

CANADIAN

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MARCH/APRIL 2022



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CANADIAN ***FIREARMS JOURNAL***

March/April 2022



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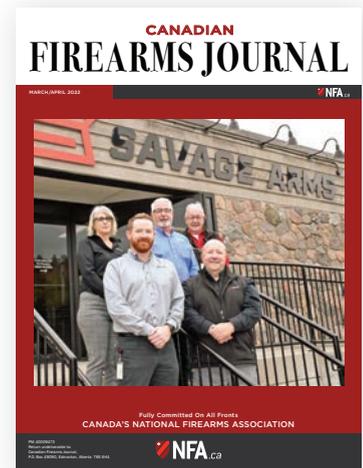
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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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On The Cover

The Savage Canada plant in Lakefield, Ont., is Canada's only large-scale manufacturing plant for rimfire firearms. The plant evolved from Lakefield Arms, which started in the village north of Peterborough, in the late 1960s. The plant turns out more than 300,000 rimfire rifles a year and is responsible for the majority of Savage's rimfire production outside of the Magnum series. Plant management include, left to right: (front row) Brian Waugh, production manager; Terry McCullough, V/P and general manager; (back row) Shannon Jones, human resources manager; David Myles, director of manufacturing; and Ernie Barriage, director of international sales. Image is courtesy of Jeff Helsdon. 



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From The Editor's Desk

Al Voth

Outdoor & Trade Shows



You should be receiving this issue of the Canadian Firearms Journal in the midst of what is traditionally “show season.” The big Las Vegas shows, such as SHOT and Safari Club International, have already ended, but other events are scheduled for March and April here in Canada. Whether they go ahead is, of course, anyone’s guess, with everything being dependant on what COVID-19 does to us and the subsequent reaction of our respective governments.

However, not everything is dependant on government reaction. Some major manufacturers made the business decision not to attend SHOT this year. They included Ruger, SIG, Weatherby, MOJO, the Beretta/Benelli group, Springfield Armory, Kimber and others. It’s worth repeating that this was a business decision in light of COVID, not a political one, as some try to colour it.

I see some of Canada’s outdoor shows have already been cancelled, but as I write this some major ones are still going ahead. Here’s a list of the ones I know about.

- Abbotsford, BC – March 4 to 6
- Toronto, Ont. – March 17 to 20
- Edmonton, Alta. – March 17 to 20
- Yorkton, Sask. – April 2 to 3
- Chilliwack, BC – April 8 to 10

Hopefully, the organizers can pull these off, and if you’re able to attend safely, I’d encourage you to get out and support the shows. These events also feature fishing and other outdoor pursuits and, if you’re like me, you find yourself wishing the gun section was much larger. So, for a bigger gun fix, look for gun shows, March and April are good for them as well. These are often small affairs held in the community halls of small towns, but they are always worthy of our attendance and support. They are also great places to rent a table and move some of the guns and gear you’re no longer using. Odds are you have something gathering dust that is just what another person has been looking for.

None of us can get to all the shows we’d like to, which is why we have publications like the *CFJ*, to keep you

informed. While we have lots of great content for you this issue, I’d like to draw your attention to the effort we’ve made here to address the topic of mental health and how it relates to firearm ownership. Tyson Sommerville shares his story with us in this issue and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for his willingness to do this. Seeking professional medical help is important in all areas of our lives, including our mental health. I’ve also used the services of a therapist when dealing with the aftermath of gruesome events encountered during my uniform-wearing days. It’s helpful.

To get a legal perspective on the issue, we’ve recruited our resident lawyer, Guy Lavergne, to analyze the law. This is also an important article, and one worth reading several times, and then sharing with others. This is information we all need to know and will help enlighten conversations we may need to have with friends and family. Assess your own situation, assess the people around you who also own firearms and then let wisdom and compassion be your guide. 



President's Message

Blair Hagen

Questions



To Liberals, owning guns is an inherently suspect and dangerous activity.

Pour les Libéraux la possession d'armes à feu est une activité suspecte et dangereuse en soi.

In this column, I write with great and profound sadness on a very sensitive subject.

Rodger Kotanko, businessman and gunsmith, was a fixture in the Canadian firearms community for decades. Through his firearms business, DARK International and RK Custom gunsmithing services, in Norfolk County, Ont., he was a well-known and well-respected firearms industry professional serving firearms owners and law enforcement agencies.

On Nov. 3, 2021, the City of Toronto Police Service executed a warrant and raided Rodger's business at his home in Norfolk County. Apparently, Toronto police didn't feel it necessary to advise or involve the local law enforcement agency, the Ontario Provincial Police, until the very last

moment before the raid. During the course of this raid, Rodger was shot to death by an officer from the Toronto Police Service.

The circumstances of this incident are entirely bizarre. In the two months since the incident, absolutely no information about the Toronto Police raid and Rodger's death has been forthcoming. An investigation by the Ontario Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is underway.

Even when taking down proven, full-on recidivist, armed, violent criminals, standard operating procedure for Canadian law enforcement agencies is to effect arrests, not kill them. Why Toronto Police found it necessary to gun down a 70-year-old gunsmith, authorized to operate his business by the Ontario chief firearms officer and

the Canadian Firearms Program, is beyond the pale of reasoning and logic.

If Rodger was under investigation or had committed an offense that warranted his arrest, why didn't the local OPP, whom he knew and with whom he likely would have complied without incident, not do so? We know nothing of the circumstances of the warrant or the raid, so we cannot comment on that, but there is one overarching issue involved here, one of national proportions, that must now be discussed.

For many decades, the Liberal Party of Canada has been waging an ideological and legislative culture war on the rights, freedoms and property of Canadians.

The Liberal Party has a lot invested in the criminalization and demoniza-

tion of gun owners in Canada. That was what their ill-fated gun registry was all about. Gun-owning Canadians were so dangerous they had to be licensed and registered in order to protect everyone else in Canada from them. Police had to be given special powers to monitor, inspect and even charge them. Civil rights had to be stripped from those who wished to legally possess and own firearms for the sake of everyone's safety.

Partly influenced by this agenda, some police administrations now view anyone with a gun, and even the legal authority to possess one, as an inherent danger to public safety. It doesn't matter who you are, a known gang member with a completely illegal smuggled pistol in your pants, or a firearms license holder in compliance with the law. You are the same danger, and if you have complied with the law and have a firearms license, they know exactly what kind of danger you are. It is now routine for police to respond to addresses where there is simply a firearms license attached with armed ERT teams, "just in case."

It's a theme I keep revisiting and

will continue to revisit. The mandatory firearms license, possession/acquisition license required of all law-abiding Canadian firearms owners, is not a "good guy" license, as some might still believe. It is a bad guy license.

The PAL authorizes you to commit the criminal offense of firearms possession for a period of time, but it is still an offense nonetheless, and it is viewed that way by government, bureaucracy and many of those in the top tiers of law enforcement.

To Liberals, owning guns is an inherently suspect and dangerous activity. A privilege that must be heavily monitored and policed at every step, and those engaged in it must feel the hand of law enforcement, government and bureaucracy every waking moment. The intent of Canadian firearms laws is no longer to target or prevent criminal violence, but to attack and destroy a part of Canadian society and culture the Liberal Party holds in contempt and disdain.

Well, regardless of the facts of the Rodger Kotanko investigation, which we pray will come out, here is a by-product of that event. A man is

dead. A man who served his community and who loved and was loved by his friends and family, and who was ultimately sacrificed at the Altar of Gun Control for the ideological enjoyment of civil disarmament fantasists.

As long as Liberals write firearms laws, there will be more incidents like this. They hope you won't notice or care, better yet they hope that you and other Canadians accept the idea this is tragic, but inevitable, until all guns are removed from society.

This shooting has reverberated through the entire Canadian firearms community. Where perhaps once there was wariness and suspicion of the motives of government, bureaucracy and the political police, there is now fear and anger and outrage.

Whatever else he may or may not have been, Rodger was also a victim of the toxic Liberal culture war on guns and the belief that all Canadian gun owners are a danger to public safety all the time. Despite what the Liberals and their civil disarmament lobbyists feel in their hearts of darkness, he didn't deserve to die that way.

We will remember. 

Message du Président

Blair Hagen

Questionnements

C'est avec grande et profonde tristesse que j'écris cet article à propos d'un sujet très sensible.

Roger Kotanko, homme d'affaire et armurier a été un personnage incontournable pendant des décennies auprès de la communauté intéressée par les armes à feu. Il était un professionnel très respecté dans l'industrie, il servait les propriétaires d'armes à feu et les organismes d'application de la loi avec ses entreprises, DARK International et RK Custom gunsmithing dans le comté de Norfolk en Ontario.

Le 3 novembre, 2021, des policiers de la ville de Toronto ont exécuté un mandat de perquisition à la résidence de Roger où s'y trouvait aussi son commerce. Toujours dans le comté de Norfolk. Il semble que la police de Toronto n'ont pas jugé nécessaire d'aviser la Police Provinciale de l'Ontario (PPO) qui agit comme police locale dans ce comté qu'ils effectueraient une perquisition sur leur territoire avant la toute dernière minute. Un agent de la police de Toronto a tiré et tué Roger Kotanko durant cette perquisition.

Les circonstances de cet incident sont complètement bizarres. Aucune information à propos de la perquisition ou de la mort de Roger Kotanko ont été divulguées jusqu'à date. L'événement est présentement sous enquête par l'Unité des Enquêtes Spéciales de l'Ontario.

Même lorsqu'ils ont affaire à des récidivistes armés et violents, les policiers Canadiens n'abattent pas les gens. Ils effectuent des arrestations. La décision du policier de Toronto qui a abattu un armurier de 70 ans dont le commerce était approuvé par le Registraire des armes à feu de l'Ontario et le Programme Canadien des Armes à feu dépasse l'entendement.

Si Roger Kotanko avait commis une infraction qui méritait son arrestation, pourquoi est-ce que la PPO ne l'a pas contacté pour qu'il se présente à leur bureau? Ils se connaissaient! M. Kotanko s'y serait certainement soumis sans incident. Les circonstances du mandat et de la



perquisition restent toujours inconnues, donc nous ne pouvons les commenter. Il y a ici par contre, un enjeu primordial et de proportion nationale dont il faut discuter immédiatement.

