

# CANADIAN FIREARMS JOURNAL

MARCH/APRIL 2021

 NFA.ca



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**CANADA'S NATIONAL FIREARMS ASSOCIATION**

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# LAST CHANCE FOR 2021

The Type 81 LMG is an infantry support version of the Type 81 rifle family. Chambered in the same 7.62x39, the rifle was designed with a number of changes over the standard Type 81 to support its role. A thicker and longer chrome lined barrel was added for better retained accuracy during high volume firing, a folding bi-pod was attached to the barrel for firing support and the front sight was moved to the end of the barrel to provide a longer sight radius for added precision. A top mounted carrying handle was mounted to the rear sight post and the rear stock changed to "club foot" style to allow the user to fire from the prone position more comfortably.

The Type 81 LMG has classic looks and is an iconic piece of history. A solid and enjoyable shooter, an asset to any collection. Supplied with two 5/30 magazines, with sling and drum magazines available as optional accessories. All parts and components are new production. Non-restricted. In-stock now and priced at just \$1499. Last shipment for 2021, very limited quantities.



# CANADIAN ***FIREARMS JOURNAL***

March/April 2021



## COLUMNS

**4**  
**ON THE COVER**

**5**  
**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**  
Emerging From Winter  
**AL VOTH**

**6**  
**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
Review & Repeal  
**SHELDON CLARE**

**8**  
**VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
Support Your Suppliers  
**BLAIR HAGEN**

**10**  
**PRESERVING OUR  
FIREARMS HERITAGE**  
Tribute To A Firearms Icon  
**GARY K. KANGAS**

**12**  
**POLITICS & GUNS**  
The New Governance  
**BRUCE GOLD**

**50**  
**LEGAL CORNER**  
Overcoming A Firearms  
Prohibition Order  
**GUY LAVERGNE**

**54**  
**NFA BOOK SHELF**  
Wild Sheep  
**BILL RANTZ**

## FEATURES

**14**  
**CANADA'S OLDEST  
TRAPSHOOTING CLUB**  
Visiting the Hamilton Gun Club  
**JEFF HELSDON**

**18**  
**THE THOUSAND-YARD GAME**  
An intro to F-Class competition  
**TIMOTHY FOWLER**

**22**  
**ONE SWEET SAUER**  
Reviewing the Sauer 100 Atacama  
**TIMOTHY FOWLER**

**26**  
**UNDERSTANDING  
THE 6.5 PRC**  
An in-depth look  
at the latest 6.5mm  
**T.J. SCHWANKY**

**33**  
**STEADY UP**  
A DIY shooting bench  
**LOWELL STRAUSS**

**36**  
**WEATHERBY'S INERTIA SHOTGUN**  
Reviewing the 18i Waterfowler  
**LOWELL STRAUSS**

**40**  
**WARTIME WHEELGUN**  
Shooting a Webley MK IV  
**TYSON SOMMERVILLE**

**44**  
**INDUSTRY NEWS 2021**  
Visiting the  
SHOT Show that wasn't  
**AL VOTH**



## 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

This month's cover speaks to the desire of Canadian gun owners to get out shooting after a long winter of pandemic lockdowns. It pictures a rimfire silhouette competitor getting in some practice in anticipation of a competition season with fewer COVID-19 restrictions than last year. The potential for competitive shooting events will likely vary across the country, with some provinces closing shooting ranges, while others allow them to open. If you can get out to shoot, whether competitively or not, a good rimfire rifle and targets which fall when hit -- as in silhouette shooting -- makes for wonderful therapy. 



## Canadian Firearms Journal

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# From The Editor's Desk

Al Voth

## Emerging From Winter



**I**l'll be early March when this issue of the *CFJ* reaches your mailboxes, a time when most Canadians have the worst of winter behind them. With the promise of spring in the air, and the increasing delivery of the COVID vaccine, things should be looking more optimistic for all of us. Like you, I'm looking forward to that Great Canadian Reopening, which should be coming soon.

The shooting sports are one of those areas which have been in lockdown, and while we may not see a complete return to normal this summer, there should be significantly more activity than last year. My only concern is that there will be sufficient ammunition and handloading supplies to feed the increased competition activity.

Certainly, there are opportunities here for Canadian businesses to expand into ammunition and component production if they want to take that risk. But because start-up costs are high and demand is so cyclical, it's a huge

risk. Still, it would be wonderful to see a Canadian manufacturer of things like bullets, primers and cartridge cases emerge.

Over the winter, I tried my hand at swaging jacketed bullets from fired 22 LR cases, as well as from commercial jackets. And while it was a fascinating exercise and I learned a lot, I also learned I'd much rather buy my bullets. Yes, even casting bullets is faster. At least it was a great way to use up some lockdown time, and if we get confined to our homes again, I might return to it. But right now, I'd rather go shooting.

This issue of the *CFJ* scratches that let's-go-shooting itch by taking you into the world of F-class long-range competition via Tim Fowler's interviews with a couple of the world's top competitors. And, of course, they are Canadian. If your interests run more towards the world of shotgunning, Jeff Helsdon highlights Canada's oldest continuously operating trap club, located in Hamilton, Ont.

And just in case you saved enough money during the lockdown to buy a new gun, we've included some reviews to inform your buying process. Tim Fowler and T.J. Schwanky do a tag-team look at the new Sauer 100 Atacama, chambered for the 6.5 PRC cartridge, with Tim handling the gun review and T.J. diving deep into the cartridge. For wingshooters, Lowell Strauss looks at Weatherby's new shotgun, an inertia-operated beauty called the 18i. Then, for handgunners, Tyson Sommerville explores the trials and tribulations of getting a wartime Webley MK IV back into service.

All the usual columnists are here too, with their latest insights into the political world, a place we always need to stay involved in. So, enjoy emerging from winter by exercising your guns, but exercise your rights too by staying involved in the political process. If you don't do the latter, your ability to do the former will vanish like snow in the springtime. 



# President's Message

Sheldon Clare

## Review & Repeal



Our strong legal action in opposition to the May 1, 2020, Order in Council (Parker v. Canada, and intervention) is well underway, and we are confident that our approach will be successful. We are fully funding the Parker case, as well as our intervention in the matter. However, all of us should be working to elect a government that is friendly to firearms owners. That needs to be where we put most of our effort in the months to come, as existing legislation remains a continued threat to our rights. Review and repeal need to be our goal.

We are also looking seriously at defamation suits to challenge the libel and slander directed at us as an organization and firearms owners generally by those who lie to support gun control. The key to success in such an effort is to identify unprivileged commentary (out of parliament) that are untrue attacks on us. If you have evidence of any, please send us a note to [info@nfa.ca](mailto:info@nfa.ca)

I would particularly like to thank all our directors and field officers, and volunteer page administrators for their efforts in promoting and protecting our social media presence. Jordan Vandenhoff has done amazing work for us in that regard, and along with NFA Talk podcasts, we remain the most widely known and effective firearm rights organization in the country.

We continue to fight the three failed legs of the gun control stool -- licensing of owners, classification of firearms and registration of firearms -- with political action, legal challenges and information distribution. None of those Liberal gun control programs serve public safety and are merely barriers to lawful firearms ownership, so it is essential that we continue to educate decision makers about the real failures of gun control. All the best for 2021. Take someone shooting, and never give up your guns.

This new year promises to present significant challenges. With the prospect of an election this spring, we are poised to have a significant influence on the outcome. As you will recall, the NFA is the only firearms organization to have reported third-party spending in the last federal election. Our efforts there effected the results in at least a dozen ridings and this time we need to do even more. We have been building our election war chest and developing concepts for election advertising. As well, we continue to be active at the grassroots level in participating in EDAs and candidate selection -- thanks for your efforts in that regard.

Our lobby efforts are likewise well underway. Despite the complex situation of the ongoing pandemic scare, Charles Zach has managed to engage members of parliament and other reportable and non-reportable contacts over the past year. NFA lobbying

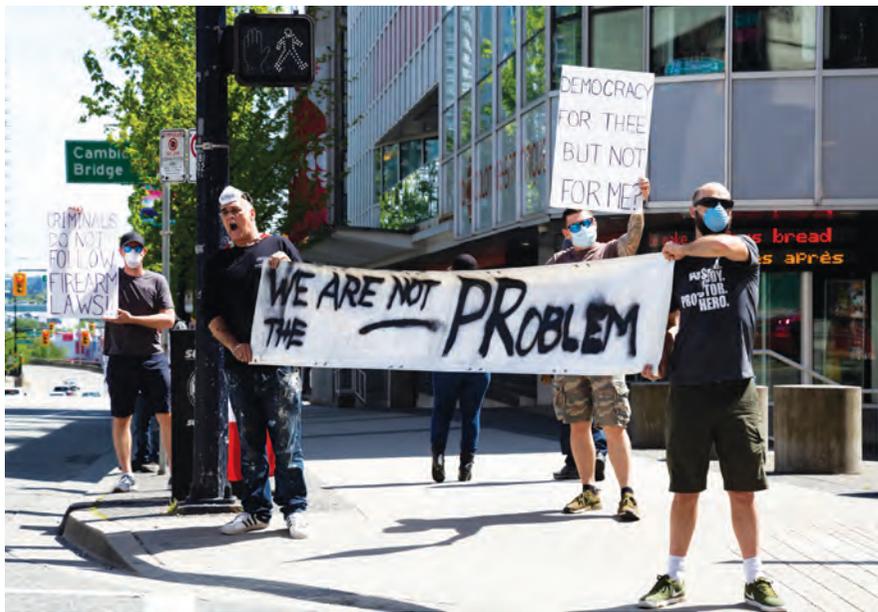
efforts have far exceeded any others in both quantity and quality. Long-time members will be aware that the NFA has been engaged in both professional and volunteer lobbying without pause since its inception. Our efforts are intended to identify supporters, those who are open-minded, and our opponents, and to be a source of information and education on our issues of concern. The NFA is second-to-none in this effort.

Big news at time of writing is that IBM has been contracted to operate the legislated theft of people's property. Surely their participation in the failed Phoenix federal pay program foreshadows similar problems in controlling people and in stealing their firearms. Anyone who has IBM in their portfolio may want to consider dumping their stock, or at least complaining to the head office of IBM. Of course, IBM stock and our CPP may also bear some critical scrutiny.

# Message du Président

Sheldon Clare

## Réviser et abroger



Nous aurons beaucoup de défis à surmonter cette année. Avec une élection qui pointe à l'horizon ce printemps, nous pouvons y exercer une influence importante. L'ACAF est la seule organisation pro-armes qui a rapporté des dépenses électorales de tiers durant la dernière élection fédérale. Nos efforts ont influencé les résultats dans au moins une douzaine de circonscription. Ce printemps nous devons faire encore mieux. Notre caisse électorale grandie et nous travaillons présentement sur des concepts publicitaires. Nous demeurons actifs sur le terrain en participant aux choix des candidats dans les comités de circonscription. Nous vous remercions de votre travail envers cet objectif.

Nos efforts de lobbying mènent bon train cette année, malgré la situation complexe du règne de la peur causé par la pandémie. Charles Zach a réussi à rejoindre plusieurs députés et autres contacts à déclaration obligatoire et non obligatoire. Le lobbying est l'activité la plus importante de l'ACAF, plus que toute autre organisation, en quantité et en qualité. Les anciens membres peuvent témoigner que

l'ACAF fait du lobbying professionnel et bénévole depuis sa naissance. Notre objectif est d'identifier ceux qui nous appuient, ceux qui ont l'esprit ouvert, nos adversaires et en même temps demeurer une source d'information et d'éducation à propos des enjeux qui nous touchent. L'ACAF est imbattable dans ce domaine.

La nouvelle de l'heure est qu'IBM a eu le contrat pour gérer le vol de notre propriété privée suite au décret du 1er mai dernier. Nous pouvons douter de leur capacité de contrôler les gens et de voler leurs armes étant donné leur implication dans le système de paie Fédérale Phoenix qui fut un fiasco total. Quiconque détient des parts dans la compagnie IBM peuvent considérer les vendre ou du moins porter plainte à leur bureau chef. Notre fond de pension du Canada a peut être lui aussi

des investissements chez IBM, ceci mérite d'être vérifié.

Notre puissante poursuite qui oppose le décret du 1er mai 2020 (Parker v. Canada et interventions) est bien entamée et nous sommes confiants que notre méthode réussira. Nous assumons la totalité des frais encourus pour cette cause ainsi que pour notre intervention qui l'accompagne. Par contre nous devons tous travailler pour élire un gouvernement qui nous voit sous un oeil favorable. Cet objectif doit être celui qui nous préoccupe le plus dans les mois à venir car les lois qui sont déjà en vigueur demeurent une menace envers nos droits. Les réviser et les abroger sont des objectifs qui doivent être prioritaires.

Nous considérons sérieusement tenter des poursuites en libelle diffamatoire contre ceux qui mentent pour promouvoir le contrôle des armes. Notre organisation ainsi que tous les propriétaires d'armes à feu en sommes les victimes. La clef pour réussir à ramasser de la preuve est d'identifier les commentaires qui se font à l'extérieur du parlement et qui ne jouissent d'aucune immunité. Si vous en rencontrez, s'il vous plaît nous en faire part à: [info@nfa.ca](mailto:info@nfa.ca) Je tiens à remercier tous nos directeurs, nos agents de terrain et nos bénévoles qui administrent nos pages web pour leur travail envers la promotion et la protection de notre présence dans les réseaux sociaux. Jordan Vandenhoff a fait un travail hors pairs pour nous dans ce domaine et avec les podcasts NFATalk nous sommes l'organisation pro-armes la mieux connue et la plus efficace au pays.

Nous continuons à nous battre contre les 3 politiques manquées du régime de contrôle des armes - l'émission de permis, la classification des armes et l'enregistrement des armes - avec des actions politiques, des poursuites à la cour et en faisant la distribution d'information. Il n'y a aucun de ces programmes Libéraux de contrôle des armes qui n'a un effet sur la sécurité publique, ils ne sont que des barrières à la possession légitime d'armes à feu. Il est donc essentiel que nous continuons à éduquer les décideurs à propos des échecs réels du contrôle des armes. Bonne année 2021 - emmenez quelqu'un tirer avec vous et n'abandonnez jamais vos armes. 

**Protestors standing against Trudeau's firearms ban, May 9, 2020.**

**Des manifestants contre les interdictions de Trudeau, 9 mai 2020.**



# Vice-President's Message

Blair Hagen

## Support Your Suppliers

These crazy, bizarre, Alice in Wonderland times are having a negative effect on every Canadian. It truly is as if the classic novels 1984 and Animal Farm all came true at the same time. However, if you are a firearms owner and user, you are probably noticing some particularly challenging and disturbing trends the average citizen is missing.

Shortages of firearms and ammunition abound, not only due to the machinations of the Liberal government, but also due to events in the United States. As you probably know, the US firearms industry is the main source of supply for Canadian firearms wholesalers and retailers. To varying degrees, this has been true for many years. Somewhat similar to what we have with Ford Canada and GM Canada, the Canadian firearms industry is also largely made up of subsidiaries of big US corporations that manufacture and distribute firearms, ammunition and related products. Which means we depend on them for supply.

Political turmoil in the US has sent the demand for firearms and ammunition through the stratosphere, with the situation so dire that many Canadian retailers report inquiries from Americans looking to purchase items they cannot find in their own country. That industry cannot keep up with the insatiable demand for firearms, ammunition and related items from Americans who fear for their own safety and security, as well as the future of their nation.

There has essentially been a decade-long, unprecedented demand for firearms and ammunition in the US, fed by fear, political uncertainty and irresponsible politicians pursuing disturbing and dangerous political and social agendas.

Boy, does that sound familiar.

What does that mean for us, here in Canada? It means that 2021 will see fairly serious shortages of the things you are used to getting easily at your local gun store, and at big box stores like Cabela's Canada and Bass Pro Canada. The US firearms industry will serve US customers first. If there is anything left over, they will ship to Canada. And there may not be anything left over.

There used to be a firearms industry in Canada, and although there definitely is still one now, it has changed significantly. But the upshot is, in the past, Canadians were a lot more self-sufficient in terms of availability of Canadian-made firearms and ammunition than we are today.

What happened through the 1960s and 1970s was the Liberal Party adopted an agenda of civil disarmament. And as the government pursued a legislative and regulatory agenda, the manufacture of firearms and ammunition in Canada became unprofitable due to that environment. Sound familiar? It remains the agenda of the Liberal Party today.

After the debacle and the very public failure of the Liberal gun registry and the Firearms Act of the 1990s, as well as their election loss and the defeat of their government in 2006 to the Conservative Party, our firearms industry began to recover. A recovery spurred on by Canadians rediscovering their rights and proud culture of firearms ownership and use in a political and cultural environment which began to respect their rights, culture and property.

