely stored than it would be if it was in a locked container in the middle of one’s living room.

Subsection 86(1) is about “careless” handling, storage, use, etc. of firearms and ammunition. I have underlined “ammunition” because there are few (if any) legislated rules dealing with storage of ammunition. A conviction under

subsection 86(1) requires a “marked departure” from the generally accepted standards of storage, handling, etc⁵. That requirement (i.e. “marked departure”) is not applicable to a charge under subsection (2).

WORDS OF CAUTION

What if you remove the bolt of a firearm to render it inoperable, instead of using a trigger lock? And then do not leave it with or in plain sight of the firearm, especially if it can be readily reinserted in the firearm? Indeed, although this would technically comply with the regulations, it could nevertheless be viewed as “careless storage” and lead to charges under subsection 86(1) of the *Criminal Code*.

Not all storage cases are created equal. I know of at least one instance⁶ where charges of unsafe storage were laid, and the Crown brought an expert to try and demonstrate that the type of case used by the accused, although technically made specifically for the storage of firearms, could be readily broken into. Although the Crown did not succeed, and the accused was acquitted, it is preferable to use as sturdy a case as possible. By all means, use a case that is sold specifically for the storage of firearms. Anything less is potentially illegal and asking for trouble. This is true of cases used for both restricted and non-restricted firearms, although in the latter case, the case can be of lesser resistance if the firearm is also trigger locked and rendered inoperable.

As to ammunition, it is recommended to store the ammunition in a different part of the house, preferably one that would not be too obvious to a person who would gain unauthorized access to the firearm. Keeping the ammunition under lock or out of view, although not technically required if it is not “readily available to the firearm,” would likely satisfy that requirement. 

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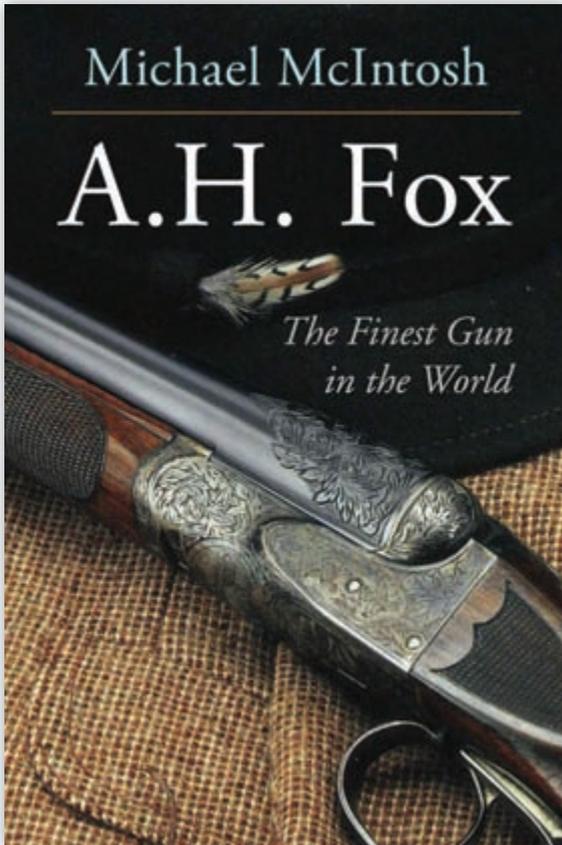
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NFA Book Shelf

Bill Rantz

A. H. Fox - The Finest Gun in the World



During his writing career, Michael McIntosh wrote over 30 shotgun-related books and hundreds of articles for major outdoor publications. *A. H. Fox - The Finest Gun in the World* reflects the extensive research and exceptional writing skills for which McIntosh was known. Writing this book, which blends the life of A. H. Fox with the development and production of his famous shotgun, occupied nine years of McIntosh's life, culminating in a 1992 publication date.

Ansley Herman Fox was born in Decatur, Ga., on June 25, 1875, and passed away 73 years later in 1948. During his lifetime, the world moved from horse and buggy to automobiles and airplanes, smokeless powder replaced black powder and significant advancements in firearm design occurred throughout the world.

Fox developed a passion for firearms and shooting at age 10, and in his teens was a proficient shooter who reportedly spent three years market-hunting birds around Chesapeake Bay. In that period, the transition from black to smokeless powder was responsible for significant damage to black powder shotguns, especially those used extensively in events such as competitive pigeon shoots. The efficiency and power of the new nitro powders cracked frames, broke springs, wore sears and created dangerous firearms. It became clear this new ammunition required shotguns that were designed and built differently.

The hammer gun reined supreme until the mid-1880s when Dan Lefever and L. C. Smith began producing hammerless shotguns. Then, in 1894, at the age of 18, Fox began to display skills as an inventor, industrialist and perfectionist, when he applied for a patent on a break-action gun in which hammers concealed in the frame were cocked by leverage from the barrels.

A small number of shotguns were produced by the Fox Gun Company of Baltimore before Ansley moved on to represent Winchester Repeating Arms shotguns and ammunition for a short time. But Fox's inventing genius returned, and he was granted a patent on Oct. 17, 1905, which he branded "The Finest Gun in the World."

Fox marketed his 12-gauge shotguns in five grades, ranging in price from \$50 to \$500. Theodore Roosevelt carried a Fox shotgun into the African wilderness for 11 months in 1909 and wrote, "I had a Fox No. 12 shotgun: no better

gun was ever made." This Roosevelt endorsement was used extensively in Fox advertising over the next few years. Lower-priced shotguns were also available, and marketed for \$25 each. However, Fox did not want his name associated with anything but the highest-quality product, so they bore the brand "Sterlingworth" and were advertised as the "Best Gun in the World for \$25."

A. H. Fox - The Finest Gun in the World outlines the models available, engraving, the introduction of 16 and 20-gauge guns and eventually the acquisition of Fox by Savage Arms in 1929. The production of A. H. Fox shotguns ceased shortly after the Second World War. In 1993, the Connecticut Shotgun Manufacturing Company began duplicating these guns in 20-gauge only, with prices ranging from \$15,500 to \$25,000! Today, a Fox shotgun is still available via Savage Arms, but the price is closer to \$5,000.

Michael McIntosh passed away on Aug. 14, 2010, at 66 years of age. *A. H. Fox - The Best Gun in the World* is certainly a treasure he left for generations of firearm enthusiasts. Listed at \$39.95 US, it is a must-have book for anyone interested in the life of A. H. Fox or his famous shotguns. 

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