Depuis des décennies le parti Libéral du Canada fait la guerre idéologique et culturelle envers les droits, les libertés et la propriété privée des Canadiens.

Le parti Libéral a beaucoup investi pour criminaliser et diaboliser les propriétaires d'armes à feu au Canada. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils ont créé le registre des armes longues. Les propriétaires d'armes à feu Canadiens sont si dangereux qu'ils doivent obtenir des permis et leurs armes doivent être enregistrées dans le but de protéger les autres citoyens. Les policiers ont reçu des pouvoirs spéciaux pour les contrôler, faire des inspections et les accuser s'il y a lieu. Ils ont enlevé les droits civiques de tous ceux qui ont voulu posséder légalement des armes à feu, sous le prétexte de protéger la société.

À cause de cette influence idéologique, plusieurs corps policiers perçoivent n'importe qui qui possède une arme à feu ou qui a l'autorisation d'en posséder comme un danger public en soit. Ils ne font pas la différence entre un membre d'un gang criminel qui a un pistolet de contrebande dans ses pantalons versus un citoyen respectueux des lois ayant tous les permis gouvernementaux. Pour eux le danger est le même et si vous avez respecté la loi et que vous avez un permis d'armes à feu, ils savent exactement quel danger vous posez. Lorsqu'ils doivent intervenir dans un endroit où quelqu'un a un permis d'armes à feu, ils le font avec une escouade tactique genre SWAT "juste au cas où".

Le sujet que je dois revoir et revoir sans cesse est celui du permis d'armes à feu. Le permis obligatoire de possession-acquisition (PPA) imposé à tous les propriétaires d'armes à feu n'est pas un permis pour les "bons gars" comme certains le croient encore. Il est plutôt un permis pour les "mauvais gars".

Le PPA autorise son détenteur à commettre l'infraction de posséder une arme à feu pendant une période déterminée. Le gouvernement, les fonctionnaires et plusieurs haut placés dans les corps policiers perçoivent



la possession d'arme à feu comme étant une infraction criminelle malgré le permis.

Pour les Libéraux la possession d'armes à feu est une activité suspecte et dangereuse en soi. C'est un privilège qui doit être lourdement contrôlé à chaque étape et ceux qui y prennent part doivent sentir la main de la loi, du gouvernement et de sa bureaucratie à chaque instant de leur vie. L'intention des lois Canadiennes sur les armes à feu n'est plus de prévenir la violence mais de s'attaquer et de détruire une partie de la société et de la culture Canadienne que le parti Libéral a dédaigné et méprise.

Nous espérons que les résultats de l'enquête Kotanko aboutissent, mais peu importe quels qu'ils seront, voici un sous produit de l'événement. Un homme est mort. Un homme qui était au service de sa communauté, qui aimait et qui était aimé par sa famille et amis. Il fût ultimement sacrifié au nom du contrôle des armes à feu pour le plaisir idéologique des fantaisistes du désarmement civil.

Tant et aussi longtemps que des Libéraux écrivent des lois sur les armes à feu, il y aura des incidents comme celui-ci. Ils souhaitent que vous ne remarquerez pas ou bien que cela vous laisse indifférent.

The PAL authorizes you to commit the criminal offense of firearms possession for a period of time, but it is still an offense

Le PPA autorise son détenteur à commettre l'infraction de posséder une arme à feu pendant une période déterminée.

Encore mieux, ils souhaitent que vous et d'autres Canadiens acceptiez que c'est tragique mais inévitable, jusqu'à ce que toutes les armes à feu disparaissent de la société.

L'effet de cette fusillade s'est répercuté à travers toute la communauté intéressée par les armes à feu. Dans le passé il y avait de la méfiance par rapport aux motifs du gouvernement, de la bureaucratie et de la police politique, aujourd'hui elle s'est transformée en peur, en colère et en indignation.

Quoi qu'il ait été ou pas, Roger Kotanko est une victime de la guerre culturelle toxique Libérale contre les armes à feu et de la croyance que tous les propriétaires d'armes à feu sont un danger public en tout temps. Malgré ce que les Libéraux et leurs lobbyistes de désarmement civil peuvent croire dans la noirceur de leur coeur, il ne méritait pas de mourir comme ça.

Nous ne l'oublieront pas.



Vice-president's Message

Rick Igercich

The Year Ahead

As we look to the year ahead, we know that the challenges for firearms owners will be considerable. Justin Trudeau's amnesty covering the May 1 Order in Council firearms ban is coming to an end. This ban includes over 1,500 types of rifles and shotguns, with seemingly more firearms added each week. There is also talk of handgun bans on a provincial level. It appears that the federal government is holding the proverbial money carrot in front of the noses of the provincial premiers to influence their decision-making process.

At this point, you may be asking, "How the heck did we get here?"

There are a variety of reasons.

For years, the Liberals have used law-abiding firearms owners to shift the narrative when they find themselves under scrutiny for their countless missteps. They provide the public with false information and manufactured statistics about crime in Canada that make us an easy target. The Liberals, supported by their media, continue to take advantage of tragic crimes committed by criminals using smuggled and stolen firearms. They manipulate the statistics by communicating numbers accumulated by non-violent, non-victim offences, an example being an expired PAL.

Another reason we find ourselves in this situation is that many firearms owners are just not aware of the steps being taken by the government. There is only a small percentage of firearms owners who are directly involved in trying to stop this injustice.

Final contributing factors are related to the soft approaches and shifting positions of opposition parties to appease some voters, which in turn alienates others. Voters do not know which way to turn.

Each day, the NFA is inundated by phone calls and e-mails with



This is about more than guns; this is about government control of our personal property, our lives and our thoughts.

questions and concerns about this May deadline. Firearm owners are wondering about the possibility of an extension, a buyout or if there is a chance of grandfathering any of the firearms on the list. Others are wondering about the consequences of non-compliance. Prior to this publication, the Trudeau government and the new Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Marco Mendicino, have not provided any information about next steps, and it appears there is no plan. From my perspective, Marco Mendicino is blindly following the lead of his predecessor, Bill Blair.

The NFA is working with a renewed determination to make changes and to stop this Liberal gun grab. We are working hard to lobby and educate all members of parliament to help them understand where we, as law-abiding citizens, stand. We are reaching out to all Canadians through social media, websites, television and radio, with our dedicated members working

diligently to share our message. Our directors are continuing to travel to gun shops, gun clubs, gun shows and other events across Canada to talk to and keep gun owners informed about this current situation.

The NFA, with the help of Solomon Friedman, found Cassey Premack, a gun shop owner in British Columbia whose business has been directly impacted by the May 1 Order in Council. Solomon has filed proceedings against Justin Trudeau's OIC. He believes that the greatest chance of success is to focus directly on a business owner who will experience substantial losses.

This is not just a fight for firearms owners, this is a fight for all Canadian's futures and the future of all generations. This is about more than guns; this is about government control of our personal property, our lives and our thoughts. Please know that we at Canada's National Firearms Association continue to be grateful to you for your continued support. 



Politics & Guns

Bruce Gold

Assault Rifles



Trudeau and the Liberal Party are very good at some things. They are the masters of big talk and big announcements for maximum favourable press, followed by precious little actual doing. The issue of safe drinking water for reserves is a good example. They are also experts at finding a problem to highlight, then focusing their efforts on high-profile, easy-to-virtue-signal areas where the problem isn't, but it's easy to show results. The problem of an opioid epidemic supported by violent drug gangs and the solution of attacking law-abiding gun owners is a very current example.

DEVIOS METHODS

The first and most basic requirement of research or, for that matter, policy formation is to clearly define one's terms. However, if one's policy is more public relations than actual practice, one needs to capitalize on the fact most voters are not subject experts or even well informed. Accordingly, there are a number of sly tricks that help one's manipulation of the public. You want to establish a glib story or narrative that sounds "reasonable" and shapes public perceptions. Then one needs to create a carefully chosen vocabulary of terms that tilts the debate before it even begins. It is also helpful to have fuzzy

definitions which obstruct exact analysis and are easily shifted in emphasis to please or befuddle different audiences. One of the many examples of selective vocabulary, but one that is of concern to us, is the whole matter of "assault weapons" and the numerous euphemisms for the term.

HISTORY OF THE TERM

The source of the term "assault weapon or rifle" cannot be determined exactly since different groups have used it in different ways and at different times. The most likely origin of the term is the Sturmgewehr 44 (literal translation: assault rifle 44), which the Germans developed in the Second World War, with over half a million manufactured. This was an intermediate-sized rifle (carbine), using a medium-sized cartridge more powerful than a pistol, but less powerful than a full-size rifle. It was capable of fully automatic, as well as semi-automatic fire. The United States Defense Intelligence Agency describes "assault rifles" as short, compact, selective-fire weapons that fire a cartridge intermediate in power between submachine gun and rifle cartridges (Small Arms Identification and Operation Guide). Such firearms have been illegal in Canada since the '70s.

After the Second World War, militar-

It's likely that the next to be banned will be hunting rifles, as they routinely use cartridges twice as powerful as those currently banned and are dangerous at much greater ranges.

ies around the world continued to shift towards "assault rifles" to replace the heavier, more powerful rifles that had been in use. The ArmaLite 15 (AR-15), a lightweight semi-automatic, was manufactured for the civilian market starting in 1959, and a modified version with full-auto capacity, the M16, was adopted by the US Army in 1964. The Kalashnikov, or AK 47, was adopted by the Soviet Union in 1948. These rifles were less powerful and less lethal than their full-size rifle predecessors, but they had the advantage of light weight, especially when it came to the amount of ammunition that could be carried, and they were often cheaper to produce.