Canadian businesses flourished as they served the needs and interests of Canadians and the economy of Canada. How about that?

Well, Liberals don't see it that way. They see firearms and the Canadians who own them at best as a public

nuisance to be tightly controlled and monitored, and at worst a danger to public safety and an embarrassment that must be eliminated from society. And so, with the combination of these two factors, we face a 2021 that begins to look bleak for Canadian firearms owners, users, retailers and wholesalers.

But there is light at the end of the tunnel. The year 2021 may well see a federal election in Canada where this corrupt, irresponsible and out-of-control Liberal government will be defeated and replaced by one that respects the rights and property of Canadians. The situation in the US? I wish I could speculate, but I cannot even begin to predict what will happen. God bless and keep them.

Now is the time to support the Canadian firearms industry, including wholesalers, retailers and local mom-and-pop gun shops. They are working diligently to try and provide you with the things you need to celebrate your Canadian right and tradition of firearms ownership. Remember, if they don't have it and can't get it for you, it is not a snub. They are not ignoring you, the customer. They are in a difficult situation that threatens their very ability to stay in business. It may take weeks or months, but they will come through.

Support Canadian importers and manufacturers. They have made a great financial investment in asserting and advancing our rights and traditions in a political, legislative and regulatory environment filled with forces who want to make sure they fail. By doing so, we will create an industry and culture in Canada that is dependent on no one's political, social or economic situation but our own. That will be a net benefit to Canadian sovereignty, society and culture. 



# 2021 VIRTUAL AGM

Join us as we share our impact  
over the 2020/21 fiscal year.

All members in good standing  
are encouraged to participate.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Saturday May 8, 2021**  
- 10am - 1pm MT -



**Online Registration**

(link available a few days prior on [NFA.ca](https://www.nfa.ca))

**ATTENDANCE PRIZE:**  
**KODIAK DEFENSE WK180 RIFLE**



**SEMI-AUTO, NON-RESTRICTED**

*For more information, please  
contact the NFA office  
at 1-877-818-0393*

# Preserving Our Firearms Heritage

Gary K. Kangas

## Tribute To A Firearms Icon

Al Page was born Feb. 17, 1953, and my dear friend of 46 years passed away peacefully in the company of his devoted mate, Laurie, on the evening of Sunday, June 7, 2020. Al had spent the afternoon sipping coffee in the sun while inspecting vintage bolt-action rifles with friends at Pullen's Gun Shop. A fitting prelude for someone as dedicated to the shooting sports as Al was to depart from our midst.

Al was a gun guru. With an encyclopedic knowledge of all things gun wise, he was the go-to source for information on handloading, gun identification, ballistics and more. He was a crack shot, champion IPSC shooter, an enthusiastic participant in cowboy action shooting and an avid hunter. Al's alias in cowboy action shooting was "The Reverend Al." He was imposing and impish in his frock coat and matched pair of antique nicked Smith & Wesson No. 3s, accompanied by his original 1873 Winchester. A valiant defender of gun rights and an individual of conviction, he was an irreplaceable mentor, firearms scholar, instructor and above all my dear friend. The loss is inconsolable!

Allen B. Page was born to Dorothy and Arthur Page and lived in the James Bay area of Victoria. He came from a non-gun-owning family, spending his teen years playing music and having a band with older brother, Harry. After high school, he went to work for the local Victoria newspaper, and it was during this time he discovered firearms and a lifelong passion began.



Al Page on the phone at Specialty Guns, circa 1990s.



BELOW: Al Page (centre) flanked on his right by Reggie Byrum, and on his left Logan Clark, two of the cowboys from the movie Tombstone

muzzleloader of Belgium origin and began to compete. This young fellow was an extremely good shot, plus a superb gun handler. We became acquainted and over time attended many shooting events together, forging a lifelong friendship in the process. As time went on, he developed a keen interest in target shooting, hunting, collecting and the restoration of cars. He did everything with dedication and conviction. Al was brilliant, a thinker, collector, a multi-faceted individual doing what he enjoyed most with vigor and distinction.

Al went to work for Gordon's Sporting Goods, at the same time developing into a champion competitor involved in silhouette, trap, bullseye, practical pistol and later in cowboy action shooting. He competed as an extremely proficient marksman, belonging to multiple area gun clubs, plus being a member of Canada's National Firearms Association. His skill with handguns began to be noted by everyone, and I personally watched him shoot a Smith & Wesson Model 25-5 in 45 Colt at a target 75 yards away,

scoring highly. I also have witnessed his skill with a rifle, shooting silhouette off hand at 500 yards and hitting the target consistently. His practical pistol skills earned him a place on the Canadian team, which competed in South Africa in September 1979. Upon returning from South Africa, he said,

My first encounter with Al was in 1974 at the old range of the North Saanich Gun Club during a black powder competition day. Chris Wilcox and I were shooting with our own hand-crafted muzzle-loading rifles when a big, robust, bearded young man appeared. He was carrying an unknown



**Allen Page's awards and trophies.**

**BELOW: Al & Laurie's wedding was accompanied by cast members of Captain Jack's Wild West show.**



His laurels, awards and citations fill a room, with trophies, certificates, plaques and medals numbering 106 plus. He was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Southern Vancouver Island Rangers and bestowed a Life Membership by the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association.

Al's ultimate passion turned out to be the discovery of and his relationship with his life mate, Laurie, with whom he journeyed for 21 years. The following are her words: "I had been divorced for 10 years and working in a stressful environment, with my weekend retreats consisting of going to a co-worker's house (Gina) in Mill Bay as a volunteer in their nursery. In 1997,

"The competition was intense," and Dale Hayton, his employer at that time, quoted Al as saying, "Some of those guys could shoot real good and move even better." Then Al went on to compete at many high-profile practical pistol competitions, including the Bianchi Cup International Tournaments in Columbia, Missouri, in May 1981 and 1982. He was also a sometimes actor in Captain Jack's Wild West Show.

Al's achievements in the shooting arena were now becoming legendary, but he also served the shooting organizations to which he belonged with distinction. His ability to mentor, coach, teach and instruct was displayed on a regular basis at public events, where he would share with novices the techniques of safety and accuracy. You could watch novices become marksmen before your very eyes. A prime example was at a period-style trap shoot when Sybil Kangas was shooting her shotgun and Al intervened, sharing with her some proper shotgun technique. She went on to win top female trap shooter with a 20-inch barreled coach gun.

Gina met a customer, Terry, who was a member of the Southern Vancouver Island Rangers, and he offered her some skeet shooting lessons. She suggested I join them and was introduced to Allen, also a Ranger and Terry's best friend. At that time, I wasn't interested in a romantic relationship, but I had never shot a firearm and was intrigued by this new adventure. We did a few lessons at the Southern Vancouver Island Rangers and I ultimately hit a clay target, I was so overjoyed and excited I gave Al a big hug! Much later, Al confessed that was the moment he fell madly in love with me!

"Over the next period of time spent shooting and gradually getting to know Allen, my feelings changed. We were married in 1999 at the Southern Vancouver Island Rangers where we had first met. Our friends and family gathered on the shotgun range to hear our wedding vows, which were followed by seven of our close friends firing a 21-gun salute with 12-gauge shotguns. While wedding photos were being taken at another part of the club grounds, our guests were entertained

by a performance of Captain Jack's Wild West, an 1880s-style Wild West Show in which Al and I performed. We had personas, Al was Reverend Al, and I was Temperance Tillie. The show included trick shooting of balloons, both on the ground and from horseback, with audience participation. We spent our honeymoon at a friend's ranch in Alberta, where I had my first opportunity to shoot gophers. I was only persuaded in this endeavour as I witnessed the devastation that the gophers had done to crops. Once I had my first hit with a .22 rifle, I was hooked!

"Upon taking the course and qualifying for my firearms license, Al would occasionally surprise me with a firearm that would suit me for our various disciplines. We would go to the local range for instruction, proper stance and practice. His most frequent comment was, 'Sight picture... squeeze the trigger.' Safety was always prominent, and if I occasionally deviated from that point, he was quick to remind me. With the introduction of every new firearm and the accompanying unfamiliarity, Al coached me with patience, calmness and never criticized. His gentleness gave me the ability to relax.

"In time, Allen and I added Jake, a German shorthair pointer, to our family, and our fall weekends were spent going grouse hunting on the Island. We would follow Jake until he was on point, and if I missed a bird that was flushed out Al would be right beside me with his shotgun at the ready and would hit the bird. Al showed me how to skin a bird and Jake was rewarded at home with a hot meal of heart and liver. On our holidays, we would go to Alberta with Jake to a new ranch and spend many glorious hours in the vast fields flushing out birds."

Al worked for the foremost gun shops in Victoria. Starting at Gordon's Sporting Goods, then moving to Specialty Guns and finally Island Outfitters Gun Shop, retiring in 2011. Although Al lost his duel with heart disease, his legend will live on. He was dedicated to preserving our firearms heritage. The Allen B. Page estate, in concert with others, have proposed seed funding a bursary or perpetual trophies for the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association.



# Politics & Guns

Bruce Gold

## The New Governance

The policies of Trudeau and his Liberal Party are designed to increase their own political power by commandeering governance in Canada. This is not without historical precedent. If we look back to the English Civil War (1642 to 1651) we can see the same struggle between autocratic rule (divine right of kings) and representative rule (parliament). Promoting a statist top-down approach to governance is not surprising with a PM who considers himself a philosopher king and publicly declares the superiority of dictatorship's arbitrary power.

From mandating ideological litmus tests for government support (summer student job funding) to direct cabinet rule through Orders in Council, the pattern of direct rule by the anointed, our intellectual and moral superiors, is demonstrated again and again. Like one of the Stuart kings, he has simply dismissed (prorogued) parliament when numerous major scandals become too awkward. He then used a confidence vote to stonewall any further investigations into illegal patronage and other corrupt practices. His budget and project spending remain a secret.

Reversing a centuries-long struggle to free ourselves from arbitrary rule by elites, the Liberals secretly prepared an Order in Council to criminalize tens of thousands of Canadians through an arbitrary gun ban of commonly owned "assault weapons" (no legal definition). The governor in council (a creature of the Liberal cabinet) declared that none of the newly banned firearms were "reasonable for use in Canada for hunting or sporting purposes."

This gun ban, like most gun bans, piggy backed on a mass shooting. The Liberals used a mass shooting in 1989 (Montreal Massacre) and 31 years later in 2020 (Nova Scotia shooting) as a pretext to launch a virtue signaling gun grab, or perhaps more accurately, a vote grab. The official justification for this was an increased public demand for more measures addressing gun violence. This supposed demand was

a direct contradiction of the government's major survey in 2018 (137,000 respondents). In this survey, 76 per cent of respondents did not see any need for further limitations on "assault weapons" and 80 per cent did not see the need for further limits on handguns. Immediately after the Nova Scotia shootings, polls began to reflect the public's emotional response to the shooting, giving the Liberals the political window they needed to push forward their anti-gun-owner agenda. When asked in court what studies supported the claim of "no reasonable use," the Liberals replied that the documents were cabinet secrets and Canadians had no right to see them.

### GUNS & LAW

When the Liberals reclassified some 1,500 firearms (so far) into the prohibited classification, they declared, "These weapons were designed for one purpose and one purpose only: to kill the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time." They stated, "There is no use and no place for such weapons in Canada." We might therefore ask if the RCMP will continue using "assault weapons" (patrol carbines) whose only purpose is to kill as many Canadians as possible as fast as possible?

With this declaration, tens of thousands of Canadians found they were suddenly criminals, and hundreds of millions of dollars in what had been legal property was going to be seized without compensation. There is neither compensation nor grandfathering in the Order in Council, only vague talk of intentions. There is also a difficulty since the Order in Council and its legal authority to make changes in classification does not include nullification. This nullification process is a legal step beyond changing the firearm's status to prohibited, which would have left them open for use with a prohibited licence. With nullification, the firearm becomes completely unregistered and illegal for any use. There is no legal basis for

this nullification, as it is not mentioned in the Firearms Act and, despite the RCMP's claim, is not mentioned by the Order in Council. The Liberals and the RCMP are simply inventing a new law without any Parliamentary or other legal authority to do so.

### THE STATISTICS FALL APART

The criminal use of "military assault weapons" is so minimal in Canada that there is and never has been any legal definition of what they are. There are no statistics on the criminal use of "assault weapons," however whim or fancy defines them. There are two categories which somewhat fit. These are automatic weapons and rifles/shotguns. Automatic firearms have been banned since 1978, and from 1991 to 2018 there were 144 homicides with automatic weapons. Out of 16,855 homicides, this is about 8/10th of one per cent. Even if they were not already illegal, the statistics don't justify criminalizing tens of thousands and confiscating hundreds of millions of dollars in private property.

That leaves the category rifle/shotgun. The Liberals have told us their new gun ban and confiscation does not apply to shotguns. However, it does. Which ones the regulation is unclear about, since the ban on bore size is simply 20 millimetres or greater. That would seem clear, except the drafters seemed ignorant as to how close this is to the size of 12-gauge shotguns (nominally 18.5 millimetres, but can be up to 20 millimetres in some overbored guns). Including the chamber or choke recess puts 12-gauge shotguns over the limit, and the Order in Council does not state how it is to be measured. A mere administrative trifle which can put you in jail with a criminal record, especially since the measurement procedure can be changed without notice.

The RCMP responded to the public alarm on this shotgun confiscation by stating that the secretive Firearms Reference Table defines the bore as the diameter of the barrel forward of the chamber but before the choke. How-

ever, this detail of measurement is not part of any Canadian law or any Order in Council. The FRT is merely an internal document of the RCMP and nothing more than their opinion as to how it should be measured. Bizarrely, this amateurish twaddle, which has no standing in law and is not part of any legislation, is used by police, courts and legislators as if it was the law. This detail makes all statistics about rifles/shotguns completely worthless, since the legality of the millions of 12-gauge shotguns is just the current opinion of RCMP bureaucrats. The failure of the category to distinguish between rifles and semi-automatic rifles (if this is what is meant by "assault rifles") reduces the rest of the category's statistics to pure speculation. But of course, all crime gun type statistics are largely speculative, since a large percentage of crime guns are never recovered.

#### LICENCED GUN OWNERS

There are still the licenced gun owners, the true target of the gun ban. Do they constitute an immediate threat to public safety which must be met with secretly prepared gotcha laws? If we look at StatsCan data (1997 to 2005),

only 1,572 of 5,206 homicides (30 per cent) involved a firearm. Only 118 homicides involved a registered gun of any kind (2.2 per cent of homicides), only 111 registered firearms owners were accused ( $111/5206 = 2.1$  per cent). Trying to reduce homicides by cracking down on the supposed assault weapons problem means focusing tens of thousands of police hours and hundreds of millions of dollars on a tiny percentage of the problem. It's a decision diverting scarce resources to virtue signaling.

#### CONCLUSION

This Liberal gun ban is just part of their drive to re-invent how governance is done in Canada. Responsible government is being replaced, step by step, with direct cabinet rule, censorship and arbitrary governance. The procedures and legal precedents established in the gun control file are now accepted process, available for any other agenda that appeals to our activist rulers.

Think this isn't your problem? Just remember that SUVs contribute to global warming, so maybe they should be banned and confiscated. I know,

this is obviously a completely unrealistic and absurd speculation, which will never happen. Just like bypassing parliament with secretly created laws that criminalize thousands, and confiscate millions of dollars of private property will "never happen."

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Nathaniel Milijour



# CANADA'S OLDEST TRAPSHOOTING CLUB

Visiting the Hamilton Gun Club

*BY JEFF HELSDON*





**ABOVE: This 1910 photo shows members of the club in front of one of the earlier facilities.**

When a facility's claim to fame is being the oldest continuously operating major trapshooting club in the world, it has seen a lot of changes in recreational shooting, and the most surprising of these is when the club's membership peaked.

Today's members of the Hamilton Gun Club are sure their club is the oldest in the country, and to the best of their knowledge in North America. With trap being predominately a North American sport, it's also entirely possible the Hamilton Gun Club is the oldest continuously operating North American-style trap shooting club in the world.

#### THE EARLY DAYS

The Hamilton Gun Club started in 1882, first located on the shores of Burlington Bay. Not surprisingly for the day, the club's original documents make reference to its launch being in conjunction with the Wildfowlers' Club. But some sort of falling out occurred in the ensuing 10 years, as the 1892 minutes say a person couldn't be a member of both clubs.