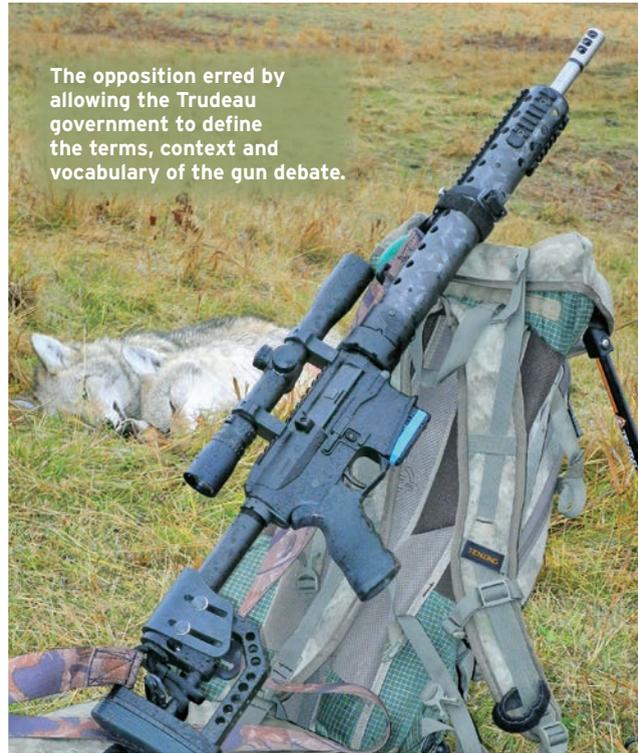
Following these developments in firearms technology, many manufacturers started to design similar-looking civilian rifles using plastics instead of wood, with a military-looking profile and using intermediate-powered ammunition. Their light weight, easy handling and medium-powered ammunition made these rifles extremely popular with the public.

The term “assault rifle or weapon” came into more common use around 1989, when the term was politicized to reflect a US government-induced media panic about how “high-power assault weapons,” “automatic weapons,” or “military weapons” were the firearm of choice for criminals. This use of semi-automatic rifles was, in fact, extremely rare, involving about one per cent of cases. The criminal use of fully automatic firearms is almost unknown in both the US and Canada and is usually confined to organized political gangs.

The current use of the term is associated with a 1988 paper by gun-control activist and Violence Policy Center founder Josh Sugarman. Sugarman wrote, “Assault weapons – just like armor-piercing bullets, machine guns and plastic firearms – are a new topic. The weapons’ menacing looks, coupled with the public’s confusion over fully automatic machine guns versus semi-automatic assault weapons – anything that looks like a machine gun is assumed to be a machine gun – can only increase the chance of public support for restrictions on these weapons. In addition, few people can envision a practical use for these weapons.” The reality, of course, is that these firearms have been in common use for hunting and target shooting for 70 years.

Efforts in other jurisdictions to ban these semi-automatic firearms have inadvertently recognized the falseness of the political spin by defining them as having certain cosmetic features, such as a bayonet lug, pistol grip or folding stock. This is pattern which Trudeau and the Liberals have followed with their fuzzy definition and absolute refusal to provide a legal definition of the term. In other cases, legislatures have simply listed certain guns, thereby avoiding the need to define their criteria. The May 1 OIC of course does both, with the added twist of banning “variants,” without defining that term.

Another feature which gun banners focus on is magazine capacity – the dreaded “high capacity” danger. Since magazines are simply a box holding



The opposition erred by allowing the Trudeau government to define the terms, context and vocabulary of the gun debate.

ammunition, they can be manufactured in widely varying capacities and are not in any way unique to semi-automatic firearms. This is a non-issue in Canada because magazines for semi-automatic rifles are already legally limited to five rounds (except .22 calibre).

Another lie perpetrated by the Trudeau government is the idea that these guns have no purpose except to kill people. In fact, one of the reasons for the use of an intermediate-size cartridge is that it does not kill as often. The military logic behind this is that it takes a lot more resources to evacuate and care for a wounded soldier than a dead one. In terms of effectiveness, a study by US Navy SEALs clarifies some of the issues. They found that at close range, a bolt-action gun cycles 1/10th of a second slower than a semi-automatic. At longer ranges, even trained shooters cannot hit a target faster than one shot a second, no matter what gun they use. The movie favourite of just blazing away with automatic fire, sometimes referred to as spray and pray, is effectively useless at hitting a target.

CONCLUSIONS

There are several political conclusions we can reach from this. The first is the absolute disdain the Liberals have for

public safety, as they are in the process of diverting billions of scarce resources on a vote-harvesting boondoggle. The second is the opposition’s folly of allowing their opponent to define the terms, context and vocabulary. Every time the Conservatives debated “assault weapons,” they made Trudeau’s debating point for him. It would have been child’s play to simply refuse the bait and insist on using the more truthful term, “semi-automatic hunting and target rifles.” The Liberal framing of the issue as a problem with law-abiding licensed gun owners instead of the gang violence that doubled under Trudeau’s watch was another avoidable misstep.

We also saw a repeat of the Liberal strategy of divide and conquer, with the attack

focused on semi-auto owners and threats to pistol owners, both small subsets of the gun-owning community.

For those gun owners that continue to feel that this is “not my problem” and that accepting the new restrictions will buy peace, we can only note that we have had two decades of ever-increasing restrictions without ever reaching any peace. We can also note the total dishonesty of the current crusade against inanimate objects in preference to a crackdown on violent criminals.

The gun community should be aware that the decision to attack this or that segment of the firearms community is entirely subjective. The attack on semi-automatic rifles was a politically expedient way for a corrupt, inept, bankrupt government to change the subject. This attack on inanimate objects held by some can be repeated against any segment of the community. Pistols are easily carried and concealed, as well as smuggled. Shotguns spray pellets over a wide area and are dangerous “street sweepers.” Hunting rifles routinely use cartridges that are twice as powerful as those of the rifles currently being banned and are dangerous at much greater ranges.

Time will tell if the gun community and its supporters will continue to fall into these political traps. 

Preserving Our Firearms Heritage

Gary K. Kangas

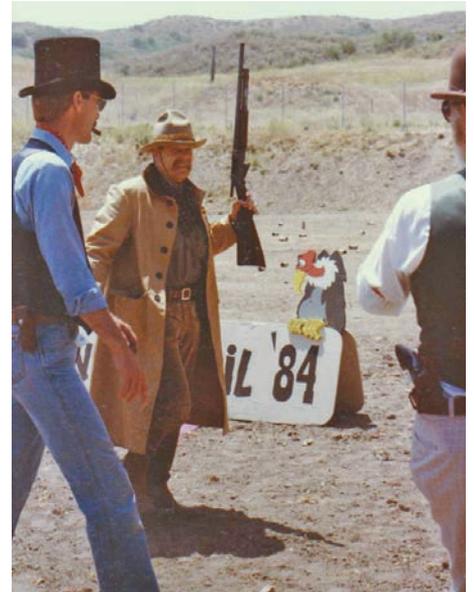
30th Annual Headquarters

Cowboy action shooting began in the early 1980s in the fevered, fertile imaginations of Harper Creigh, Bill Hahn and Gordon Davis, three avid practical pistol shooters. These three were also western movie enthusiasts who suggested they should have a shooting competition using three old west-era guns, rifle, pistol, and shotgun, cowboy style. Cowboy action shooting was born.

Harper, Bill and Gordon lived in a gated community called Coto de Caza, which contained a shooting range. They were soon joined by like enthusiasts, such as Boyd David, owner of EMF Corp., a gun distributor, and others. Their brainchild was revealed in 1982 at the shooting range at Coto. It was called End of Trail, and on that day the cowboy action legend begins. End of Trail (EOT) proved to be a success and was noticed by various American gun writers, such as Phil Spangenberg. Their articles began to appear in popular firearms

publications, led by the foremost Guns & Ammo magazine. The event known as EOT was repeated in 1983 and the interest began to grow. We read an article by Phil Spangenberg, which appeared in Guns & Ammo during the spring of 1984; it excited us and gave the call to action. Gary phoned Phil, as we had been acquainted since 1979. Phil then passed on to Gary the phone number of renowned holster maker Gordon Davis. He then called Gordon, who proved to be very accommodating, and made the arrangements for our attendance at End of Trail 1984.

Having been a single-action revolver shooting enthusiast since age 16 when Gary acquired his first single-action revolver, plus being an owner of a lever-action rifle and appropriate shotgun, he found himself kitted up and ready to go. With Sybil and our 14-year-old daughter, Cassie, we drove to California, where we had lived for three years in the 1960s.



ABOVE: R.J. Poteet, Grey Fox and Deadly Redley at End of Trail 1984.

BELOW: Social distancing is possible.



Being familiar with the area, we arrived at Coto de Caza and unloaded the car at our rented condo. The next day, we went to the range and Gary was greeted by Harper Creigh, "The Judge;" Gordon Davis, "Diamond Jim;" Dennis Mader, known as "Wes Turner;" and Boyd Davis, alias "The General." Because everyone had to have a cowboy alias, they asked what Gary's was, but before he could answer, Wes Turner said, "He looks like the Grey Fox." And that is how he has been known at cowboy action shooting events since 1984.

End of Trail proved to be an incredible experience, both culturally and skill testing. With it, the seeds were planted for future events like this back home. Upon arriving back in Victoria, we decided that we would bring cowboy action shooting to Canada. It required two years of effort to field the first cowboy action shooting match in western Canada at the North Saanich Rod & Gun Club, May 1986. Unknown to Gary, an Ontarian, Frank McFarquar, had organized the first cowboy action shooting match in Canada at the Peel Gun Club, Brampton, Ont., in May of 1985.

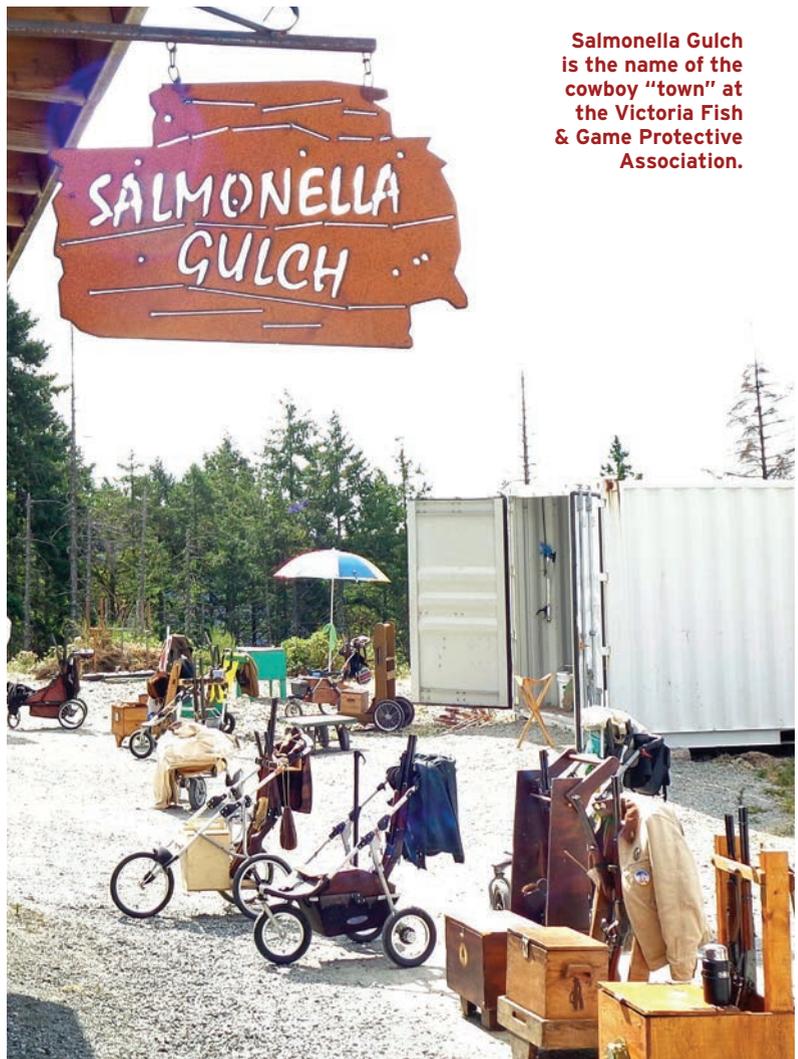
Fast forward to 1992 and cowboy action shooting had become well established in BC. Gary has been a member of the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS), the governing body of cowboy action shooting, since its inception in 1987. His SASS badge number is 223. We and a number of cowboy action

enthusiasts organized a match called "Headquarters" in May of that year at the North Saanich Rod & Gun Club. Headquarters has gone on to become the oldest SASS-affiliated cowboy action shooting match. The initial event was attended by a small but enthusiastic group of competitors, many of whom would continue to compete for many years. The winner was Al Page, also known as "The Reverend Al," who beat Gary with a single-action borrowed from him, a 2nd Gen. Colt chambered in 44 Special.

The second Headquarters was held in 1993 at the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association range, Malahat, BC. The theme for the competition was the mythical BC mining and cow town of Salmonella Gulch. Salmonella Gulch still stands today with bermed bays, proper facades, covered shooting positions and period signage, all

due to the diligent efforts of a small cadre of dedicated labourers, carpenters and painters.

Headquarters 2021 was the 30th annual edition of the event. Why is the event named Headquarters, you may ask? In the early days of the cattle trade in BC, Victoria was the home of the head offices for most of the big ranches in the interior of the province. Hence the title, Headquarters. Headquarters has hosted participants from the UK, France, Hawaii, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, Montana and Washington state. Regular attendees who have acquired their PALs come from California and Oregon, plus a regular from Germany who has also acquired his PAL and has been an attendee since 1992, missing only a couple of years due to ill health. Within Canada, we have attendees from Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and



Salmonella Gulch is the name of the cowboy "town" at the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association.





the interior of BC; however, COVID has curtailed these visits for the past two years.

Sybil and Gary passed on the management of the Victoria Frontier Shootists, and all the events involved, in the early 2000s. The administration of these cowboy action shooting events is in excellent hands today. The 30th Annual Headquarters cowboy action shooting competition, held Aug. 7 and 8, 2021, was most enjoyable and well organized. Due to COVID, the event was downsized; however, this did not deter the planners, who organized enthusiastic work parties that made the cowboy town, Salmonella Gulch at the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association, come alive. The format of Headquarters' shooting stages and barbeque were outstanding, with social distancing the order of the day.

THE CATEGORY WINNERS WERE:

- Overall Top Gun: Whistlin' Will, SASS#88382 (won all categories he was registered in)
- Gunfighter: Black Ashley, SASS#89866
- Wrangler: Smiley Joe, SASS#109737
- Senior Duelist: Slim Delgado, SASS#85279
- Forty-Niner: Renegade Ron,

RIGHT: Whistlin' Will was Top Gun at Headquarters 2021.

- SASS#10354
- Silver Senior Gunfighter: Killshot Kenny, SASS#91136
 - Lady Senior: Salal Sal, SASS#101126
 - Senior: Doc Richards, SASS#101125
 - Elder Statesman: Saskatoon Barry, SASS#70295
 - Silver Senior Duelist: Little Edgy, SASS#64366
 - Elder Statesman Gunfighter: Kananaskis Kid, SASS#62402
 - Silver Senior: Helena Handbasket, SASS#85280
 - Gran Patron: Lone Wolf, also known as Gunter Shuldes
 - Frontier Cartridge: Branko Diklitch
 - Cattle Baroness: Miss Mary, SASS#55147
 - Cattle Baron: Teacher C, SASS#71703

PRIZE SPONSORS INCLUDED:

- Laurie Page: multiple items from the AI Page estate
- Grey Fox, SASS#223, a Chiappa Little Badger .22 calibre rifle,
- Wild Horse Jack, SASS#64334, cowboy videos and grand movie posters.

The event was another page added to our firearms heritage. 



Nathaniel Milljour

MAKING 4K

Magic happens at 4,000 feet per second
BY TIMOTHY FOWLER

Human beings like to push limits; it's how we roll – from my toddling grandson who wants to see how far he can make his fire truck go, to varmint hunters who wish to see just how fast they can push a projectile from a rifle. Some folks dedicate their professional lives to the combination of safe speed and accuracy. Seth Swerczek from Hornady is one of those guys, but we'll get to that in a minute.

OPTIONS

A loading bench full of cartridges can achieve and pass the magical 4,000-feet-per-second threshold. We tested the 17 Fireball, 22-250 Remington and the 204 Ruger – all exceeded the blistering 4,000 feet-per-second threshold. Some exceeded it by a tidy margin. But shooters who want this kind of speed can find it in other rounds too, like the 17 Remington, 224 Weatherby, 220 Swift, 223 WSSM and even the 243 Win. can be pushed above 4,000 feet per second with the right handload and a light bullet. Several wildcats meet and surpass the 4,000-feet-per-second threshold too. You might be able to add a couple of rounds to this list also.

EXPERT BALLISTICIAN

Seth Swerczek, currently the marketing and communications manager with Hornady, used to be the >



engineering ballistics. So, he knows something about bullets and ballistics, both internal and external.

Swerczek said, "I think the 220 Swift was the first one to blow into that 4,000-feet-per-second category. And that's still a popular round today. It's been around since the mid-1930s in a factory load, and I think it was like 4,200 feet per second. So, the 220 Swift is the original mainstream rifle capable of 4K and it's still available today. We (Hornady) still load factory 220 Swift ammunition, and several other manufacturers do as well. Another one that was mainstream was the 17 Remington, similar to the ballistics of a 17 Fireball, but the 17 Remington was a popular one. And then there's a slew of the Weatherby cartridges known for blistering speed."

Some of us shooters might think that a 4,000-feet-per-second round is sort of a recent phenomenon, but it is good to be reminded that the 220 Swift is better than 90 years old and is still a top-notch varmint-hunting choice.

HANDLOADING

Swerczek reminds us handloaders to be safe, first and foremost. "When you're going after a specific number, there's no way to read pressure. You can look at your case head and feel your bolt lift and stuff. But say you've got a custom action, the tolerances on custom bolt actions are super tight, so you don't get those traditional signs of pressure where your primer flows, and the ejector stamp on the case head is not always visible. One of the significant hurdles is finding the suitable powder and bullet weight to approach that speed safely."

Another important topic in pushing bullets fast is as you increase muzzle velocity, you're going to increase the revolutions per minute (rpm) that the bullet is spinning (see sidebar on rpm calculation). And with these smaller-calibre bullets, relatively thin jackets, and twisting these bullets real fast, they might blow up and disintegrate on exiting the muzzle. You can get close to being on that ragged edge where it shoots well, and then you go shoot over a field full of varmints and 15 shots in with the barrel heating up, you're blowing up bullets. That's something to be considered as well.

We tested .17, .20 and .22-calibre cartridges for this article, but Swerczek likes to split the difference between



ABOVE: This Kimber in 204 Ruger is beautifully finished and loves Hornady ammunition.

BELOW: Careful handloading and chronographing is necessary to safely reach the 4,000-feet per second mark.

.17 and .22 calibres. He said, "If I was going to build a gun specifically for the 4,000-feet-per-second goal, I think the .20 calibre would be my choice. For me, the 204 Ruger makes a lot of sense. We have brass for it; we can buy factory ammunition for it; I can reload for it. The .20 calibre is a good compromise between bullet weight and velocity. With the .17 calibre, the bullets are small and light. The .22 calibres and six-millimetre bullets are heavier but require more powder capacity to get the same speed. For me, the .20 calibre is balanced; you can get that hot speed, and you've got a little bit heavier bullet. You can bridge the gap between prairie dogs and coyotes. A 4,000-feet per second, 15-grain bullet out of a 17 Fireball is

probably not the best coyote bullet, whereas the 50-grain 22-250 is awesome, but the 32-grain .20 calibre splits the difference well. And you can use temperature-stable powders like Varget for example, if it's available, to handload.

POWDER IS KEY

"When you're chasing speed, ball powder tends to work well, because it's composed of nitrocellulose and nitroglycerin, making it a double-base powder," said Swerczek. "There's a lot of energy potential in those ball powders, but they're not as temperature stable. And when you're laying out on the prairie, laying down for a couple hours shooting stuff, that temperature-stable powder helps

with ammunition consistency.”