While the history of the first decade's existence is a little unclear, from that point forward it's all recorded in the minutes, which are incredibly still intact. It's believed that from the club's first location near the Dundas Marsh on the bay, in 1893, it moved to the Racetrack Association grounds. Then

a move to the Chappel Farm at the corner of Barton and Ottawa Streets followed in 1900. That property was rented at \$35 per year.

The club purchased its first property in 1906 at the base of Parkdale Avenue on the bay, where a two-story clubhouse was built. This property was sold to the Hamilton Harbour Commission in 1953, with agreement it would be vacant by 1955. The Hamilton Gun Club moved to its present site on the corner of Highway 20 in Stoney Creek in 1955. The original purchase was 80 acres, with another 76 added in 1972.

Although its history originates in trapshooting, today the club boasts a variety of shotgun sports, including trap, skeet, 5-stand and sporting clays. On the main property, adjacent to the clubhouse, there are two practice traps, three skeet fields, a sporting clays range and 5-stand. Another 14 trap fields are located across the road.

The property is a 10-minute drive from the city but has already built berms.

"We've built berms all the way around the property so we're keeping ourselves secluded," said the president, Dave Troiani.

#### LIVE BIRDS

But before switching entirely to the present, one more trip down memory lane is necessary. Live bird shooting was popular in 1882 and the highlight of the >



**ABOVE: This 1924 photo of Ladies' Day shows the good participation this shoot used to draw.**

club year used to be its annual live bird tournament, first held in 1891. It started as a one-day event, grew to three, and then expanded to a week to include clay targets. In 1906, the event was known as the Grand Canadian Handicap -- although it attracted many American shooters -- with results reported in *Forest and Stream* magazine. Live bird shooting ended in 1931 after the Humane Society intervened. Pigeons were the target and 2,790 were trapped for the 1897 championship. Dead birds were sold to restaurants, although members could keep their own birds during tight economic periods.

#### TRAP

While trapshooting has been part of the club since its early days, it's not exactly clear when the first clay target was thrown. However, it was well established when the 1892 minutes were written. In 1914, the first year where records report a total, there were 45,000 targets thrown. Now, there are about a million targets a year, with substantially more in years when the club hosts the provincial or national championships.

The club was part of the Dominion of Canada Trapshooting and Game Protective Association at the turn of the last century. It hosted that organization's championships in 1902, 1906, 1913 and 1918.

The club's history makes reference to the first registered shoot for the AATA in 1908. Although no historical reference could be found, there is not a lot of doubt this is referring to the Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA). The club typically hosts numer-

ous ATA shoots throughout the year.

Hamilton Gun Club hosts the Ontario Provincial Trapshooting Association championship every other year, switching off with St. Thomas Gun Club. It has also hosted the national trap shooting championships numerous times. This competition typically draws 350 shooters, while the nationals attract 470 shooters. Its 16 trap fields make the club one of the premiere facilities in the country.

In April 1960, Hamilton Gun Club became the country's first international (bunker) trap shooting facility. However, the club has since ceased to offer international trap.

#### SKEET

Skeet shooting was slower to start at Hamilton Gun Club, beginning in 1934. By 1937, skeet targets exceeded trap targets and they were almost equal in 1938. A skeet league was started with York Skeet Club in 1939, and a second skeet field was approved. Hamilton became an Ontario Skeet Shooting Association member when it was formed in 1940. Through additional expansions, the layout was expanded to four skeet fields by 1967. One field was temporarily converted to international skeet.

There are presently three skeet fields, but the club is looking at adding a fourth again, as the sport is growing "exponentially," according to Troiani. Asked why he thought skeet seemed to be so popular, Troiani answered, "The targets resemble flying game. It's fast, but not too fast. It's also a good social sport where everyone can talk between each station." Troiani shoots a little of everything but com-

petes in skeet.

Hamilton shoots in a regional winter league against Mohawk, Hamilton Anglers and Hunters Association, Waterford and Galt. In addition, there are sanctioned shoots through the National Skeet Shooting Association (NSSA). The club has not held the provincial skeet championships, as a minimum of four fields are needed

#### SPORTING CLAYS & 5-STAND

The sporting clays field is what is known as a compressed sporting clays field. Rounds are 50 targets, instead of the typical 100, and all shooting is in open fields as there are no woods. "With the different angles and speeds and rabbit option, it's really good and makes great hunting practice," Troiani said.

The 5-stand course was installed about a decade ago after environmental and neighbour issues forced condensing the sporting clays course. For those not familiar with it, 5-stand is like sporting clays shot on a trap field. It consists of targets thrown from a variety of machines, including rabbit targets, to simulate wild game situations. Rounds are 25 targets and it's much quicker to shoot than sporting clays.

In Hamilton, a former combination skeet and trap field is used for five-stand, with those sport's throwers as part of the game, plus others for a total of nine throwers. The birds thrown



**RIGHT: Jennifer Arnold pulls for Jordan Vandenhoff on Hamilton Gun Club's skeet range. Skeet has been growing in popularity and the club is looking at adding a fourth range.**



**LEFT: President Dave Troiani on the skeet line at the club**



from the trap house are not standard trap target angles. One machine, for example, throws the target on its side in an arcing pattern, so the face of the target is towards the shooter. Other targets include an incoming mini, overhead outbound shots and quartering shots at various angles.

A recent upgrade allows shooters to pull for themselves with a voice-activated system. "It's starting to grow slowly," Troiani said. "There's more people showing interest in it."

Although some clubs shoot different disciplines different days of the week, all disciplines are available when Hamilton Gun Club is open on Wednesdays Saturdays, and Sundays. In addition, the club operates on Thursdays in the summer.

Non-members are welcome (in a non-COVID world) and are typically given a tour by an executive member after arriving at the club. More information is available at [hamiltongunclub.com](http://hamiltongunclub.com).

## TRENDS

With a long history, Hamilton Gun Club offers an insight into trends in shotgun sports, such as female participation. A ladies' day shoot commenced in 1905. Although the club history doesn't have a reference to participation levels in the shoot, a 1924 shoot from ladies' day shows participation at about 35 ladies. The ladies' day was discontinued in 1963, and a Ladies' Nite party was held. It was discontinued in 1981. Things may be changing, though, as Troiani said many of the PAL courses the club hosts have 30 per cent female participants.

Although Hamilton Gun Club has been a shotgun club for its entire history, an archery range might be next. Most members are from Hamilton, but there are members from outside the immediate region. "We're starting to get a huge influx from outside the area, even as far as Toronto,"

Troiani said.

Although Troiani has been a member since he was 15 and there are many long-time members, he said much of the growth is new shooters, perhaps being driven by the club hosting PAL courses. "Typically, what happens is people join because they're brought in by their friends," he said. "They start shooting whatever discipline their friends shoot and then diversify over time."

Troiani noticed the older demographic has dropped off. "Now it's taking off again. It seems young people are taking it up and enjoying it."

Getting back to the burning question of when the club had its greatest number of members. The somewhat surprising answer is 2020. According to the centennial history book, memberships previously peaked in the mid-1970s at 240. In the early days, they hovered around the 100 mark, and then approached 200 in the late 1940s before hitting 229 in 1964. Three years ago, it was sitting at 217, less than half of the 517 members who joined in 2020. Those numbers from last year indicate the club is on track for a successful future. 🍀

**RIGHT: F-Class shooters are affectionately known as belly floppers in some shooting circles – for obvious reasons.**



# THE THOUSAND- YARD GAME

An intro to F-Class competition  
*BY TIMOTHY FOWLER*



Restricted and F-Factory. Open class equipment can be any .35-calibre round or smaller. The maximum gun and scope combo weight is 10 kilograms. Shooting support is an adjustable front rest and a rear support bag. F-Restricted allows rifles chambered in either 308 Winchester or 223 Remington. Restricted rifles are capped at 8.25 kilograms, including the weight of the bipod. F-Factory is simply a factory gun in a suitable calibre ready to go, pretty much shot as is, right out of the box. Target distances range from 300 metres out to 900 metres or 1,000 yards. That's more than half a mile. All shooting is from the prone position. It's worth noting that F-Class shooting is a methodical, slower course of fire with shooters receiving feedback from the target on every shot so they can adjust before their next shot.

The F in F-Class is a nod to the late George Farquharson, a PALMA competitor who found that with age his eyes could no longer use the mandated iron sights effectively. Also, holding a rifle became more difficult, so he started competitions which allowed the use of optics and front and rear rests. It became wildly popular, and now it's enjoyed by all age groups, regardless of physical capabilities.

**“**The first time you can put rounds downrange accurately at 1,000 yards -- there's something about it that's addictive. And I want to do it again. I want to do it better. Some people have the personality to challenge themselves all the time. I am one of those people. I just took off from there,” said Ken Thiessen, world-class F-Class competitive shooter.

The first time Thiessen shot at 1,000 yards, he was working in Alberta and one of his buddies signed them up for an intro day at the range in Rosebud, Alta. Tagging the target at 1,000 hooked him deep and started him on a long-range target trail he is still navigating.

That pretty much sums up F-Class and F-Class competitors. F-Class attracts shooters who love the long-range game, and have personalities obsessive enough to tinker with equipment, lock down a shooting process and manufacture extremely precise handloads to consistently punch holes in a five-inch target at 1,000 yards.

Thiessen is a member of the Canadian F-Class Open team, but he shoots other competitive events too. He is the operations manager of Bullseyenorth Sports Shooting Superstore, and pro-staff for CADEX and Vortex. Thiessen is still a qualified red seal motorcycle mechanic and past competitive motocross racer -- which accounts for, or at least partly explains, his interest in tinkering and his penchant for competition.

Bob Raymond is an F-Class competitor, long-distance shooting instructor and coach, helicopter mechanic and falconer. “I’m really proud that nearly half of the Canadian team was, at one time, my student. It feels good,” said Raymond. “He acknowledges with a laugh that some of these students who have gone on to serious competition now (sometimes) shoot better than him. I interviewed both Thiessen and Raymond for this article.

#### F-CLASS EXPLAINED

The F-Class long-range game comes in three categories: F-Open, F-

#### THE CHESS OF SHOOTING SPORTS

“I would say F-Class competitors are like chess players,” said Thiessen. “F-Class is about extreme precision. There's a lot of thought put into the set-up of equipment, preparation and everything that goes into it. Your target is a five-inch circle at 1,000 yards and you want to hit that with every projectile. That's a tall order. Everything needs to be perfect, from your ammunition to your firearm to your mental game. You're constantly trying to do the same thing you did last shot -- if you've made the perfect shot. At the world-class level, everyone's equipment is top tier, everyone's ammunition is top-notch, everyone's gear is perfect, so the variables become your mental game, your wind reading capabilities, and your coaching and team staff.”

#### PLAN, PREPARE, PERFECT

“Shooting F-Class competitions took me back to my motorcycle racing days. Prepare for the task with top-tier components, put in the time to ▶



**LEFT:** Raymond has set up his rifle and optics to dryfire an hour before supper three to four times each week of the winter.

**BELOW:** The 284 Winchester is mandated by the Canadian F-Class team. Hornady A-Tips are mandated by their performance on target at 1,000 yards.

do the testing, and when it comes time to compete, you've already done everything to get to perfection. Then you just execute. Plan, prepare, perfect -- when I did this, I had success motorcycle racing," said Thiessen. He says applying the same process of planning, preparing and perfecting to the discipline of F-Class competition has served him very well.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

It seems that once the equipment, loads and shooting process is locked down, shooters are left with responding to the wind, and managing what goes on in their head, in addition to managing the trigger. When you realize all the competitors are rigged up with spectacularly accurate equipment and precision handloaded rounds, all that is left is the guy on the trigger and his ability to hold his mental game together in the face of intimidating competition.

"Pull the trigger with purpose," said Thiessen. "It always has something to do with the guy pulling the trigger. Every long-range shooter is challenged by the wind. Everyone will struggle with environmental conditions. If you add up all of the mechanical portions of the firearm system, it all comes down to one thing and it's the guy pulling the trigger."

#### GOLD MEDAL ADVICE

There are myriad skills shooters need to acquire, practice and hone to shoot



consistently to win matches. Raymond has this advice about matches and managing one's self: "When I go to a match, I don't look at the scoreboard. I'm making every shot my best shot. I don't care what the next guy beside me is shooting. I can't control that. I can control what I do -- that's it and that's all. The only thing that's going on in my conscious mind is breaking the trigger. I've been here 1,000 times before at the 1,000-yard line. I've done this and walked off with gold. How many times? It's easy-peasy, and I'm out with my buddies and we're having fun. There's no stress and no fuss. When I first started the game, I would let scores get ahead of me. I would let

a conversation I was listening to from two shooters beside me distract me. I've learned how to tune all that out."

Raymond cautions prospective shooters not to get tangled up early in high-end equipment. After attending an F-Class match, it's easy to think that one needs a super custom rifle to compete in F-Class. But he feels there is much to learn and accomplish before a shooter can utilize the full benefit of a rifle capable of quarter-minute-of-angle shots. "If you don't know how to break a trigger properly and you don't know how to read the wind, that \$10,000 rifle and \$10,000 scope is not going to do you any good," he says.



F-Class demands top-tier in hardware and glass. Thiessen has both.

## EQUIPMENT & CARTRIDGES

The top two competing elements for long-distance shooters are bullet velocity versus recoil. The faster the bullet moves, the less it is impacted by wind and the less adjustment is required to hit the bullseye, but the level of recoil which must be managed is higher. And eventually punishing recoil will take its toll. Finding the middle ground is a good place to start. The Canadian Team mandates 284 Winchester as the cartridge they shoot partly for this reason. The seven-millimetre projectile is capable of excellent accuracy, and the selected cartridge doesn't beat shooters up too badly during a day of shooting.

Raymond says this about recoil: "I don't like recoil. And 85 rounds a day, for a three-day tournament, makes for a long day if you're getting beaten up by recoil."

Thiessen agreed, "The 284 Winchester is tough to beat in the 1,000-yard game. You're lying down and pushing 60, 70, 80 rounds in a day for an F-Class match, and the 284 Winchester doesn't beat you up too bad." While the Canadian Team chose the 284 Winchester, there are many other good options for shooters starting out. The six-millime-

tre cartridges developed for long-range shooting are an excellent place to start, as is as the 6.5 Creedmoor.

As far as gear goes, Thiessen thinks getting started with what you have makes sense, and Raymond likes the idea of getting shooting skills locked down before even considering the long-range game. Thiessen said, "Everyone needs a \$1,000-dollar rifle and \$5,000 in training, not the other way around. Also, being part of a team has surrounded me with caring, helpful, knowledgeable advisors."

## WHERE TO START

When you commit to getting into the long-range game, Thiessen said, "Just go do it! The best way to learn is to jump right in. Show up with whatever equipment you have and try it. From that point forward, you're going to know exactly what you have and what you're capable of doing with your given circumstances. And you will probably learn where to go from there. Just go out and do it. Don't be afraid because there are lots of people to help you along the way. Surround yourself with knowledgeable people you want to be around, and that will shorten your learning curve."

Raymond was one of those knowledgeable people Thiessen surrounded himself with, saying, "What I tell people is the .22 rimfire is the best place to start. Shoot over flags at 25 yards with a scoped rimfire. Test different ammo. The .22 is easy to shoot, has no recoil, it's low noise and you can do a lot of shooting and learn a lot for a little bit of money. Get your breathing down. Try to find an old guy (like me) that has been doing this for a lifetime to take you under his wing. Take an intro F-Class day at a range where you can shoot a rifle prone and they can coach you through the process. Then decide which discipline you're going to shoot. If it's going to be F-Class open, then start with a 6mm or 6.5 Creedmoor."

These guys are at the top of the F-Class game in the world, and something which comes through the conversation loud and clear is their love for the long-range shooting game and their desire to help up-and-coming shooters. Go to the range, talk to some shooters, you will find they have a lot of time to share their knowledge and experience.

What do you say? Want to get in the game? Send it! 🏹



# ONE SWEET SAUER

Reviewing the Sauer 100 Atacama

BY TIMOTHY FOWLER



Getting my hands on a Sauer 100 Atacama rifle and a big Zeiss scope for an extended test drive is a bit like your girlfriend's dad tossing you the keys to the BMW Sport and saying, "Go ahead take it for a spin." This rifle is top-drawer German engineering chambered in Hornady's 6.5 PRC cartridge, and I was able to take that "spin" this past big game season.

Sauer is a premium German manufacturer with a reputation for fine engineering and consistent quality. Optics were German as well, with the same kind of reputation; specifically, a Zeiss 6-24x50mm scope with their new #89 reticle. Steve Hornady, president of Hornady Manufacturing, sums it up well on Sauer's website by saying, "We are delighted that Sauer, a highly respected German gunmaker that has been producing guns for over 267 years, has worked with Hornady to chamber a rifle in 6.5 PRC. Sauer is the first European manufacturer to work with us to have a rifle chambered in a new calibre Hornady has developed at launch. This is a proud step for both companies."