A few years back, Dave Emery, Hornady’s ballistician, found some powders that worked well to achieve impressive velocities without increasing chamber pressure. And the most popular of those, LEVERevolution, was released from Hodgdon as a reloading component.

Swerczek said, “LEVERevolution is a double-based ball powder and because it has two energy sources, it has a lot of energy potential. When you light something on fire, it burns, and as it burns, the rate at which it continues to burn gets faster. That (in simplified terms) is what we’ll call progressivity – how progressive a powder is, how fast it changes burn rate, how fast it increases burn rate as it continues to burn. These powders, like LEVERevolution and Superformance, are very progressive. The way that works in a cartridge case is they start burning and the peak chamber pressure is obtained. And let’s say peak chamber pressure is 60,000 pounds, and because it’s changing that burn speed so rapidly, it maintains 60,000 pounds of pressure for a longer duration of time. You don’t get



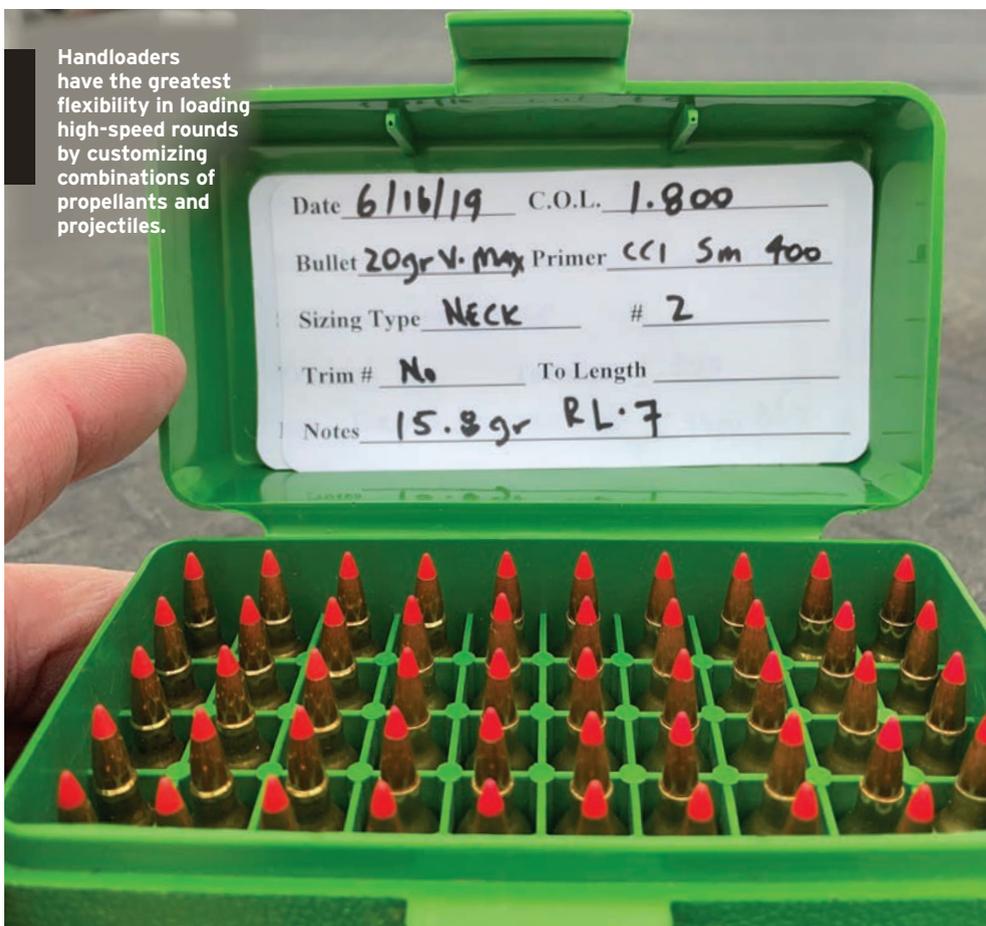
All the cartridges capable of reaching the 4,000-feet per second level are best suited for varmint and predator hunting.

any more pressure than the peak pressure of 60,000 pounds, but the bullet was worked on by those 60,000 pounds for a longer duration. And that’s how you achieve those high velocities with LEVERevolution and Superformance. That makes sense. Generally speaking, ball powders, because they’re double based, and they’re more progressive than a single-base stick powder, will achieve higher velocities.”

YOUR CHOICE

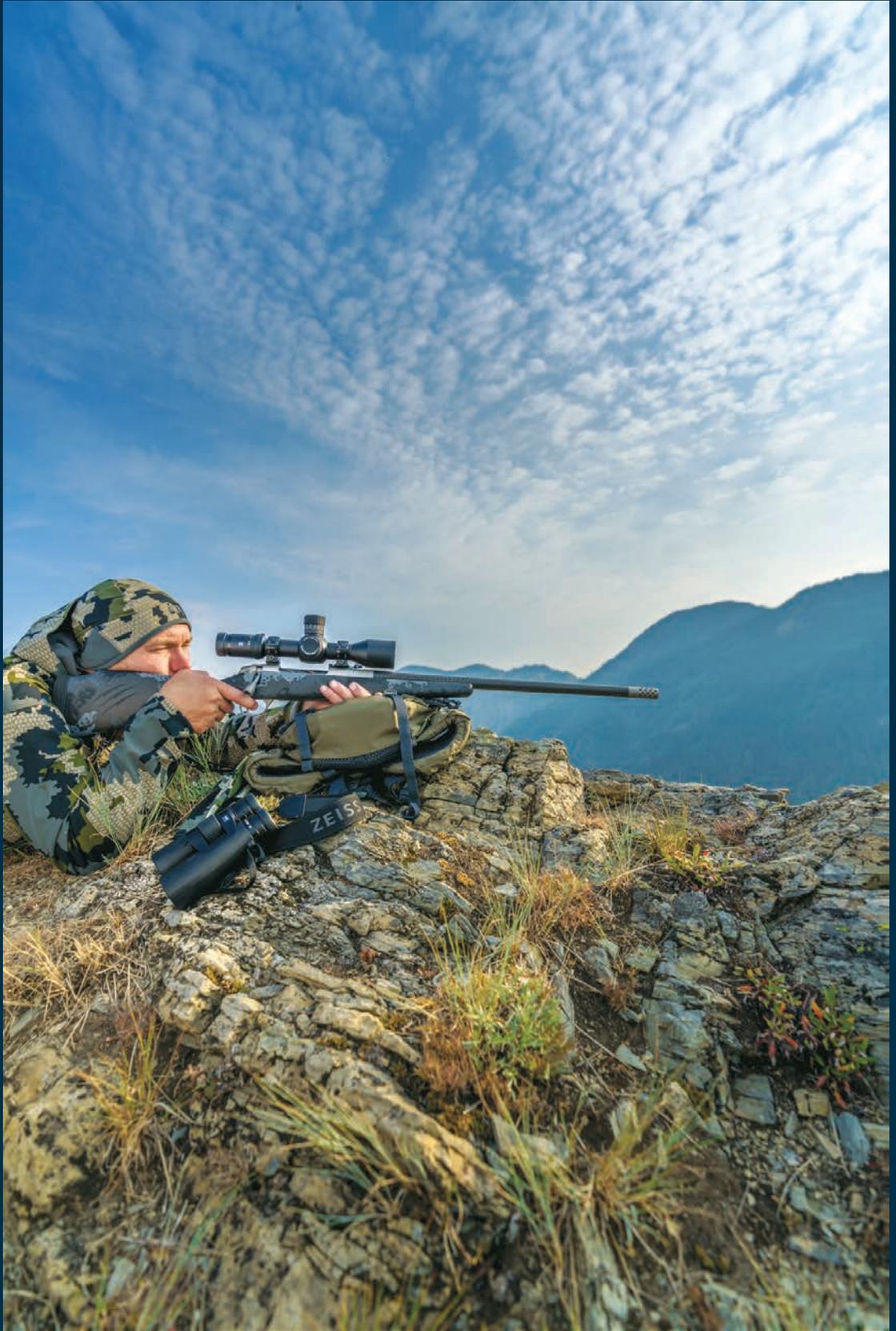
Taking the time and trouble to get to 4,000 feet per second is a big achievement. For folks who want a round which will achieve 4K speeds and beyond, there is an excellent selection of rounds to choose from. And whether you handload or buy factory ammunition, there are plenty of options for your specific application. 

Handloaders have the greatest flexibility in loading high-speed rounds by customizing combinations of propellants and projectiles.



CALCULATING BULLET RPM

The spin rate or revolutions per minute of a fired bullet is important for both terminal performance on varmints and for accuracy. But it’s a balancing act. The faster a bullet spins, the more spectacular are its effects on varmints. However, maximum accuracy is often found at rpms which are lower, and just enough to properly stabilize the bullet. You can calculate a bullet’s rpm by using this simple formula: Muzzle velocity in feet per second x 720 / twist rate in inches = revolutions per minute. So, a 204 Ruger shooting a 32-grain V-max at 4,200 feet per second and having a barrel twist rate of one turn in 12 inches will launch bullets with an rpm of 252,000. And this rpm will degrade little over its entire flight, even at extended distances.



DISPELLING MYTHS

Truth is frequently roadkill on the Internet

BY T.J. SCHWANKY

All one needs to do is spend an hour on social media and you'll appreciate not only how poorly many shooters understand firearms and ballistics, but how willing people are to argue their point of view. Let's look at few of the more common myths.

THE ENERGY DUMP

Many people are convinced that energy is a killing force. While energy is required for a bullet to expand and penetrate, energy itself does not kill, nor is it a reliable measure of the capability of a cartridge. At one time, bullets all had basically the same construction, so energy was a somewhat reliable measure of how much was required to kill certain sizes of game. But what was being measured was how much energy was required for the bullet to penetrate and expand sufficiently. The larger the animal, the more energy needed to achieve the required penetration. But these now outdated formulas led people to believe that energy itself was responsible for death, not the hole created by the bullet. This in turn led many to believe that the perfect bullet was one which achieved far hide penetration but didn't exit because it expended all its energy. The truth is it ran out

of energy and couldn't penetrate any further. This in no way makes it more deadly than a bullet that passes through.

When shot with standard hunting cartridges, animals die in one of three basic ways: either they bleed to death, they experience organ failure (as with soft tissue hits), or from a major disruption to the central nervous system (as with a brain shot). In the case of soft tissue hits, there is a primary wound channel created by the bullet and there is a secondary or temporary wound channel created by fluid being displaced by the bullet moving through at high speed. As the bullet slows, the secondary wound channel diminishes in size. This is easily observed in ballistic gelatin. There may also be considerable secondary wound channel damage as a result of the bullet fragmenting. More frangible bullets, like cup-and-core designs, run out of energy more quickly as they shed weight, while tougher bullets, like mono-metals, retain weight better and achieve deeper penetration. A 150-grain mono-metal and a cup-and-core of the same calibre shot at identical velocities will have identical muzzle energy, but the mono-metal will achieve deeper penetration be-

cause it retains the bulk of its weight. No, all its energy won't be used up as quickly as the cup-and-core, which sheds weight, and the mono-metal is more likely to pass through, but it is no less deadly than the cup-and-core.

WIND DRIFT

There is a common misconception that bullet weight has a direct correlation to the amount a bullet drifts horizontally in a crosswind; however, it's not that simple. Ballistic coefficient (BC) is the ultimate factor in wind drift, with bullet weight only somewhat irrelevant in how it relates to ballistic coefficient. Two factors come into play here: the first being that BC is basically a measure of aerodynamics and, the more streamlined a bullet is, the less effect the force of wind has on it; but more importantly, the higher the BC, the shorter the time of flight to the target, thus reducing the amount of time wind influences the bullet.

Let's say we take a 180-grain SP InterLock with a G1 ballistic coefficient of .452 and a 178-grain ELD-X with a BC of .552 and we shoot both at 3,000 feet per second in a 20-mile-per-hour crosswind at a target 500 yards away. Many would argue that the heavier bullet will drift less, but the truth is the 180-grain will drift 32.28 inches versus 25.50 inches for the 178-grain bullet. Ballistic coefficient wins. The biggest factor is time of flight, with the ELD-X getting to the target a full tenth of a second faster. That's a tenth of a second less that the ELD-X was exposed to the wind.

BULLETS PENCILING THROUGH

It amazes me the number of shooters who believe that with high-velocity impacts, expanding hunting bullets will pencil right through the animal without expanding. The belief is that the bullet passes through so fast it doesn't have time to expand. This is often associated with mono-metal bullets and a small exit hole is often referenced as conclusive evidence. The truth is, with all expanding bullets, expansion is initiated the instant it strikes the target. The higher the impact velocity, the more rapid and violent the expansion. This has been proven countless times in ballistic gel, and if you've shot mono-metals

RIGHT: A 2x expanded mono-metal bullet, like these .284 slugs, are still only about the size of your baby finger.

BELOW: The author with a cape buffalo in Tanzania, taken with a mono-metal bullet.



much, you'll know your best chance of recovering one is at closer range with a high impact velocity. As for the small exit hole, mono-metals typically expand to double diameter and often make a perfect mushroom, so it's no surprise that exit holes are small. A .30 calibre bullet expanded to twice diameter is still only about the size of your baby finger. Exit hole size means nothing. Larger exit holes just mean the skin tore, not that the bullet expanded to the size of your fist.

FLAT-SHOOTING CARTRIDGES

While most shooters understand the term 'flat-shooting cartridge' means one which has a trajectory that isn't perfectly flat, I've seen many argue that their favourite chambering has

no drop in the first 200 to 300 yards and, in fact, the bullet rises above the muzzle plane. Again, physics would beg to differ. If you hold a rifle perfectly level and send a projectile on its way, that bullet begins to drop the instant it leaves the muzzle, and the rate of drop is identical no matter the bullet weight. We compensate for this by utilizing sights that, while directly on the target, have the barrel angled upward. The bullet never rises above the plane of the muzzle, but it does rise above the target in flight due to the barrel being angled upward. What makes some cartridges flatter shooting than others is time of flight. Remember that gravity works the same on all objects but the amount of time the bullet is subjected to gravity de-



ABOVE: Understanding ballistics is key to proper cartridge selection, shooting long range and compensating for wind.

LEFT: The ballistic coefficient of a bullet is determined primarily by its shape and plays a large role in its time of flight.

termines how far it falls. So, cartridges with higher muzzle velocities utilizing high ballistic coefficient bullets will drop less due to reduced flight times. Physics still applies.

THE ZERO RECOIL RIFLE

There are two types of recoil with firearms. There is actual recoil, which can be calculated by a complex series of equations, or more simply by just plugging your variables into an online calculator. This will give you a value in foot-pounds as to how much recoil a specific load will produce in a specific weight of rifle. It's a useful calculation when comparing different cartridges and weights of rifles. The second type of recoil is what's known

as felt recoil, and there is no way to measure this other than with anecdotal reports. Rifle weight, bullet weight and velocity are the major factors when calculating actual recoil, and amount of powder also plays a smaller role. All things being equal, heavier rifles have less recoil, and using heavier bullets increases recoil. But the fit of the rifle plays a huge role in felt recoil and this is where Internet arguments often begin.

One person may own a 308 that offers them less felt recoil than a 6.5x55 in a rifle of similar weight, but that doesn't mean the 308 has less recoil, it just means that rifle likely fits them better, and that comparison is unlikely to apply to

shooters of different statures. Actual recoil is an accurate measurement, while felt recoil is completely subjective. You'll often hear shooters talk about one cartridge feeling like more of a slow push for recoil and another being extremely sharp and there is a scientific explanation for this. It really depends on the pressure curve of the cartridge. The 6.5 Creedmoor is touted by many for its low recoil, and this is due in part to it having a long pressure curve, rather than a cartridge like the 270WSM which has a relatively short pressure curve. Most shooters would agree that the 270WSM, while not only offering more recoil than a Creedmoor, also a much sharper punch. With all this said, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction and that is recoil. No cartridge or standard hunting rifle is recoil free.

THE 6.5 CREEDMOOR IS THE BEST CARTRIDGE

This one is a bit tongue-in-cheek, but you don't have to read many posts on social media to see that most people love what they shoot and freely ignore the ballistics associated with it. While people are blinded by their love for certain cartridges, the 6.5 Creedmoor could be the most misunderstood of all and I'm not certain why.

I've been shooting a Creedmoor for close to a dozen years and had one when only one rifle company had a factory chambering. I looked at the ballistics and thought it would be a great low-recoil, medium-range hunting cartridge and I was right, it is. But as the popularity of this cartridge grew, so too did the myths surrounding it. Today, it's hard to be in the practical camp. Instead, you must believe it's a poor choice for anything bigger than coyotes or it's a great 1,000-yard elk cartridge. As with most things on social media, the truth lies somewhere in the middle. I can honestly say I've never fallen in love with a particular cartridge and have always let ballistics guide me when looking at intended usage. Most seasons I'll shoot rifles in a half-dozen chamberings and I'm fully aware of what each is capable of and, more importantly, what they are not. Ballistics tell the tale – people just need to learn to understand them. 🍷



SAVAGE CANADA

Touring Savage's rimfire plant
BY JEFF HELSDON

Located in Lakefield, Ont., 15 kilometres north of Peterborough and across the road from the Otonabee River, Savage's Lakefield rimfire plant is the source for the vast majority of Savage's rimfire production worldwide. In its 50-plus-year history, the company that started as Lakefield Arms has seen many changes.

The genesis of the idea to create a Canadian company to manufacture .22 rifles came in 1968 with five people who had experience from the H.W. Cooley Machine and Arms Co. Ltd. prior to its purchase by Winchester. Dave Wilson, Mary DeCarlo, Frank Dempsey, Ernie Braund and Paul Scott started Lakefield Arms Ltd. in 1969. The original 18,000-square-foot plant in Lakefield was the only Canadian-owned gun manufacturer at the time. The original products were the Mark II bolt-action rifle and the Mark III semi-automatic 22 LR.

Only a year after Lakefield Arms was started, it was noticed by Alan Mossberg, president of O.F. Mossberg. A synergy was found, as Mossberg was looking for better access to the Canadian market and Lakefield was looking for a way to

expand. As a result, Lakefield started assembling the Mossberg Model 500 pump-action shotgun under license in its plant. After a year, the Model 500s shipped in Canada were sold under the name Lakefield Mossberg. There were also .22s produced under that name.

A few model changes took place in the early years. In 1972, a Mark I Plinker single shot was introduced. Following the closure of the Cooley plant in Coburg, Ont., Lakefield purchased the machinery used to manufacture the Cooley Model 64 semi-automatic .22 rifle. The Lakefield Mark III was replaced with what became the known as the Lakefield Model 64B.

Lakefield also distributed a line for Marlin, known as Marlin-Glenfield in Canada. These guns were produced with birch stocks instead of walnut. This part of the business was sold after 10 years.

Just four years after the company started, more space was needed, and a new building was built on Water Street. Exports to the European and Australian markets started in the early 1980s, and to the United States in 1988.

A few ownership changes took

place over the years. Toronto-based Enterprise Canada Management Ltd. purchased the company in 1989. Al Taylor, one of the partners in Enterprise Canada, came to Lakefield as the plant manager. In 1995, the plant was sold to Savage Arms. At the time, Ron Coburn was president of Savage, and it was owned by Challenger International. When Challenger wanted to get out of the gun business, Coburn organized investors and bought Savage Arms. It was sold to ATK (which became Vista Outdoors) in 2013. Vista sold the company to a group of investors organized by Savage Arms president Al Kasper in 2019.

A NEW ERA

With the latest ownership came a new vision and mission for the entire company. The vision is, "To be the most widely used firearms in the world." The mission is, "Bring our customers the innovative products and services that they want, deliver the performance they demand, for every shooter's level and discipline."

Terry McCullough, vice-president and general manager, was proud there was Canadian input into the new vision and mission. "Even the ▶

Canadian folks got their two cents worth in," he said.