## THE RIFLE

The Sauer 100 Atacama line of rifles is a relatively new offering, priced in the \$1,200 range. The Atacama version of the Sauer 100 features a digital printed desert-looking camo pattern on the stock, with Desert Sand Cerakote covering bolt, action and barrel. It sort of looks like high mountain or desert camo.

The Sauer 100 is currently available in 13 calibres from 223 Remington to 300 Winchester Magnum. Magnum cartridges include the 7mm Remington Magnum, the 6.5 PRC and the 300 Winchester Magnum. The standard barrel is 22 inches and the magnum is 24 inches. The gun is available in nine standard calibres, including 270 Winchester, 30-06 Springfield and 6.5 Creedmoor. The rifle feels light right out of the box at 3.150 kilograms (6.93 pounds), the ERGO MAX rugged stock feels solid, and "grippy" but not sticky at the forend and wrist. Even barehanded at -20, the stock doesn't feel as cold as laminated wood.

There are three things that hit you when you unpack this rifle. It feels light, the bolt is slick and it operates with a low angle (60-degree) throw. The safety is a typical three-position

type, and the trigger is adjustable, but I left it at the factory setting of just over two pounds, as measured with my Wheeler Engineering electronic trigger scale. That trigger is excellent, feeling as crisp as an oven-baked croissant. The specs say the trigger is adjustable from 2.2 to 4.2 pounds.

The rifle accommodates Sauer Hexalock rings, but I used rings supplied with the Zeiss scope and found them easy to install and some of the best-designed scope rings I have used. I purchased a Leupold Picatinny rail to install the scope rings on and it fit perfectly. The Sauer is designed to accommodate Remington long-action mounts, so finding something to fit is a snap.

The double-stack polymer magazine holds four magnum rounds (five for standard calibres) and positively ejects when the release button is pushed. However, I found it needs to be finessed into place. This is not a magazine you can slam home and know it will find its way home by force. Even after 15 days of solid field use, I needed to finesse the magazine to get it to positively insert and lock. It's not a problem unless you're in a hurry. When we were hunting

farmland in central Alberta and were moving from one hunting area to another, I left the unloaded magazine in the rifle, and the whitetail I took was with a single round, loaded through the breech.

Whether walking with this rifle, packing it on the quad or sitting on a trail while it rested on a bipod, it was an absolute pleasure to pack and shoot. And I have a freezer half-full of venison because of it.

#### TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Sauer 100 utilizes a push-feed bolt design with three locking lugs up front, a large sliding extractor mounted on one of the lugs and dual plunger-type ejectors which contribute to a low-angle exit of a spent case. Sauer cuts the part of the receiver that faces the barrel and inserts a breech ring for the bolt face to lock into when closed. This arrangement is used instead of cutting lug abutments into the receiver like most North American-manufactured rifles. They feel this arrangement makes barrel attachment more consistent rifle to rifle. The breech ring is a bit more expensive to manufacture but offers potential accuracy improvements.

The (620-millimetre/24-inch) standard contour hammer-forged barrel for the 6.5 PRC employs a twist rate of 1:8, which is slightly faster than their 6.5 Creedmoor at 1:8.66. The rifle stock has an aluminum bedding block with lots of space for epoxy. The free-floated barrel is screwed and torqued into the action, a departure from the usual European press fit, allowing the barrel to be swapped out at some point in the future. The polymer stock is very rigid, with the bolt knob cover and magazine also made of polymer. The trigger guard and bottom end is metal. The magazine accommodates cartridges up to 3.015 inches long, giving those handloaders among us a little room to work with when handloading projectiles a bit closer to the lands.

#### THE SCOPE

The Zeiss V4 in 6-24 with a 50-millimetre objective accompanied the rifle to the range and the woods. The scope is well thought out, and the #89 reticle shows 20 MOA below the centerline of the reticle to allow for that much holdover. The centre "X" in the crosshairs is illuminated and adjustable through 10 levels of brightness.



**RIGHT:** The Zeiss glass never let me down, performing perfectly even in cold weather, and helped me tag two big game animals.

The parallax adjustment takes the shooter from 10 metres to infinity. The Zeiss rings have torque-to specs printed on the bottom of the rings and a bubble level built into the rear ring. Real Avid's SMART TORQ torque wrench let me put the right amount of torque on the mounting screws and the Real Avid Level Pro helped me mount the scope squarely on the rifle.

### TARGET

Killing an antelope at 500 yards a few years back with a 7mm Remington Magnum handloaded with a 139-Grain Hornady SST was satisfying. That was the longest shot I had ever taken, until the day I took the Sauer to the range with the intent of shooting out to 800 metres (875 yards). Minute-of-angle at that range is nearly nine inches. My group was less than that and for a guy who isn't comfortable at that range, the combination of rifle and scope made it possible. But more important than the hardware was a competent shooter and coach who could read the mirage and bark, "Send it," at the precise moment the mirage was boiling straight up. I am not sure what was more fun about hitting an 800-metre target, the sight of the first two bullet splashes one nearly on top of each other on the steel buffalo or the WHOOP! my marksman-spotter let go at the second shot. Both were exhilarating. You can read elsewhere in this Journal about F-Class competitors who regularly shoot half-minute-of-angle at 1,000 yards, but for me, this is a big deal. It is a thing I want to repeat. The Sauer rifle and Zeiss scope combination are certainly up to the 1,000-yard task.

### HUNTING

Knowing your rifle shoots so well out to 800 metres builds confidence in the field when hunting, and it was encouraging to know that I was packing an accurate rifle. I hunted a week in the breaks of the Old Man River in southern Alberta, successfully taking a mule deer at only 85 yards. The rifle carries comfortably and is a pleasure to pack up and down those hills. I also hunted a few days with my brother in central Alberta on farmland, constantly jumping in and out of the truck between



**ABOVE:** Yes, this is my silly-kid grin after hitting an 875-yard target with five rounds I can (almost) cover with my hand.

**LEFT:** This sweet-shooting combination provides excellent accuracy right out of the box.



hunting one spot and relocating to another. The whitetail I tagged was taken just over 100 yards in a poplar grove in farm country. The 143-grain Hornady ELD-X ammunition combination was perfect and worked spectacularly on both my deer.

Mid-November found my hunting partners and I setting up an outfitter tent in the boreal forest. We hunted hard for eight days in -20 degrees Celsius for both late-season bull moose and cow elk. While two of us were lucky and tagged an animal, I was unable to put the deal together. But every day I packed the rifle on the quad and found a good place to sit with the rifle on a bipod and found trails to walk while chasing moose and elk. Spending so much time with the Sauer provided a good sense of the rifle's capability.

### MY CHOICE

I love the Sauer S 100 rifle and the 6.5 PRC, but like my Uncle Bob used to say, there are no free lunches. While the 6.5 PRC gives hunters a bit more velocity and downrange energy, a significant advantage over the 6.5 Creedmoor for longer range shots on big game, it does come at a recoil cost. I found the 6.5 PRC comfortable to shoot, but not nearly as comfortable as the Creedmoor. When it comes to big game hunting, I would always prefer a bit more velocity given everything else being equal, but at the range, it is an advantage to have a lower-recoiling rig. Your choice. Choose wisely. But I'll admit to being a sucker for more velocity and would choose the 6.5 PRC in the Sauer S 100. It is a sweet-shooting combination. ♥

# UNDERSTANDING THE 6.5 PRC

An in-depth look at the latest 6.5mm

BY T.J. SCHWANKY





**The 6.5 PRC is the cartridge many mountain hunters have been waiting for.**

While the 6.5 Creedmoor has become the cartridge everyone loves to hate, the more recent 6.5 Precision Rifle Cartridge (PRC) has become the cartridge that everyone seems to love. The fascination with this newcomer to the 6.5 realm runs so deep that factory ammunition, brass and even reloading dies are being sold for two or three times their value on the black market. Manufacturers are clamouring to keep up, but the demand is outweighing the supply right now. While many people look at the Creedmoor as an overnight sensation that benefited from good marketing, the truth is, its rise was anything but meteoric. The Creedmoor was developed way back in 2007 and only started to see mainstream acceptance about a decade or so later. The 6.5 PRC, on the other hand, could truly be called an overnight sensation.

Described by many as what the 6.5 Creedmoor should have been in the first place, the 6.5 PRC is basically a short magnum 6.5 cartridge. The first rumblings of the 6.5 PRC started in 2013, when GA Precision owner, George Gardner, set out to create a new cartridge specifically designed for Precision Rifle Series competition (PRS) shooters. The PRS Shooting Series includes about 6,000 active shooters participating in over 40 national pro series precision rifle competitions and hundreds of one-day matches across the US. In the production division, competitors must shoot stock rifles and optics, with rifles limited to .30 calibre or under and 3,200 feet per second. These are timed competitions with ranges extending beyond 1,000 yards. The ideal rifles are flat-shooting, low recoil bolt actions with relatively long barrel life. Enter the 6.5

and its high ballistic coefficient bullets capable of reaching the 3,200-foot-per-second maximum in a short-action cartridge.

In conversation with Hornady, Gardner explained why he chose the .264. "With six millimetres, you can get to 3,150 (feet per second) but the ballistic coefficients are a little bit lower. Seven mills you really can't get to 3,150 safely... not in a short-action cartridge, anyway."

While several long-action 6.5s danced around the 3,200 feet per second velocity limit, Gardner wanted a short-action cartridge to take advantage of the faster cycling time of the bolt and the accuracy advantage offered by short actions due to their stiffness. Basically, he wanted a Creedmoor on steroids. After looking at several possible parent cases, Gardner settled on the Remington Short Action Ultra Magnum (SAUM), a descendant of the 404 Jeffery. While the new 6.5 SAUM performed well, Gardner was not 100

per cent satisfied by the rebated rim case and, in consultation with Hornady, reworked the new 6.5 utilizing the 300 Ruger Compact Magnum (RCM). In 2018, Hornady introduced the 6.5 PRC at the SHOT Show, along with the 300 PRC based on the Ruger case.

While mainstream rifle manufacturers were slow to embrace the Creedmoor into their line of standard chamberings, most clamoured to get on the bandwagon with the new PRC, and by early 2020, nearly two dozen manufacturers offered a model chambered in 6.5 PRC, including Sako, Bergara, Browning, Christensen Arms, CVA, Fierce, GA Precision, Gunwerks, Howa, Mossberg, Ruger, Proof Research, Sauer and Savage.

Just as the Creedmoor was built with competition shooting in mind but quickly found favour with hunters, so too did the 6.5 PRC. While some North Americans question the ability of 6.5 cartridges for big game, the Europeans have been using them for all manner

of big game up to the size of a moose for over a century. The 6.5x55 Swedish is still one of the most popular chamberings today in Scandinavian countries, yet despite this track record, many North Americans seem to suffer from magnumitis. It's amusing to read many of the social media posts surrounding the 6.5's ability. One could easily come away thinking that anything less than a 300 Winchester Magnum is under gunned for even deer-sized game. But what the 6.5 managed to do long before the advent of modern jacketed bullets speaks to the effectiveness of the calibre, and now with a plethora of highly specialized hunting bullets, it's more effective

**The 6.5 PRC averages around 2,950 feet per second in factory ammunition, but it can be pushed to 3,150 feet per second in handloads.**





The 6.5 PRC compared to the 6.5 Creedmoor.

than ever.

So how does the 6.5 PRC really stack up? Hornady's Precision Hunter ammunition has a published velocity of 2,960 feet per second with their 143-grain ELD-X in a 24-inch barrel. In my Sako S-20, I'm seeing an average of 2,956 feet per second. The Creedmoor, for comparison, has a published velocity of 2,700 feet per second with the same bullet, so roughly 260 feet per second slower. But reloading manuals indicate you can push the 143-grain ELD-X all the way up to 3,150 feet per second out of the PRC with maximum loads of Alliant RL25 or 26. This is getting close to the 3,200 feet per second Gardner wanted to achieve. This is impressive velocity from a short action 6.5 when you compare it to long-action speedsters like the 264 Winchester Magnum, which maxes out at 3,050 feet per second with the same 143-grain bullet.

Speed isn't everything, but if you're looking to shoot at long ranges, especially while hunting, speed matters.

We can easily compensate for the trajectory of slower bullets with modern optics, so that is of less concern, but where speed really matters is with bullet impact velocity. Each style of bullet has a velocity envelope which delivers maximum performance. Exceed the maximum recommended impact velocity and excessive fragmentation and poor penetration is likely. Drop below minimum required impact velocity and you will see poor expansion and minimal tissue damage. For mono metals like the Hornady GMX, it's best not to drop below an impact velocity of 2,000 feet per second, while on a more specialized long-range bullet like the ELD-X, you can drop down to 1,600 feet per second and still see good expansion and penetration. So, it quickly becomes obvious that if shooting identical bullets, the one that starts out with increased muzzle velocity will offer more range, based on required impact velocity. There will also be slightly less wind drift with the faster bullet due to the shorter flight time.

But where does this magic really come into play? Let's start with the 6.5 PRC. With a muzzle velocity of 3,150 feet per second, we can maintain an impact velocity of 1,800 feet per second to 1,000 yards and at 1,150 yards we dip down to around 1,600 feet per second. If we compare this to the Creedmoor with a maximum handload producing 2,800 feet per second, we dip down to an impact velocity of 1,800 feet per second at 750 yards and to 1,600 feet per second at 850 yards, so the PRC does extend range about 250 to 300 yards. But what about the wind? At 500 yards, the PRC will drift 11.8 inches in a 10-mile per hour wind versus 14.1 inches for the Creedmoor. At 1,000 yards, however, the gap widens with the PRC drifting 54.4 inches and the Creedmoor 65.8 inches.

So, what does all this mean to the average shooter? It means that if you never shoot beyond 500 yards, a deer >

standing at that range wouldn't know the difference. Both the 6.5s have adequate impact velocity for the bullet to penetrate and expand. It's become fashionable among gun writers these days to compare two cartridges based solely on speed and energy, and if your goal is to shoot 1,000 yards it becomes relevant, but at average hunting ranges your quarry won't know the difference. But, if you are a well-practiced long-range shooter capable of making 1,000-yard shots, then velocity is definitely your friend. Even for the shooter looking to have a 300-yard hunting rifle and a 1,000-yard paper rifle, the extra velocity takes a bit of the wind out of the equation.

But there are always trade offs. The one big reason so many people shoot the Creedmoor well is because of its minimal recoil. We all love to boast about how well we handle recoil, but the truth is, most of us shoot lower-recoil rifles far better, especially for extended shooting sessions from the prone position. If you measure the free recoil of both the Creedmoor and PRC, the PRC produces roughly 35 per cent more recoil simply based on the additional velocity and larger powder charge. But the Creedmoor has one more trick up its sleeve in the recoil department. It has a very rounded pressure curve which helps reduce that sharp recoil associated with the more aggressive pressure spikes experienced with short magnum cases. But the PRC is hardly a heavyweight in the recoil department. If we compare it to other long-range favourites like the 7mm RM shooting a 162-grain bullet, we see about 20 per cent more recoil in the 7mm RM than the PRC. Nothing is free when it comes to velocity and owning both a Creedmoor and PRC, I can attest to the additional recoil, so it is a consideration if you are particularly sensitive to recoil.

Another casualty of velocity and increased powder burn is barrel life. The PRC isn't bad in the realm of high-velocity cartridges and shooters should expect 1,000 to 2,000 rounds out of their rifle, meaning if you are a weekend hunter it will basically last



**The 6.5 PRC is designed for long-range precision shooting.**

you a lifetime. But for competitive shooters or even those that just love to shoot, it is a consideration. Creedmoor shooters are seeing about twice that barrel life.

The final trade off with the PRC is the magazine. As the cartridge is considerably fatter than the Creedmoor, most magazines will hold one less of the PRC. Additionally, with heavy-for-calibre, high ballistic coefficient bullets, there may not be enough length in the magazine to hold them. Many people building custom PRCs are utilizing long actions to gain additional magazine length. Where the line between where short action ends and long action begins is a bit of a moving target, but it's generally accepted at around 2.86 inches or the overall length of a Winchester Short Magnum. The Creedmoor is well under this at 2.825 inches, but the PRC is slightly over at 2.955 inches. For those shooting mid-weight bullets, it shouldn't be an issue, but it's something to be aware of.