When Savage Canada and Savage Arms finished fiscal year 2021, which ended on June 30 for them, it turned out to be the best year for both the entire company and the Canadian division. The goal for the Lakefield plant was to produce 200,000 rifles. The result was 54 per cent above goal, with 306,000 shipped. McCullough said Covid did provide a few hiccups, such as cardboard shortages and some labour issues, but the company ended up hiring 88 people to meet the labour shortage.

He believes Covid is responsible for the increase in sales, with people having more time to shoot during lockdowns. "More and more US gun owners go to the range, and so there's more plinking and target shooting," he said. "Another factor was the price of ammunition. If you are stuck in the house with Covid, you aren't going to shoot \$45 centrefire when you can get low-cost rimfire ammunition like Wildcat or Thunderbolt."

In Canada, this was also seen to some degree. However, McCullough expressed concern about the gun bans that came out after the Nova Scotia shooting, saying, "I'm worried our Model 64 .22s are going to be next."

THE PLANT

The Lakefield plant is 40,000 square feet and produces over 1,000 guns per day.

"The secret of this plant is that people embrace their jobs here. This plant is probably the best workforce I have ever worked with," said McCullough, who has extensive manufacturing plant experience.

Of the 192 employees, about 120 are on the assembly line. There are 20 to 25 skilled trades employees, seven engineers and some office staff. The plant works seven days a week, three shifts per day. Many of the employees have been there more than 10 years.

Ernie Barriage, who oversees international sales, has been there 52 years and is still going. That dates to just after the plant opened, and in its initial location. He originally worked for Lakefield Sales, which was a separate company from Lakefield Arms until Enterprise Canada merged the divisions. Although he isn't working as much as he used to, he continues

Each gun is test fired for accuracy and function via an automated process that ensures consistency. Any barreled actions not making the cut are sent back to find the deficiency.



RIGHT: Automation is a large part of the manufacturing process, but so too is hands-on assembly of the various parts, such as the bolt.



to work because he enjoys it. "You have to be doing something, so I might as well do this," he said.

Director of manufacturing, Dave Myles, has worked at the plant for 42 years, and the list goes on.

THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS

The rifle stocks are purchased completed from manufacturers specializing in this. Menelli, Boyt and USA Wood are the big suppliers who manufacture to the specifications Lakefield requires. Barriage has seen a change over the years from wood stocks to synthetic. He said the price point is a factor, but also a change in the preference of the consumer towards synthetic.

The barrels start as steel rods, which

are drilled, reamed and rifled. A separate line manufactures the action components, which are then assembled, and the bolt handles attached. The action is then attached to the barrel, after which they are blasted with stainless steel shot to give the metal a matte finish. Carbon steel guns are then blued, while stainless guns are obviously not. A thorough inspection takes place for any damage and the data stamp is checked to ensure the calibre is correct. The gun is then test fired for accuracy and to ensure proper function. The safety is also checked to see if it's operating correctly and then an indicator flag is put in the action to ensure it's empty.

"Guns which don't pass inspection go back in and get corrected," McCullough said. "Maybe they have to put on a new barrel or there's an issue in the action that has to be corrected."

The barrel and action are then fitted to the stock, the gun is cleaned and oiled and put in a box to ship.

THE GUNS

All of Savage's rimfire guns, both in .22 and .17 calibres, except for the magnum series, are produced in the Lakefield plant.

The main production items are the original bolt-action Mark II and the semi-automatic Model 64. One change has been the addition of Savage's trademark AccuTrigger to both

lines. A wide variety of stock options are available for both.

The newer A Series semi-automatic and B Series bolt-action are also produced in the plant. At the time those guns were introduced, there wasn't a design engineer in Lakefield. Now, there are two. Although the guns were designed by engineers in Savage's plant in the US, it was done with input from staff in Lakefield.

The Rascal is the first new gun that was entirely designed at the Lakefield plant. Introduced 13 years ago, the Rascal is a single-shot with a shorter 11.25-inch length of pull, designed for young shooters. Although there are more stock options now, the original concept was synthetic stocks with bright colours like red, blue, pink, purple, orange and yellow to appeal to youth.

Most years, the design team is coming up with one or two new models per year. For 2022, there will be new options in the A and B Series Precision guns. These guns are designed for competitors in the rimfire precision

series. The new models will offer carbon fiber-wrapped barrels and an MDT adjustable chassis. The chassis systems are made in Chilliwack, BC. Barrels are manufactured in Lakefield and then shipped to Grey Birch Solutions near Orillia, Ont., for carbon wrapping. McCullough said this is a 100 per cent Canadian gun. Watch for a review of these models in an upcoming edition of the Canadian Firearms Journal later in the year.

The emphasis of these guns is on having the correct balance, according to Myles. With competitors having to rest their guns on different objects in the various shooting positions, he said balance is important.

The Savage Lakefield plant is a gold sponsor of the Canadian Rimfire Precision Series. The plant also has a team with staff members that competes in the series.

THE FUTURE

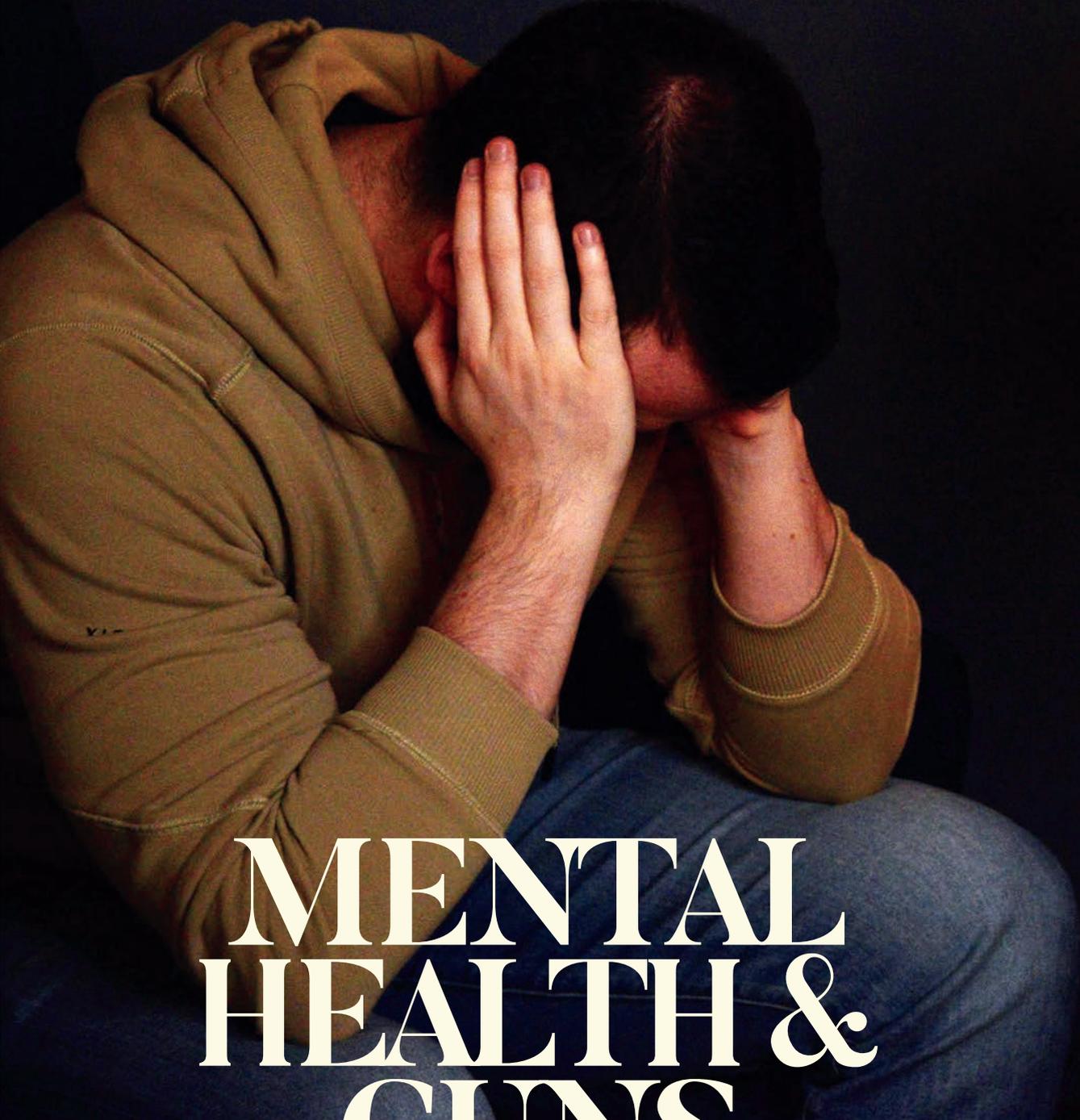
With a focus on advanced manufacturing, the Lakefield plant has come a long way from the milling machines used when it opened. Under new ownership as part of Savage Arms, there is an emphasis on quality. "One of our goals is to get away from, 'Savage Arms is a great gun for the money,' to, 'Savage Arms is a great gun,'" McCullough said. "We're always improving." 🏆



ABOVE: Barrels with the receiver attached ready to go on to the next step in the process.

RIGHT: A display of some of the more than 80 different models manufactured in the Lakefield plant.





MENTAL HEALTH & GUNS

One person's journey towards healing
BY TYSON SOMMERVILL



Recently, someone on a Facebook gun group created a post discouraging people from seeking mental health help because of red flag laws, which has prompted me to write an article that makes me uncomfortable. It appears that a sizeable portion of Canadian firearms owners are of the belief that seeking mental health help will result in the confiscation of their firearms. That is not necessarily true, because I still have all of mine.

As we find ourselves deep in winter, when seasonal affective disorder is at its highest, my hope is that by sharing my ongoing journey this article can be a small part of a much larger conversation. There is also a chance, and hope, this may be the thing that encourages someone to finally get around to booking an appointment or asking their doctor some questions they've been meaning to ask for a long time. I find mental health is one of those things, like personal finance, that people just don't talk about, but should.