Will the PRC spell the end for the Creedmoor? For those with a solid understanding of physics and terminal performance, it won't; but in the race to go ever faster, the PRC will take a big chunk out of the Creed-

moor market. I like this cartridge personally and I've long been looking for a replacement for my 264 Win Mag, and the PRC fits the bill nicely. I hunt an area where long-range shots are more the norm than the exception and the extra speed is welcome. It's a solid choice for deer-sized game and having killed several elk with the Creedmoor, I expect the PRC will be more than adequate there as well. Several studies in the US have demonstrated that bullet velocity has a direct relation to secondary tissue damage as well, so one can expect a bit more tissue damage surrounding the wound channel due to the increased velocity. Theoretically this could result in slightly faster death, but ultimately a hole in the right spot will have the same results from a slower cartridge.

Are the gains for the average hunter significant enough to upgrade from the Creedmoor to the PRC? Not really, but for those in search of their first 6.5 it's definitely an option; and for those looking for a long-range rig, Gardner and Hornady hit a home run with this one. 

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# STEADY UP

A DIY shooting bench  
BY LOWELL STRAUSS



**M**y Grandpa taught me rifle shooting and marksmanship. “Find a solid rest,” he’d say, the advice still ringing in my ears. “Once the rifle is steady, place the front post on the target, then line it up with the rear notch. Got it? Now, squeeze the trigger.”

At the range or in the field, that “solid rest” is the foundation of accurate shooting. Later, I learned how my body, in the correct stance, stabilized a gun in the prone, sitting, kneeling and

offhand positions. Still, I gravitate to a bench for zeroing or long afternoons of varmint shooting. A bench removes some of the shooter error, and did I mention it’s much more comfortable?

I own two portable shooting benches; one made by MTM, the High-Low Shooting Table, and the other by Caldwell, the Stable Table. Both are super options for field shooting, but I wanted an even lighter DIY solution. With a global pandemic keeping me close to home and a plentiful pile of >

plywood pieces, I set out to design and build something new. But first, I'll frame this project by saying I'm not an engineer, nor a project designer, so my scrap wood shooting bench, version 1.0, was mostly trial and error. As I'll explain later, I'll make some minor modifications on a v1.2 -- things you should consider if building one for yourself.

### THE DESIGN

I searched the Internet for lightweight bench ideas, finding several suitable ones. They all featured portable benchtops measuring about 36 inches long by 24 inches wide at the front, tapering down to about 10-inches -- a good starting point for my project. Shooters agreed on an ideal bench height of 34 inches, which reduces head and neck strain for long-term shooting comfort. I mocked up a benchtop with cardboard on my kitchen table, adding blocks to bring the height to 34 inches. It worked well.

Other designs used metal folding table legs, ironing board legs, threaded black pipe or wood for the bench support. With a project budget of \$20, I kept costs as low as possible by using three wooden legs attached with simple hinges.

With a solid plan, some rough measurements and a template, I headed to the shop.

### THE BUILD

Some DIYers commented that half-inch plywood flexed too much. However, instead of using thicker sheeting, I opted for even lighter quarter-inch plywood for the flat surface, with three-quarter-inch plywood strapping on the underside -- to add rigidity without the weight. I traced my cardboard pattern onto the plywood and cut it out with



The author traced the benchtop pattern on the plywood and cut it using a circular saw.

a circular saw. Next, I ripped one-inch strips of plywood and attached them along the bottom perimeter with a few crossing the centre for good measure. It was now stiff yet surprisingly light.

Splaying the legs outward adds stability to the design. I cut a 15-degree bevel on each end of the legs. The rear leg angles straight back. I canted the front legs, angling them forward and to the side, giving my bench the stance of a three-legged bulldog. The legs mount

to a hinge, allowing them to pivot flat for transport or hold fast against the tabletop in the unfolded position. I MacGyvered a leg retention system to hold them folded for transport.

Finally, I installed trim edging around the top, leaving it a quarter-inch proud on the top, creating a lip to prevent round things like cartridges and pencils from rolling off. A quick coat of paint dressed up the table, and I was ready to head to the range.



**RIGHT:**  
Strapping on  
the underside  
adds rigidity to  
the benchtop.

**BOTTOM:** The  
shooting bench  
is 34 inches  
tall, which is  
perfect when  
using this  
folding chair.



### THE VERDICT

It gives me great satisfaction to do things for myself. In the shooting sports, this includes light gunsmithing, handloading and making outdoor gear. My portable shooting bench build exceeded my expectations. In some ways, my DIY project is superior to the commercial versions. It is light, handy, customized to my shooting preferences, and it gives me pride

knowing I made it.

The shooting top is the perfect size. Is it as sturdy or stable as a commercial design? No, but I'm already working on a plan for version 1.2 -- a similar yet sturdier bench. I learned that the hinges have enough play in them that the table wiggles slightly. In my research, I found locking table leg hinges that I suspect will solve this problem. I'm also

considering a four-legged design. Like many of my DIY projects, it looks like this is a work-in-progress of modifying and improving. I'm hoping this build inspires you to make a shooting bench of your own.

If my Grandpa could see it, I'm sure he'd say, "That's a good rest. Now, take a deep breath and squeeze that trigger." 🍀



# WEATHERBY'S INERTIA SHOTGUN

Reviewing the 18i Waterfowler

BY LOWELL STRAUSS

I first laid eyes on the Italian beauty from across a dimly lit room in Las Vegas. The slim figure and smooth curves caught my attention. This model, the 18i, clad in black, was dressed to kill. "So, what do you think?" asked Chris Profota, Weatherby's Canadian rep. I shouldered the shotgun, pointing it as if tracking a rooster bursting from the cattails. "Nice, really nice! When can I try one?" I replied.

I had the privilege of previewing a pre-release Weatherby 18i at SHOT Show a few years back, and later the 18i Waterfowler made its way to my gun safe. Made in Italy, this shotgun is a new line for Weatherby and some of the first Weatherby firearm receivers marked Sheridan, Wyoming, the new Weatherby headquarters.

## THE INERTIA SYSTEM

Extreme conditions and high-volume shooting make inertia-operated semi-auto shotguns a solid choice for wing-

shooting in Canada. I've taken a straw poll among waterfowl guides about which type of shotgun their clients bring to the field, learning that many waterfowlers use an autoloader, and specifically the field-proven inertia system. With the introduction of the Weatherby 18i, discerning waterfowlers have another choice in high-performance semi-auto shotguns, and at a lower price point than the competition. What's not to like?

Inertia-operated shotguns are known for their unstoppage reliability in the field. Compared to the more complex gas-operated shotguns, inertia guns are straightforward to field strip and run all season long with minimal care. Naturally, hardcore waterfowlers gravitate to inertia guns for their reliability because nobody wants a shotgun failure in the thick of the hunt. Rock-solid performance was a critical consideration for Weatherby during the design phase of this new shotgun

line. "The 18i was designed around the inertia operating system due to its cleaner operation and ability to create a shotgun that is light and points naturally," commented Kyle Killen, international sales manager with Weatherby.

## SPECIFICATIONS

The Weatherby 18i also adds super magnum capacity to their shotgun family. "We wanted a shotgun capable of shooting 3.5-inch shotshells, as it was something missing from our current shotgun lineup. At the same time, the shotgun had to be able to run on 1-and-1/8-ounce target loads reliably," added Killen. The 18i is claimed to cycle everything but the very lightest target loads. But is it truly an ammo omnivore? To find out, I shot several boxes of shotshells, consisting of Winchester AA 2-and-3/4-inch, 1-and-1/8-ounce heavy target loads at the range and Black Cloud FS Steel three-inch one-and-a-quarter-ounce



The Weatherby 18i barrel, forend and plug are easily removed for cleaning or transport.

and Kent Fasteel 2.0 3.5-inch, 1.5-ounce loads in the field. All these loads cycled flawlessly in the 18i, including the target loads. Out of curiosity, I fired a few one-ounce 'value-pack' target loads, which cycled sporadically or not at all. No surprise, and no fault of the shotgun -- it wasn't designed to shoot the light stuff.

Shooters feel more recoil from inertia operated shotguns -- a trade-off for reliability. And, of course, too many heavy-hitting magnum shotshells without adequate protection take their toll on a shooter's shoulder. The 18i weighs about seven-and-a-quarter pounds. A heavier shotgun would lessen recoil but compromise handling. So, the designers kept the 18i light and opted for high-tech solutions for cutting kick. I appreciated the 18i's soft touch cheek rest, elastomer stock, and a generous 1.5-centimetre-thick recoil pad. The inertia system, too, soaks up some recoil. Together they mitigate heavy recoil to a tolerable level. Nevertheless, the three-and-a-half-inch loads I tested still rattled my teeth.

The Weatherby 18i rivals the performance and quality of other inertia-system shotguns on the market, and it's competitively priced, starting at \$1,399 MSRP (street prices may vary) for the black synthetic. At the top end, the 18i Deluxe version adds nickel metalwork and high-grade walnut stock and forend. The Deluxe is available in 12 gauge (three-inch chamber) 28-inch barrel or 20 gauge with a 26- or 28-inch barrel. I tested the 18i Waterfowler model, a three-and-a-half-inch chambered 12 gauge, with a 28-inch barrel. It's available finished in four fowl-fooling camo patterns -- Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades, Mossy Oak Bottomlands, Real Tree Max-5 and Real Tree Timber. Its camo-dipped polymer stock includes an aggressive texture in the palm and foregrip for extra grip in the wet weather experienced on a duck hunt.

The fit and finish of the 18i impressed me. Its single-piece receiver is precision machined from billet aluminum and houses the inertia operating system. A mirror finish on the bolt, locking head, carrier and breech speak to the build quality. And these smooth surfaces are quick and easy to clean. All parts, including the forend, fit together tightly with no rattles, a weak point for some semi-auto shotguns.



The Weatherby 18i includes five flush-mount choke tubes and a robust T-handled choke wrench.

#### FEATURES

Surprisingly, the shotgun's factory configuration fit me perfectly out the box, so maybe I'm an average-sized shooter. If you're not, the new shotgun includes buttstock shims and spacers to adjust drop, cast and length-of-pull for a custom fit. Follow the owner manual's clear instructions for a perfect shotgun fit.

In the field, I prefer slinging my shotgun, leaving my hands free for other essential gear. The 18i's molded swivel studs in the stock and rear and magazine cap accommodate a sling. However, the 18i doesn't include one, so you'll need to buy an aftermarket sling later.

The vent-ribbed barrel is camo wrapped, matching the shotgun's camo furniture. The barrel's length is perfect for a field shotgun, long enough for a decent sight radius but not too long to be cumbersome in the blind. Its balance point rests at the front of the receiver, making the shotgun feel light and nimble while pointing instinctively. I appreciated the receiver's slight u-shape channel that quickly focused my eye along the rib and to the front sight while tracking birds. A dovetail milled in the receiver accommodates a red dot or scope, expanding the gun's versatility to the turkey or deer season. For the typical wingshooter, the 18i Waterfowler includes a high-luminosity LPA fiber front sight in my favourite

red colour -- perfect for quick target acquisition in the early morning light on dull-grey days.

Knowing the 18i could be used for everything from turkeys and predators to upland birds and waterfowl, Weatherby generously includes five flush-mount interchangeable chokes. One choke is installed in the barrel and four additional tubes store in a rigid plastic box, along with a robust T-handled choke tube wrench which makes choke changes a breeze. Choke tubes range from full and improved-modified constrictions for lead shot only, to modified, improved cylinder and cylinder bore suitable for steel or lead. True to its Italian heritage, chokes use the same thread size as the Benelli Crio Plus system. That's great news if you want to upgrade to a premium aftermarket choke by Carlson's, Trulock, Patternmaster or Briley.

A mechanical safety is a necessary part of every modern firearm, and the cross-bolt or button safety located on the rear of the trigger guard of the 18i works well. This style of safety is robust, physically blocking the trigger to prevent an unintentional discharge. The safety is recessed in the trigger guard, no doubt to prevent it from accidental movement. However, I found it too small to push with a gloved hand on a cold day and would like to see an oversized button on the Waterfowler model.



A red fibre optic sight contrasts well against grey skies.

**BELOW:** The first duck scored with the author's Weatherby 18i shotgun.

### SHOOTING

My test gun's trigger had some take-up and a little creep -- an acceptable feel for a field shotgun -- and broke at 4.5 pounds. A waterfowl shotgun needs a large enough trigger guard to accommodate a gloved finger, and the 18i's guard does that with room to spare.

Field stripping is easy with a single tool. Using only a small punch, I removed the trigger guard pin, which frees the trigger group for cleaning. In a pinch, a pen or similar-sized object will do the trick. When it's time for a deep clean and lubrication at the end of the season, the bolt slides out the front of the receiver after the barrel is removed. The chrome-plated bolt head seems impervious to fouling. A simple wipe with a cloth across its slick surface removes the powder fowling. The Weatherby 18i's fool-proof design simplifies care and cleaning, even in the field.

I pattern-tested the 18i with different loads and chokes. A few dozen patterning targets later, I found several shotshell options producing duck-killing patterns at 40 yards. Kent's three-inch one-and-a-quarter-ounce No. 2 Fasteel 2.0 delivered consistent patterns through the modified choke, so I grabbed a box and headed to the marsh for a field test.

For a quick afternoon hunt, nothing beats puddle jumping ducks. I quietly work along the marsh edge, periodically poking through the cattails looking for loafing waterfowl. On this day, I spotted a small flock through the reeds. As I closed the gap between the birds and me, I slid a shotshell into the chamber. I then released the bolt under finger control as not to scare the



nearby birds. I lurched forward, and the ducks leaped into the air. Zeroing in on the lead bird, I matched his speed and pulled the trigger. A click but no boom! I learned the Weatherby 18i has a little quirk -- the dreaded inertia-click. If you lower the bolt slowly, the rotating bolt head may not lock, though the hammer still strikes the firing pin, giving an audible click. It's a problem that's easily remedied. Either press the bolt release allowing spring power to slam it closed, or finesse the bolt under control to be quiet, but make sure to let it go the last half inch or so on its own to lock the head (then check to make sure). The second method is still relatively quiet. Both ways ensure the bolt head rotates

and locks. If you do this, the 18i works flawlessly. Though I missed the duck, I learned the 18i's idiosyncrasy and what not to do in the future.

Inertia-driven shotguns excel in demanding field conditions. The Weatherby 18i is a feature-rich shotgun designed for hunting and sport shooting. It cycled a wide variety of ammo, delivering clay-crushing and bird-dropping patterns with most. The fit and finish are outstanding, and maintenance is a breeze. For the money, you won't find a better semi-auto shotgun. These Italian beauties are turning heads at retailers across Canada. Check out the Weatherby 18i if you're in the market for a new semi-auto shotgun, they're sure to please. 

# WARTIME WHEELGUN

Shooting a Webley MK IV  
*BY TYSON SOMMERVILLE*



"WAR FINISH" on the author's Webley leaves little to complain about.



Like many gun owners, I have a lengthy mental list of firearms I would like to own someday. Of course, they must be available for the right price for me to actually make a purchase. One such firearm is a Webley revolver. I'm not sure why I want one, maybe because it's a top break or because I have a soft spot for old military firearms. Either way, a friend of mine owned one and I was a touch envious, and having shot one, I knew I really wanted one of my own.

#### ACQUISITION

I have come close to buying one several times, even to the point of having one in the digital shopping cart and thinking, "I better wait, \$300 is a lot right now." Well, now that I'm a touch older, but still no wiser, I decided to try and track one down. Sadly, it looks like the price on them has nearly doubled since the first time I almost bought one. I asked around, and the few that I could find were well over \$500 and often the tanker model with the bobbed hammer. But I wanted cheap and I wanted the option of

single or double action.

Finally, one morning earlier this year, the stars aligned. I woke up a little earlier than usual and was too lazy to get out of bed, so instead went on my phone and casually perused some websites known for selling used guns. I do this whenever I am bored, just in case something from that mental list jumps up. In this case, Ellwood Epps had a Webley MK IV in 38/200 (a.k.a. 38 S&W). The price was about right, just a touch over \$400. Once my wife woke up, before she was able to get some coffee into herself to gather her senses, I asked her if I could scoop it up. On her way to the coffee maker, she mumbled, "Yeah, sure, whatever." It's a classic Jedi mind trick, use it carefully.

#### RESEARCH

While I waited for the government to rubber stamp the transfer, I did a bit of research and found out this gun, according to the serial number, was made in 1944 (via [armsresearch.co.uk](http://armsresearch.co.uk)). As a result of being made for the war effort, mine is also stamped "WAR FINISH." I am told this is there ▶

because the manufacturer was rushing production and didn't want people thinking all their guns were that rough around the edges. I do have to say though, this specific one seems to have a nice finish compared to some of the images I have been able to find online. Mine only has some milling marks on smaller features and parts, while some Internet photos show a rough finish on the sides of the frame itself. In my digital travels, I also found that the revolver was originally designed to have a 200-grain bullet, hence its designation of 38/200.

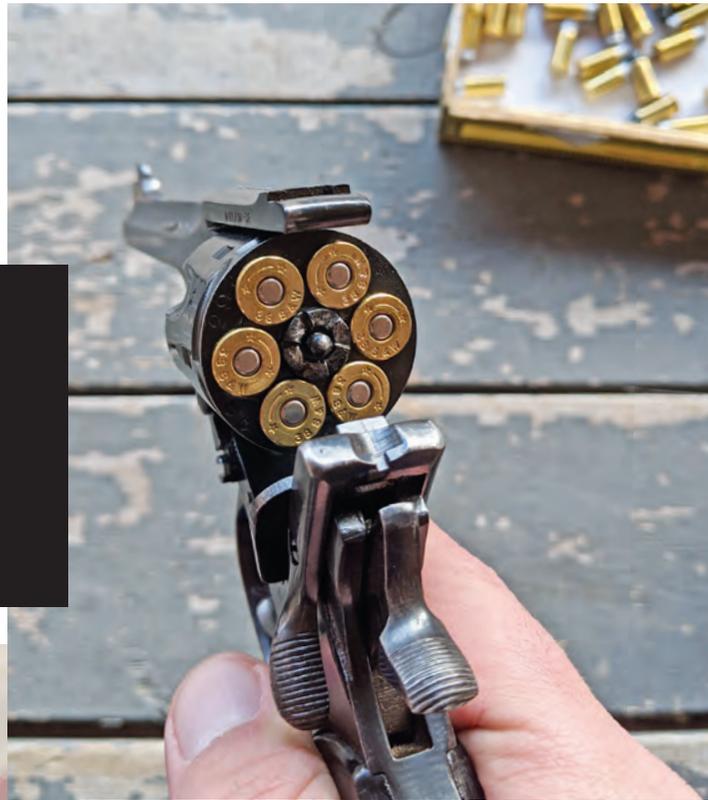
Tracing the lineage of the MK IV in 38/200 is a wild ride. The MK numbers seem to have been somewhat reused on new models in new calibres and a lot of information online is contradictory, so I did my best to sift through it. Webley & Scott began in 1790 making bullet moulds and have manufactured firearms since 1834 ([webleyandscott.com](http://webleyandscott.com)). Their first top break model, the MK I in 455 Webley, was adopted by the British, and by extension the Commonwealth armies in 1887. After several quick upgrades and modifications, they were at the MK VI still in 455 Webley.

These were the service revolvers for the Boer War and the First World War. Shortly after the First World War, it was determined the 455 Webley was too large for some soldiers to use effectively, and after trials it was replaced with a small but heavy 200 grain .38 calibre, hence 38/200. It was found, in this weight, to have similar stopping power to the 455 Webley. Initially, the contract to make the revolvers for this new cartridge was given to Enfield to make the No. 2 Mark 1. However, it seems Enfield could not keep up with demand and Webley was given a contract to make their MK IV in 38/200. It was the standard side-arm for British and Commonwealth forces through the Second World War and into the early 1960s. Police in Singapore and Hong Kong used them until the 1970s.

India Ordnance Factories still make several pistols based on the Webley design, but in .32 calibre. Notably, there is a two-inch, five-inch, and lightweight model (4.5-inch barrel and titanium frame) and I would absolutely love to get one of these ([ofb.gov.in/civil-trade](http://ofb.gov.in/civil-trade)). The lightweight model,

**RIGHT: The author found it easy to source 38 S&W brass.**

**BELOW: Hand cast and powder coated 158-grain bullets, ready to shoot.**

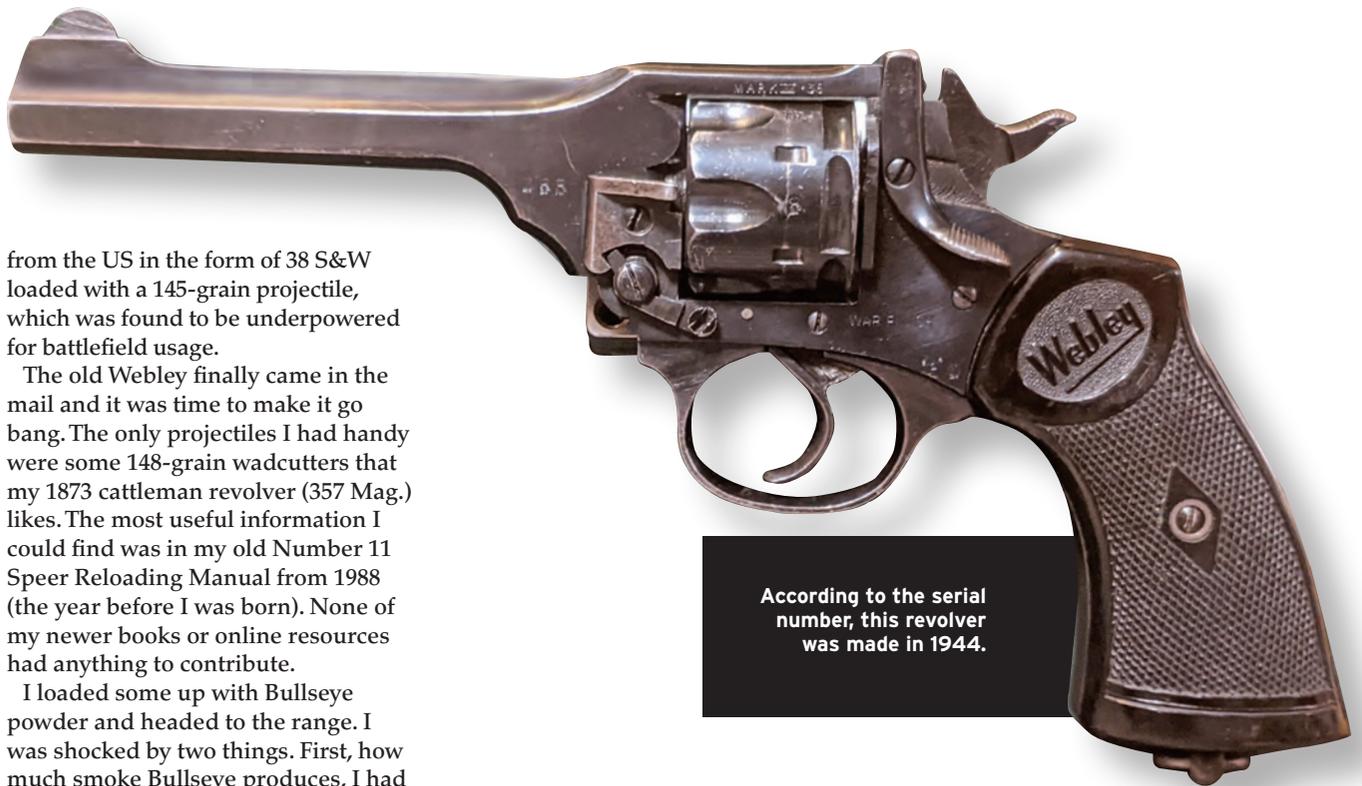


called the NIRBHEEK, retails for 105,000 rupees (or about \$1,825 CAD.) It's just a shame it's in .32 calibre so it's prohibited here.

#### **SOURCING AMMUNITION**

One unfortunate thing I found in my research was that 38 S&W ammunition is expensive, nearly \$1 a round locally. When I purchased the Webley, I didn't

plan on reloading for it, but that plan changed immediately upon seeing the price of ammunition. So, I ordered some brass and dies. They were easy enough to find, but a 200-grain bullet does not seem to exist for a .38 calibre revolver. It seems this has been a problem since the beginning for the 38/200. During the Second World War, munitions for the revolvers had to come



According to the serial number, this revolver was made in 1944.

from the US in the form of 38 S&W loaded with a 145-grain projectile, which was found to be underpowered for battlefield usage.

The old Webley finally came in the mail and it was time to make it go bang. The only projectiles I had handy were some 148-grain wadcutters that my 1873 cattleman revolver (357 Mag.) likes. The most useful information I could find was in my old Number 11 Speer Reloading Manual from 1988 (the year before I was born). None of my newer books or online resources had anything to contribute.

I loaded some up with Bullseye powder and headed to the range. I was shocked by two things. First, how much smoke Bullseye produces, I had never used it before and stopped to check online that this was normal. Now that I know it's normal, I find it kind of fun, like shooting black powder. The second shock was that my point of impact was about eight inches low of my point of aim at 10 yards. This worried me as my sights are not adjustable.

As for the rest of the gun, the trigger feels good in single-action, no creep and minimal over travel. In double-action, it was a bit of a gong show, as the only way I could shoot it and hit paper was if I went very slowly, to the point that it was faster to shoot it as a single-action. Glad I didn't buy the tanker model. The gun was also a lot snappier in the hand than I thought the small 38 S&W would be, likely owing to the pistol's small stature.

I was now doing research on how to make a pistol shoot higher. It turns out, it's very counter intuitive to a rifle guy like me. The trick is a heavier bullet, so that it goes slower and has more dwell time in the barrel as the recoil pushes the muzzle up. This makes sense since the gun was designed for a 200-grain bullet. I was now in an odd place, in that you cannot buy cast lead bullets in small quantities and I didn't want to buy 500 of something that would give me the same problem. I asked around

online about different bullet weights and received no useful help -- which is normal for online questions. Typically, asking a question like that online turns into someone suggesting the problem is the person shooting the gun. Here's a funny side-story: I mentioned once I was having trouble with my CZ 550 in 375 H&H and someone suggested I was "probably limp wristing it." So, take the Internet's advice with a grain of salt. That said, my Internet inquires were not a complete waste, as a friend from 3-Gun had spotted one and contacted me to let me know he was casting 158-grain bullets for his revolver and would happily give me some to try. I swung by his house hoping to grab 10 and he gave me nearly 50. I know Kurt is a good guy because we are relatively new acquaintances, and he was casting them in a single-cavity mould. He also showed me his powder coating setup.

I ran home and loaded those bullets up as fast as I could and hit the range the next day. The darn things worked perfectly! Offhand the groups were still not great (five or six inches at 10 yards), but they were to point of aim. Using a rest, I was able to get about a three-inch group at 10 yards. Using a rest, however, proved to be an interesting lesson

in harmonics -- resting on the barrel caused the groups to migrate about five inches south of point of aim. This made me aware of two things. One, I need to work on my pistol shooting and, two, I had to start casting and powder coating. I had already been batting around the idea of casting for other pistols and before this latest OIC nonsense I was casting for my cannon, although casting a 13,000-grain (1.8-pound) slug for a cannon is a bit slower of an affair than a 158-grain pistol bullet. Luckily for me, my stepdad has been casting for years and has his local tire shop supplying him with lead; he also, more importantly, has the space and the melting pot. So now I have gone out and bought a two-cavity mould to make bullets and a used toaster oven for coating them.

Sadly, COVID-19 restrictions mean I cannot go out and start making bullets just yet, so I may have to crack and buy a box of loaded stuff off the shelf in the meantime... dang it.

In any case, the work and the fun will continue for some time. I've learned a bunch and my education isn't over. If you like getting old guns shooting again, these vintage Webleys are great projects. 🍷



2021

# INDUSTRY NEWS

Visiting the SHOT Show that wasn't  
*BY AL VOTH*

The fallout from the COVID pandemic continues to have far-reaching consequences around the world, with the cancellation of trade shows being one of those. While these cancellations have had major consequences for some people and companies, my inability to make the annual pilgrimage to the SHOT Show in Las Vegas is really only a minor disappointment. When I start to feel sorry for myself, I think of the people who have become seriously ill or have lost loved ones to the disease, and it puts my circumstances in perspective.

This issue of the magazine would normally contain several reports from the SHOT Show, but this year we're going to make do with a single report based on press releases and phone interviews instead of hands-on handling and shooting of new products. It's certainly less than ideal, but I have no doubt the SHOT Show will be back in full force next year.



## RIFLES

Perhaps the biggest rifle story of this year is Savage's launch of a straight-pull bolt-action rifle. Called the Impulse, early advertising copy said it is, "The first all-American straight-pull centrefire rifle." Technically, that's not quite correct as the Troy SPR has been around for years, is all-American and is a straight-pull centrefire. But even with the marketing hyperbole duly ignored, it's still a significant step in rifle design.

With the AR-15 design currently prohibited in Canada, we're seeing our share of homegrown straight-pull rifles

here as well. These include the Spectre Ballistics LPC and the MRA Renegade, both of which are doing their best to step into the gap left by the recent legislation. However, Savage's Impulse isn't in the same category, it's much closer to a conventional bolt-action rifle, but with all the benefits of a straight-pull action. Those benefits include faster cycling and enhanced modularity. And even though Savage rifles are known for modularity, the Impulse looks like it's taking this part of Savage's reputation one step further.

With the barrel headspaced onto an >



**Browning's X-Bolt has some new variations, including this semi-custom Mountain Pro.**



**Mossberg has entered the over/under shotgun market with a wide range of models, including this Gold Reserve Super Sport.**



**The Browning Maxus II adds some new features to the original design.**

extension which the bolt locks into, the entire barrel assembly can be slid in and out of the alloy receiver by simply loosening four fasteners under the front receiver ring. This means barrel swaps could take nothing more than using a single wrench at the kitchen table. If the cartridge case head is of a different size, then that can apparently be changed too, and without tools no less. It's all very European, where these systems are commonplace.

Available in chamberings ranging from 22-250 to 300 Win Mag, the initial offering consists of three models aimed squarely at the hunting market. But with an un-scoped weight closing in on nine pounds, it certainly isn't targeting the mountain hunter. That weight is surprising considering the receiver isn't steel. The rifle has all Savage's accuracy-enhancing features, including trigger and stock, so if they put a good barrel on the rifle it should shoot. Price is about \$1,200 US, so it's not an inexpensive Savage, although a value-priced option may show up years down the road, depending on how the public receives the concept. Is the North American market ready for a straight-pull rifle? I think it might be, but it'll take a few years to find out.

In other rifle news, we have the usual assortment of "new" models which are really established guns sporting some new colours and/or features. On that list is Browning's new X-Bolt variation called the Mountain Pro. It's significant because this is a semi-custom rifle

with high-end features. For an MSRP of \$2,400 US, you get a carbon fibre stock, stainless-steel barrel and action, spiral fluting, Recoil Hawg muzzle brake, lapped barrel, Cerakote-finished metal and other goodies. I count availability in 11 chamberings, ranging from 6.5 Creedmoor to 300 RUM.

Other changes aren't as extensive; for example, the Benelli LUPO is adding three new calibres, 243 Win., 308 Win. and 6.5 Creedmoor.

The 6mm ARC seems to be getting some traction in non-AR rifle designs, as Savage has introduced two rifles in this chambering, a bolt-action 110 Tactical and an Axis II model. Proof Research has also added the ARC chambering to its Elevation MTR model. Hornady is supporting the calibre by adding a new 103-grain ELD-X loading in their Precision Hunter line of ammunition. Interestingly, I've heard of nothing new for the 224 Valkyrie, no ammunition, no guns, nothing.

#### SHOTGUNS

Mossberg, well known for its semi-auto and pump-action shotguns, is expanding into over/under designs with a new line called the Reserve series. There are field guns and competition guns in a full range of gauges. They will be available in two levels, Silver Reserve and Gold Reserve. Ranging

from \$600 to \$1,200 US, prices are so reasonable they are no doubt made in Turkey. The Silver line is intended for hunters, while the Gold line is aimed at competitive shooters. The Gold Super Sport is at the top of that line and promises some fancy finishing, along with practical goodies like a fully adjustable stock and five extended choke tubes.

Savage has expanded their semi-auto Renegauge line to include a competition model, but that's 3-gun competition, not clay-busting competition. It features oversized controls, complete stock adjustability and some cool-looking red accents. Of course, there's an extended magazine tube too, but that'll have to be neutered before we can get it into Canada.

Browning has updated their Maxus shotgun and dubbed it the Maxus II. New are a recoil-absorbing cheekpiece, enhanced controls, rubberized gripping surfaces, screw-on end cap, adjustable length of pull and new camo patterns. This is their best semi-auto shotgun, so I expect it to cost about \$2,000 in Canada.

Benelli has downsized the Super Black Eagle 3 by offering it chambered for three-inch shells, instead of the long-standard 3.5-inch. And not just in 12 gauge, as it will be offered in 20 gauge as well. These slightly smaller guns will weigh in at 5.8 to 6.9 pounds and set you back around that \$2,000 mark again.



**RIGHT:** Winchester's new cartridge, designed for long-range shooting, is the 6.8 Western.

#### AMMUNITION

Last year, Winchester took over operation of the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, a US government-owned facility which is operated by private contractors. This means Winchester can now claim to be the largest supplier and producer of small-calibre ammunition to the US military and the world. While they and every other ammunition manufacturer in the US is trying to keep up with civilian demand, Winchester found time to develop a new centrefire rifle cartridge, the 6.8 Western. For the metrically challenged, that's a .277-inch bullet, stuffed into a fat case that'll fit into a short action. If you're thinking that's what a 270 WSM is, you're right.

The 6.8 Western differs in that its specs call for a faster 1:8 twist, allowing for the use of heavier bullets. In this case, up to 170 grains instead of the WSM's 150 grains. Winchester says that 150-grain bullet launches at 3,120 feet per second, while the 170-grain slug leaves the muzzle at 2,920 feet per second. That should leave the two bullets in something close to a trajectory tie until around 500 yards, after which the heavier bullet should start to shine.

For trap shooters more skilled than I, who shoot from well behind the 16-yard line, Winchester has a new load specifically for them. Called AA Diamond Grade Elite Trap, this load features non-plated #7.5 shot made with eight per cent antimony, mak-

ing it much harder than standard lead shot. Winchester says the shot is "precision sorted" as well, claiming it's the best handicap ammunition they've ever built. Muzzle velocity is 1,250 feet per second. Expect it to be pricey.

There isn't much in the way of new bullets this year, likely because manufacturers are devoting all resources to keeping up with demand for existing products. However, Berger has found time to release a .25 calibre target bullet featuring a G1 B.C. of .650 and a 135-grain weight. The only new bullet from Hornady is for muzzleloaders. It's a .50 calibre, 290-grain jacketed bullet with their FlexTip technology and a polymer base that negates the need for a sabot. >



### OPTICS

It looks like a good year for new optics, with most of the big names introducing some innovative products. Vortex has done a major upgrade to their rangefinding binocular, adding ballistic solving via Applied Ballistics software. Of course, the binocular will pair with a smartphone app, but it'll also talk to a Kestrel weather meter and offer a shooting solution based on that "conversation." Vortex has squeezed a tremendous amount of capability into a 10X42 optic, and with an MSRP of \$1,999 US and their lifetime warranty, I predict it will shake up the binocular market.

Additionally, Vortex is adding solar power to their SPARC red dot, giving it a claimed 150,000 hours of battery life. The 3X and 5X Spitfire prism scopes are now smaller and lighter, and there are some new and upgraded tripods.

Leupold's big news includes a red dot sight for handguns, which sets a new standard for low-profile electronic sighting equipment. Called the Delta Point Micro, it's so compact it uses the pistol's existing rear sight dovetail for mounting, meaning no more expensive slide machining or having to buy a slide purpose-built for red dot sights. It's a three MOA dot with adjustable brightness, an automatic on/off mode which senses whether it's in use or not, a battery life measured in years, and, of course, Leupold's legendary lifetime warranty. Currently it's only available for Glock and S&W pistols. Expect

The new Vortex rangefinding binoculars include ballistic-solving software.

pricing to hover around \$650 CAD.

There's also a new line of tactical scopes designated as Mark3 HD, with a 3X magnification and a lower price point than what we're used to seeing in the Mark series. The VX3 and Freedom lines have also been tweaked to provide more features. Add in some new tripods and there's lots to see from Leupold.

Leupold's Delta Point Micro red dot sight mounts directly to a rear sight dovetail.



### HANDGUNS

Pistols by CZ are justifiably popular in the action shooting sports, with their Tactical Sport model regularly seen on the firing line. CZ has made some improvements to this handgun and designated it the Tactical Sport 2 (TS2). Included in the changes are a redesigned frame with improved ergonomics. With a 5.23-inch barrel and a weight of 48 ounces, it's a big gun that will soak up what little recoil the 9mm produces.

Staying with the competition theme, we also have the new 509 LS Edge by FN. The LS designates the long slide needed to accommodate the five-inch barrel. That slide also features lightening cuts to speed cycling and is ready for optic mounting. There's also a new frame texture and interchangeable backstraps. The trigger for this striker fired pistol is set at about 4.5 pounds and it ships with three magazines.

The TS2 promises to be another excellent competition pistol from CZ.



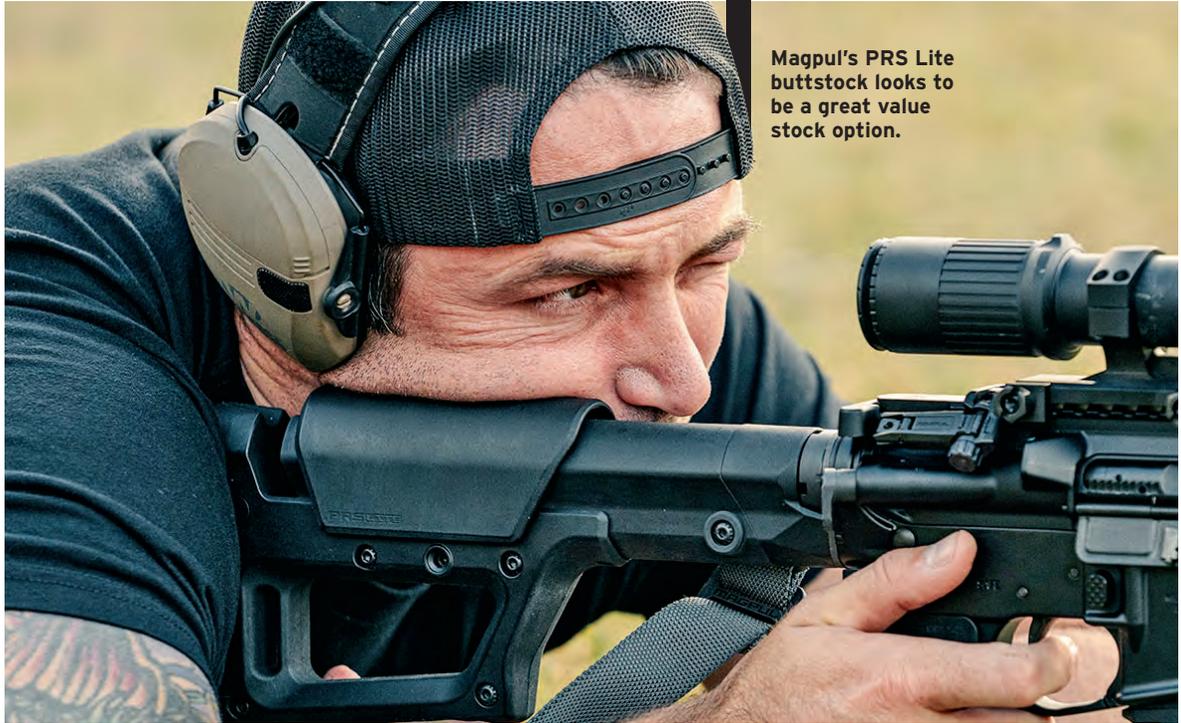


**The 509 LS Edge by FN takes a serious run at the competitive shooting market.**

#### ACCESSORIES

New accessories abound this year. Of note is Magpul's new PRS Lite buttstock. It has significant adjustability, looks good, weighs 10 ounces less than the PRS-3 and costs much less too. For shooters in search of a lightweight, precision style stock to fit AR-compatible chassis or guns, this looks like a great option.

Canadian shooters are familiar with Real Avid's line of gun tools, and they are now expanding into gun chemicals as well. I've seen bore cleaning foam and lubricating oil so far, with more releases promised throughout the year.



**Magpul's PRS Lite buttstock looks to be a great value stock option.**

#### INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

Besides new products, there is shuffling going on in the corporate world too. CZ is making a bid to buy Colt, with some sources reporting it's already a done deal. If it comes to pass, I think it'll be good for the Colt brand. What it means for Colt Canada, the makers of many of our military's firearms, remains to be seen. But understand this, with about 1,650 employees worldwide, CZ is a big international

arms company and I think they stand a good chance of bringing Colt back from being just a fringe player.

In a significant turn of events, the NRA has announced it is restructuring and moving its corporate identity to Texas. And they are doing it by filing for bankruptcy protection, even though they are apparently not in any financial difficulty. Since its inception, the NRA has been incorporated in the state of New York. However, that state has

devolved into a toxic political climate for the organization, with the attorney general there actively working to dismantle the association. The move is intended to position the NRA for the future in a state with a much friendlier political climate.

As always, there's much more to report than I have room for here. So, stay with us through the rest of 2021 to keep up to date on what's new and noteworthy. 🍀



# Legal corner

Guy Lavergne, Attorney at Law

## Overcoming A Firearms Prohibition Order

This is my second column on the topic of prohibition orders. My first column appeared in the July/August 2017 issue of the *Canadian Firearms Journal*. The reason for this second column is twofold: first, I recently tried (and won) a case before the Ontario Court of Justice where my client sought the lifting of a prohibition order, some 10 years after a sole criminal conviction; second, the BC Supreme Court recently issued a ruling<sup>1</sup> that breaks new ground and allows the lifting of a prohibition order by a superior court, in circumstances that are not specifically contemplated by the *Criminal Code*.

### HISTORY & CONTEXT

To a large extent, prohibition orders are a relic of the past. Indeed, prior to the enactment of the *Firearms Act* through Bill C-68 in 1998, and the correlative amendments to the *Criminal Code*, possession of a firearm was not, per se, a criminal offence. The goal of prohibition orders was to prevent individuals whom the justice system viewed as dangerous, from having legal access to firearms. I say "relic" because one of the effects of Bill C-68 was to create a universal licensing system, thus making everyone in Canada subject to a *de facto* prohibition order, unless of course one holds a firearms licence. However, and despite the enactment of the universal licensing scheme, the provisions providing for the issuance of firearms prohibition orders remain a fixture of the *Criminal Code*.

As explained in my 2017 column, firearms prohibition orders are of three types: mandatory<sup>2</sup>, discretionary<sup>3</sup> and preventive<sup>4</sup>. The first and second type are attached to the sentencing process, for certain criminal offences. The third type is issued even when no underlying criminal conduct exists.

### PRIOR TO BILL C-68

Prior to Bill C-68, there were a few



instances where (mostly) Native Canadians were convicted of an offence carrying a mandatory prohibition order. In at least two instances, those individuals were able to successfully apply for what was then known as a "constitutional exemption" from the prohibition order. In short, they were able to convince a court that the imposition of a prohibition order, in their circumstances, amounted to "cruel and unusual punishment" in violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This was so because they depended upon hunting or trapping for their subsistence, at least in part, and were thus able to show that a prohibition order had a disproportionate effect, in view of the gravity of the offence to which it was attached.

### AFTER BILL C-68

Bill C-68 added Section 113 to the *Criminal Code*. It provides for the lifting of a prohibition order under specific and somewhat restrictive circumstances. There are essentially two

**A court may refrain from issuing a prohibition order if it would constitute a virtual prohibition against employment in the only vocation open to the person.**

**Une cour de justice peut s'abstenir d'émettre une ordonnance d'interdiction, si elle équivaudrait à empêcher une personne de gagner sa vie dans le seul champ d'activité qui lui soit raisonnablement ouvert.**

instances in which a court may either refrain from issuing a prohibition order, or lift an existing one:

- i) the person needs a firearm or restricted weapon to hunt or trap in order to sustain the person or the person's family; or
- ii) a prohibition order against the person would constitute a virtual prohibition against employment in the only vocation open to the person.

The first category obviously addresses the situation of Natives and was meant to obviate the need for applications for constitutional exemptions that had become pervasive at the time.

The second category was novel in 1998, albeit rather narrow. In essence, it allows a person to remain employed in that person's chosen field of endeavour, if such field requires access to firearms. This would cover professions such as gunsmith, police officer, members of the armed forces, security agents and the like.

In the Ontario case that I recently won<sup>5</sup>, the Court interpreted Section 113 so as not to compel skilled workers to engage in unskilled work to earn a living. The prohibition against my client, Mr. Ilic, was lifted so that he could forthwith earn a living as a firearms expert and trainer in the motion picture industry, thereby taking full advantage of his skillset and experience.

In *R. v. Wiles*<sup>6</sup>, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the imposition of a mandatory prohibition order in the context of a conviction for the illegal cultivation of cannabis does not constitute "cruel and unusual punishment." One of the key elements of the court's decision is the presence in the *Criminal Code* of Section 113, which the court deems to be an ameliorative provision, meant to prevent unusually harsh outcomes. In the case of Mr. Wiles, he was a recreational hunter. In such context, the court deemed his access to firearms to be a privilege, not a right, and thus refused to exempt him from the prohibition order.

Thus, except in specific circumstances listed in Section 113 of the *Criminal Code*, a mandatory or discretionary firearms prohibition order cannot be lifted until it has run its course. The situation is different with the so-called preventive orders, issued under Section 111 of the *Criminal Code*. Under Section 112 of the *Criminal Code*, the latter can be lifted if the circumstances underlying the issuance of the preventive prohibition order no longer exist. By way of example, a prohibition order issued because a person is or might be suicidal, may be lifted once the person has recovered from that condition.

Things remained as is until 2019. That is until Mr. Fehr, a BC resident, sought to join the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

#### THE R. V. FEHR<sup>7</sup> CASE

Although Mr. Fehr had become

an exemplary citizen, he had been convicted for armed robbery in his youth and found himself on the receiving end of a lifetime prohibition order. Mr. Fehr's mere possession of a firearm in the course of his duties as a police officer would have violated his prohibition order.

Section 113 of the *Criminal Code* was of no assistance to Mr. Fehr. Indeed, he did not fit any of the two narrow defined categories allowing a court to lift his prohibition order. This was so because his interest for joining law enforcement was new. He had no history (or training) in that field of employment prior to his conviction. Thus, he could not make an application to the court that had originally sentenced him to lift the prohibition order.

So, Mr. Fehr turned to the BC Supreme Court and asked for the prohibition order to be lifted, in order that he be allowed to join the RCMP. He sought that relief under what lawyers refer to as the court's "inherent powers" as a superior court of justice. Superior courts are courts of law whose judges are appointed by the federal government, also known as Section 96 (of the Constitutional Act of 1867) courts. The BC Supreme Court is one such court. Unlike provincial courts, which have only those powers attributed to them by statute, superior courts have inherent powers to grant relief, at law or in equity, whenever appropriate, unless they are expressly precluded to do so by legislation.

In other words, Mr. Fehr asked the court to provide him with relief that is not expressly spelled out in the *Criminal Code*. In Canadian firearms law, that was a first, and hopefully other courts and judges will follow suit in appropriate circumstances.

Mr. Fehr was able to obtain that relief because he had a lawyer who was capable of thinking outside the box. He also had a perfect case, from a factual standpoint. Indeed, he had a single conviction, had always been repentant and had turned his life around. Most importantly, he was able to get the judge to appreciate the harshness of the effects of the prohibition order upon his prospects in life, and to convince the court that lifting the order would not compromise public safety.

Although the ruling in the Fehr case came out in December 2019, it was only recently reported by CanLii. To this day, it remains self-standing. However, there is no reason to believe that situation will remain so. As a result of its publication, firearms lawyers throughout the country may consider filing similar applications in appropriate circumstances. One would be prudent to exercise caution in bringing such an application, as courts will likely be initially cautious, if not overly so, at least until such time as an appropriate body of jurisprudence has evolved.

#### THE EXTRA-TERRITORIAL EFFECTS OF FIREARMS PROHIBITION ORDERS

One might naturally think that firearms prohibition orders have no extra-territorial effects. That would be wrong.

In *R. v. Ratray*<sup>8</sup>, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that possession of a firearm in the United States while under a prohibition order issued by a Canadian court amounts to a violation of the said order. This is so irrespective of the lack of any express or implied language in the prohibition order stating that it applies beyond the borders of Canada. The only exception would be if the prohibition order would expressly state that it does not apply outside of Canada. Since courts issue prohibition orders in accordance with standard wording and forms, that is unlikely to ever be the case.

Thus, a person who has been made subject to a Canadian firearms prohibition order may not "get around it" by traveling or moving out of the country. This is so even if the possession of firearms were to take place in a jurisdiction that does not restrict access to firearms. 

#### REFERENCES

- 1 *R. v. Fehr*, 2019 BCSC 2041
- 2 S. 109 of the *Criminal Code*
- 3 S. 110 of the *Criminal Code*
- 4 S. 111 of the *Criminal Code*
- 5 *R. v. Ilic* (Ontario Court of Justice, decision released Jan. 8, 2021, yet to be reported)
- 6 (2005) 3 SCR 895
- 7 See Note 1
- 8 2008 ONCA 74 (CanLii)



# Rubrique Juridique

Guy Lavergne, avocat

## Surmonter Une Ordonnance D'interdiction

Cette chronique est ma deuxième qui traite des ordonnances d'interdiction. Ma première chronique a été publiée dans le numéro de juillet-août 2017 du Journal canadien des armes à feu. Deux raisons m'ont emmené à écrire cette deuxième chronique: premièrement, j'ai récemment plaidé une cause devant la Cour de justice de l'Ontario où mon client a demandé et obtenu la levée d'une ordonnance d'interdiction, une dizaine d'années après une unique déclaration de culpabilité pour une infraction criminelle; deuxièmement, la Cour suprême de la Colombie-Britannique a récemment rendu une décision<sup>1</sup> qui innove, en ce qu'elle permet la levée d'une ordonnance d'interdiction par une cour supérieure, dans des circonstances qui ne sont pas expressément mentionnées au *Code criminel*.

### CONTEXTE HISTORIQUE

Dans une large mesure, les ordonnances d'interdiction sont une relique du passé. En effet, préalablement à l'adoption de la *Loi sur les armes à feu* via le projet de loi C-68 en 1998 et les modifications corrélatives apportées au *Code criminel*, la possession d'une arme à feu n'était pas, en soi, une infraction criminelle. L'objectif des ordonnances d'interdiction était alors d'empêcher certaines personnes, que le système de justice considérait comme dangereuses, d'avoir un accès légal aux armes à feu. Je dis « relique » parce que l'un des effets du projet de loi C-68 a été de créer un système universel de permis d'armes à feu, ce qui équivalait à assujettir, *de facto*, toutes les personnes présentes au Canada, sauf celles titulaires d'un permis d'arme à feu, à une ordonnance d'interdiction. Toutefois, et malgré l'adoption du régime universel de permis d'armes à feu dans le cadre du projet de loi C-68, les dispositions du *Code criminel* prévoyant l'émission d'ordonnances d'interdiction sont demeurées en vigueur.

Comme expliqué dans ma chronique de 2017, les ordonnances d'interdiction



**A prohibition order issued because a person is or might be suicidal, may be lifted once the person has recovered from that condition.**

**Une ordonnance d'interdiction émise parce qu'une personne est ou pourrait devenir suicidaire, peut être levée une fois que cette personne ne présente plus de risques à cet égard.**

sont de trois types: obligatoires,<sup>2</sup> discrétionnaires,<sup>3</sup> et préventives<sup>4</sup>. Les ordonnances du premier et du deuxième type sont rattachées au processus de détermination de la peine, pour certaines infractions criminelles. Les ordonnances du troisième type sont émises même lorsqu'il n'existe pas de conduite criminelle sous-jacente.

### AVANT LE PROJET DE LOI C-68

Avant le projet de loi C-68, il y avait quelques cas où des individus, majoritairement autochtones, avaient été déclarés coupables d'une infraction passible d'une ordonnance d'interdiction obligatoire qui leur causait problème. Dans au moins deux cas, ces personnes ont pu demander avec succès ce qu'on appelait alors une « exemption constitutionnelle » à l'égard de l'ordonnance d'interdiction. En bref, ces personnes ont réussi à convaincre un tribunal que l'imposition d'une ordonnance d'interdiction, vu leur situation particulière, équivalait à un « châtiment cruel et inusité » en violation des droits fondamentaux garantis par la *Charte des droits et libertés*. Il en était ainsi parce que ces personnes dépendaient, du moins en partie, de la chasse ou de la trappe pour leur subsistance et qu'elles étaient donc en mesure de démontrer que, dans leur cas, une ordonnance d'interdiction avait un effet disproportionné, compte tenu entre autres de la gravité de l'infraction à laquelle elle était rattachée.

### APRÈS LE PROJET DE LOI C-68

L'adoption du projet de loi C-68 a modifié le *Code criminel* à plusieurs égards. Il a notamment ajouté l'article 113. Il y a dorénavant essentiellement deux ensembles de circonstances dans lesquelles un tribunal peut s'abstenir de rendre une ordonnance d'interdiction ou lever une ordonnance existante :

- i) la nécessité pour une personne de posséder une arme à feu ou une arme à autorisation restreinte pour chasser, notamment à la trappe, afin d'assurer sa subsistance ou celle de sa famille;
- ii) l'ordonnance d'interdiction équivaldrait à une interdiction de travailler dans son seul domaine possible d'emploi.

La première catégorie traite notamment de la situation des autochtones et vise à éviter le besoin de demandes d'exemptions constitutionnelles qui étaient devenues fréquentes à l'époque.

La deuxième catégorie était nouvelle en 1998, quoique plutôt étroite. Essentiellement, elle permet à une personne de continuer une carrière dans un domaine qui exige l'accès aux armes à feu. Cette catégorie englobe, entre autres, les professions suivantes : armurier, policier, membre des forces armées, et agent de sécurité.

Dans la cause ontarienne que j'ai récemment remportée<sup>5</sup>, la Cour a interprété l'article 113 comme n'obligeant pas un travailleur qualifié à effectuer un travail non qualifié pour

gagner sa vie. L'interdiction faite à mon client, M. Ilic, a été levée afin qu'il puisse dorénavant gagner sa vie en tant qu'expert en armes à feu et formateur dans l'industrie cinématographique, profitant ainsi pleinement de ses compétences et de son expérience.

À la suite de l'adoption de l'article 113 du *Code criminel*, dans *R. c. Wiles*<sup>6</sup>, la Cour suprême du Canada a statué que l'imposition d'une ordonnance d'interdiction obligatoire dans le contexte d'une déclaration de culpabilité pour culture illégale de cannabis ne constituait pas une « peine cruelle et inusitée ». L'un des éléments clés de la décision de la cour est justement l'article 113 du *Code criminel*, que la Cour considère comme une disposition visant à prévenir des conséquences exceptionnellement sévères. Dans le cas de M. Wiles, il s'adonnait à la chasse à titre récréatif. Dans ce contexte, la Cour a estimé que son accès aux armes à feu était un privilège et non un droit.

Ainsi, sauf dans des circonstances très limitées, une ordonnance d'interdiction obligatoire ou discrétionnaire ne peut être levée avant d'être arrivée à terme. La situation est différente quant aux ordonnances dites « préventives », soit celles qui sont émises en vertu de l'article 111 du *Code criminel*. En vertu de l'article 112 du *Code criminel*, ces dernières peuvent être levées si les circonstances qui sous-tendent leur délivrance n'existent plus. À titre d'exemple, une ordonnance d'interdiction rendue parce qu'une personne est potentiellement suicidaire peut être levée, une fois que cet état de fait n'existe plus.

L'état du droit est demeuré ainsi jusqu'en 2019, soit jusqu'à ce que M. Fehr, un résident de la Colombie-Britannique, exprime le désir de devenir membre de la Gendarmerie royale du Canada.

#### L'AFFAIRE R. C. FEHR

Bien qu'il soit devenu un citoyen exemplaire, M. Fehr avait, par le passé, été reconnu coupable de vol à main armée, et il était assujéti à perpétuité à une ordonnance d'interdiction. La simple possession d'une arme à feu par M. Fehr dans le cadre de ses fonctions de policier aurait contrevenu à son ordonnance d'interdiction.

L'article 113 du *Code criminel* n'était d'aucune aide pour M. Fehr. En fait,

il ne correspondait à aucune des deux catégories permettant à un tribunal de lever son ordonnance d'interdiction. C'était le cas parce que son intérêt pour se joindre aux forces de l'ordre était nouveau. Il n'avait pas d'antécédents (ni de formation) dans ce domaine avant sa condamnation. Ainsi, il ne pouvait pas formuler une demande au tribunal qui l'avait condamné à l'origine, afin de lever l'ordonnance d'interdiction.

M. Fehr s'est donc tourné vers la Cour suprême de la Colombie-Britannique et a demandé la levée de l'ordonnance d'interdiction afin qu'il lui soit possible de se joindre à la GRC. Il a formulé ce recours en vertu de ce que les avocats appellent les « pouvoirs inhérents » que seules les cours supérieures possèdent. Les cours supérieures sont des tribunaux dont les juges sont nommés par le gouvernement fédéral, également connues sous le nom de cours de l'article 96 (de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867). La Cour suprême de la Colombie-Britannique est l'une de ces cours. Contrairement aux cours provinciales, qui n'ont que les pouvoirs qui leur sont attribués par la loi, les cours supérieures ont le pouvoir inhérent d'accorder une réparation, soit en droit ou en équité, à moins qu'elles ne soient expressément empêchées de le faire par voie législative.

En d'autres termes, M. Fehr a demandé au tribunal de lui accorder ce qui n'est pas expressément énoncé dans le *Code criminel*. En droit canadien des armes à feu, il s'agissait d'une première, et j'espère que d'autres tribunaux et juges emboîteront le pas dans des circonstances appropriées.

M. Fehr a pu obtenir cette réparation parce qu'il avait un avocat capable de sortir « des sentiers battus ». Il avait aussi un cas parfait, d'un point de vue factuel. En effet, il avait une seule condamnation, avait toujours été repentant et avait changé sa vie. Surtout, il a été en capable d'amener le juge à apprécier le caractère disproportionné des effets de l'ordonnance d'interdiction sur ses perspectives de carrière, et de convaincre le tribunal que la levée de l'ordonnance ne compromettrait pas la sécurité publique.

Bien que la décision dans l'affaire Fehr ait été rendue en décembre 2019, elle n'a été rapportée que récemment par CanLii. À ce jour, c'est un cas unique.

Toutefois, il n'y a aucune raison de croire que la situation le restera. À la suite de sa publication, les avocats de tout le pays pourront envisager de déposer des demandes semblables dans des circonstances appropriées. Il serait toutefois prudent de faire preuve de circonspection lorsqu'il s'agit de faire une telle demande, car les tribunaux seront probablement initialement enclins à faire preuve de retenue, en l'absence d'une jurisprudence plus abondante.

#### LES EFFETS EXTRA-TERRITORIAUX DES ORDONNANCES D'INTERDICTION D'ARMES À FEU

On pourrait naturellement penser que les ordonnances d'interdiction des armes à feu n'ont aucune incidence extraterritoriale. Il n'en est rien.

Dans l'affaire *R. c. Rattray*, la<sup>7</sup> Cour d'appel de l'Ontario a statué que la possession d'une arme à feu aux États-Unis alors qu'une personne est visée par une ordonnance d'interdiction rendue par un tribunal canadien équivaut à une violation de cette ordonnance. Il en est ainsi, indépendamment de l'absence de tout libellé explicite ou implicite, dans l'ordonnance d'interdiction, indiquant qu'elle s'applique au-delà des frontières du Canada. La seule exception serait que l'ordonnance d'interdiction énonce expressément qu'elle ne s'applique pas à l'extérieur du Canada. Étant donné que les tribunaux émettent des ordonnances d'interdiction conformément à un libellé et un formulaire type, il est peu probable que ce soit le cas.

Ainsi, une personne qui fait l'objet d'une ordonnance canadienne d'interdiction d'armes à feu ne peut pas s'y soustraire en voyageant ou en déménageant en dehors du pays. Il en est ainsi même si la possession d'armes à feu devait avoir lieu dans une juridiction qui ne restreint pas l'accès aux armes à feu. 

<sup>1</sup> R. c. Fehr, 2019 BCSC 2041

<sup>2</sup> Article 109 du Code criminel

<sup>3</sup> Article 110 du Code criminel

<sup>4</sup> Article 111 du Code criminel

<sup>5</sup> R. v. Ilic (Cour de justice de l'Ontario, décision non encore rapportée, en date du 8 janvier 2021)

<sup>6</sup> (2005)3 RCS 895

<sup>7</sup> 2008 ONCA 74 (CanLII)



# NFA Book Shelf

Bill Rantz

## Wild Sheep

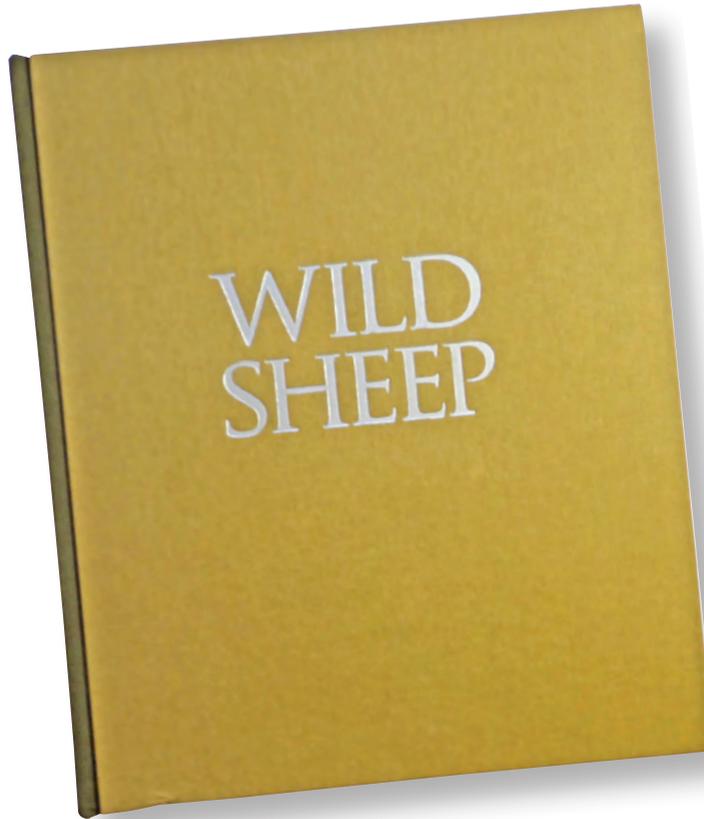
**W**ild Sheep is the second limited edition book published by YETI, a company whose mission is to produce high quality coolers for the serious outdoor enthusiast. YETI's first book, *Tarpon*, was a tremendous success, receiving outstanding reviews.

My first impression of *Wild Sheep* as a coffee table book was formed after scanning the incredible photographs. Taking the time to examine each picture closely caused me to envy the photographers who had experienced such rugged yet beautiful wilderness.

Adam Foss, who wrote the foreword titled, "The Calling," explains how he was born into a sheep-hunting family. Memories of his first sheep, taken with a bow while his father stood alongside, was the defining moment in his life as a sheep hunter. Why do hunters pursue wild sheep when it can be physically exhausting, frustrating, dangerous and expensive? Five essays, arranged by species, included in *Wild Sheep* share each author's motivation for hunting this elusive game.

Dall's sheep: "The Journeyman," as told to Jacob Baynham, shares the life of Al Klassen, an experienced sheep-hunting guide in the Northwest Territories. Born into a Saskatchewan family of non-hunters, Klassen found his true niche in life hunting and guiding for Dall's sheep. As he nears his 150th sheep, Klassen describes sheep hunting and sheep country as an obsession.

Desert bighorn sheep: "The Protec-



tors," by Kirsta Langois, outlines the history of this wild sheep and its significance to the Indigenous peoples. Declining sheep populations caused by a variety of factors have resulted in extensive conservation efforts by dedicated volunteers.

Stone's sheep: "The Second Chance," by Eva Holland, shares Anna Vorisek's very personal reasons for pursuing Stone's sheep in Alaska. Hunting has renewed her spirit and helped her heal from two tragedies. As in her life, Anna was given the opportunity of a second chance, which resulted in her first ram.

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep: "The Unlimited," written by Elliot D. Woods, describes Tim and Roxanne Shinabarger's successful hunt in the Beartooth Mountains of Montana. The hunting area is referred to as "The Unlimited," as anyone can buy a tag over the counter. However, once two

sheep have been harvested in a wildlife zone, the area is closed until the next season.

The photographs and essays in *Wild Sheep* create an inspiring publication which encourages readers to plan their hunt of a lifetime. Jack O'Connor said, "There is no halfway. After his first exposure, a man is either a sheep hunter or he isn't. He either falls under the spell of sheep hunting and sheep country or he wouldn't be caught dead on another sheep mountain." *Wild Sheep* is limited to 1,100 hard cover copies which retail at \$129 CDN. A special edition of 350 slipcover copies is offered at \$350 USD, with proceeds donated to the Wild Sheep Foundation. Purchase includes a draw entry for a guided sheep hunt. 

**Title:** Wild Sheep

**Executive Producer:** Adam Foss

**Essays:** Jacob Baynham, Krista Langois, Eva Holland and Elliot D. Woods

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### EDITOR'S NOTE:

As we go to press, I've learned the entire print run of this book has been sold out, leaving the used book market as the only source.

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