MY HISTORY

Everyone has their own version of history, and how I remember my childhood is likely quite different from how it actually was. It is my belief that my memory is somewhat tainted by a brain that doesn't produce enough serotonin. As best I can recall, I've been somewhat prone to melancholy and anxiety my entire life. I can't blame my parents, they're divorced and both remarried to great people. As a result, I now have four wonderful and encouraging parents (seriously, they read everything I write.)

I got my first firearm at the age of 12, when my stepdad and I restored an old Cooye. It was kept locked up and I only used it when supervised. I got my minor PAL at 14, then cashed it in for a normal PAL at 18 and got my restricted license shortly after. Working at the now-closed Wholesale Sports, I quickly amassed a collection of firearms. I found that despite my bouts of depression, I still enjoyed range trips and hunting, it was one thing that always cheered me up and was something I could look forward to with optimism. It wasn't until my mid 20s that I sought help, and it was a disaster. >

ASKING FOR HELP

I first consulted my doctor, who was quick to write me a prescription, but that just gave me a daily 2 p.m. headache. I spoke to him again, went off the meds and he set me up with the in-house therapist, who struck me as a snake oil salesman. The therapist asked me a bunch of questions, never wrote anything down and then forgot what I had said. As in, "So, it was tough for you being an only child."

"I just told you I have a massive family..."

He also desperately tried to sell me on transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) which, as he explained it, is hitting my brain with a powerful magnetic field. He claimed it could cure depression, anxiety, cancer, Alzheimer's, insomnia and just about every ill you can imagine, all for the low price of... I left and didn't come back.

That put me off for years, until more recently when I started having marital trouble, likely the result of my condition. I once again sought help. First it was through my employer's benefits and a consultation via e-mail. Pretty much everything I said was met with, "Well, you're allowed to feel that way," which I didn't find helpful.

After that, I sought help via Alberta Health Services. It started with a phone interview and then after much waiting, I was set up to meet in-person. It was also a disaster. I was set up with a man who attributed all my problems to what any of us would call sinful living. "If you've ever drank alcohol, looked at dirty pictures, womanized, lied or cheated at cards, that's what's causing your problems. I'm not judging, but I've never done those things and I'm fine." Which is interesting, because I can't say I live a particularly sinful life and my problems seem to predate my access to sinfulness. It felt like a judgemental chat with my vegan aunt. Also, the people I know who do all those things seem pretty happy (that's a joke, people who overindulge in risky behaviour are sometimes masking issues.) So, I decided to give up again. At this point, it's important that I say, at no point did anyone ask me about firearms.

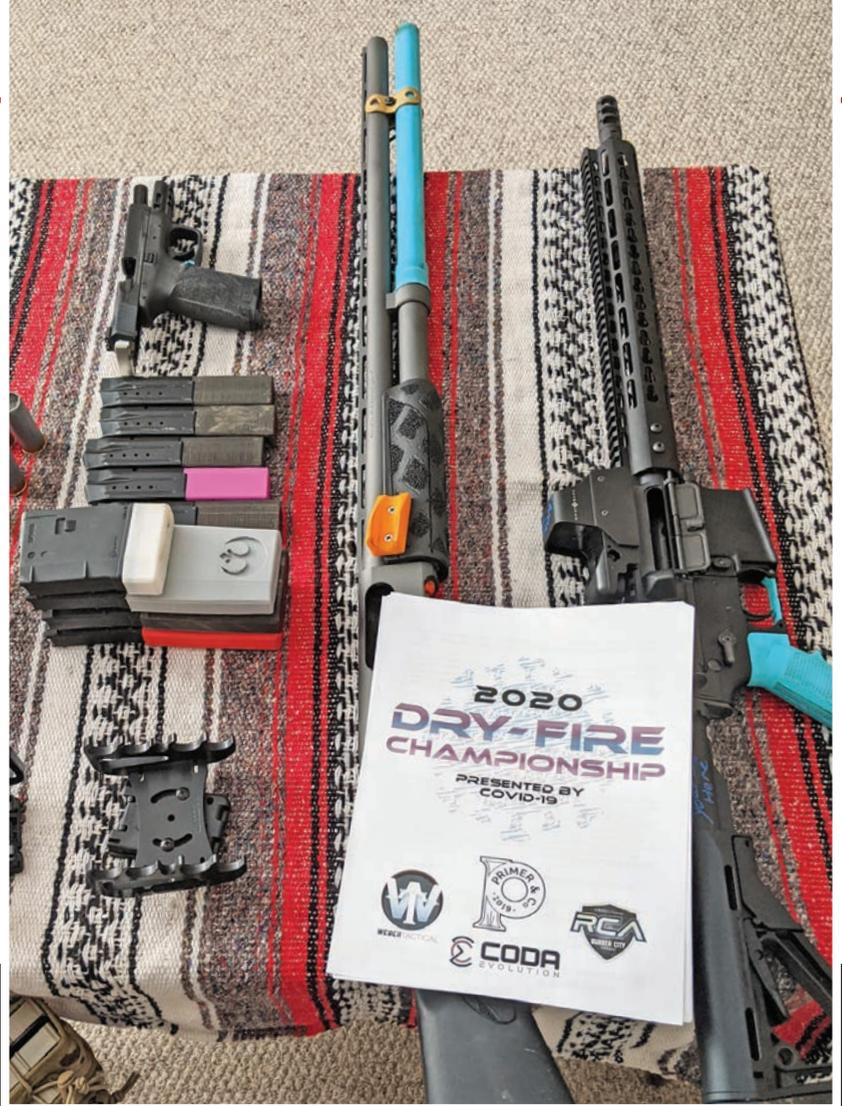
SUCCESS

Thanks for suffering through the

preamble and set up. I just wanted to highlight that it's normal to try a few avenues before you find what works. I have a friend, who is very open about going to therapy, and she knew things were unravelling a bit for me in life. She informed me that she'd gone through a few therapists before finding one she got along with and had a

style she liked. She encouraged me to keep trying.

I didn't want to go the same routes I had before, I didn't want to deal with all that again. Fortunately, I was in a better place financially and had better work benefits. This allowed me to go to a private counselling centre. I had been avoiding them because I



TOP: When lockdowns hit, someone on Instagram came up with this fun competition to help keep us all sane.

LEFT: The reality is, medical and mental health professionals are exactly that - professionals.

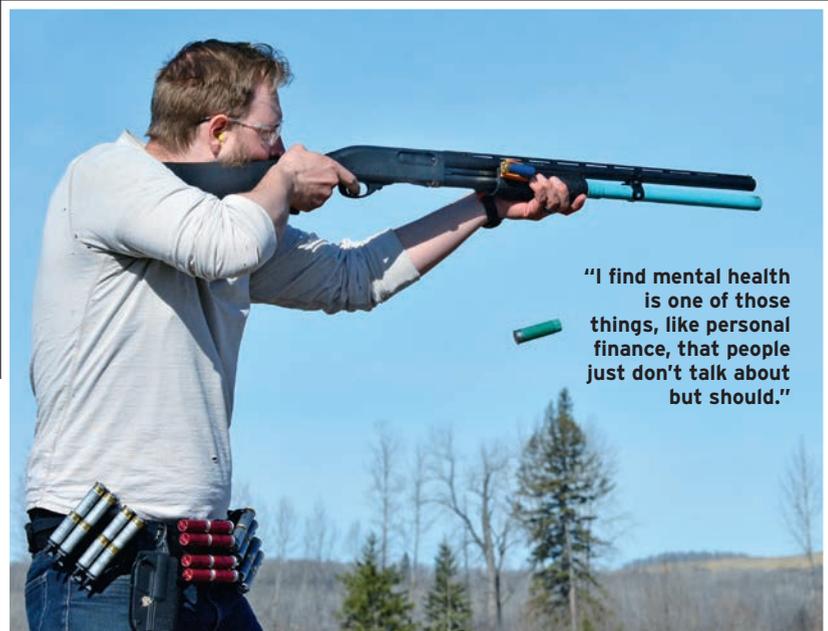
wasn't in a hurry to risk my money on another flop. Unfortunately, it appears that like many things, you get what you pay for. The individual I was set up with was fantastic from the start, but she was adamant that if I felt she wasn't a good fit, she would help me find another therapist, no hurt feelings. I decided to keep seeing her. Even when my annual benefits ran out, I kept paying out of pocket because I felt it was worth it. Make no mistake, it's a lot of money, but it's money well spent when you find a good therapist.

Like many gun owners, I was of course very hesitant because of my fears of having my firearms taken away, but it was getting to the point that I had to do something. For the first few sessions, I avoided talking about that side of my life. I didn't mention my writing much and any talk of hobbies was about fishing, hiking and outdoors "stuff." Eventually, we built up a bit of trust and I let it slip that I had a competition on the weekend. She asked what kind of competition and the door was irreversibly opened. Turns out, she saw the value in it, and instead of, "Why do you have these? You need to get rid of them," I got, "Well it's good that you have a hobby you can share with friends." It's been nearly a year and she has helped me through my separation, a career change, a pandemic and the 2021 election (not a joke, I was, coincidentally, in her office that day expressing my anxiety.)

I'm still me, and I still feel down sometimes, but looking at the peaks and valleys, the valleys aren't as deep or as wide as they used to be, and that was well worth the effort to get here. The progress I've made has made me a big proponent of mental health and I made a conscious decision to be a little more open about it. I've found a lot more people than I ever imagined also go to therapy or take anxiety meds, and the people who don't seem encouraging.

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

I reached out to two professionals while working on this article, an MD friend and fellow 3-gunner, and my therapist, to ask about firearms confiscation. My therapist said she couldn't help me much, as it's not something



"I find mental health is one of those things, like personal finance, that people just don't talk about but should."

that she has ever dealt with, which tells us quite a lot, actually. As for my MD friend, he gave me a very detailed response, and as I suspected a lot of it is about nuance. The long and short of it is, if you are an immediate danger to yourself or others, especially to the point of being in an ER room, they can hold you there for 24 hours and reassess, which means you won't have access to your firearms anyway, so confiscation is of no benefit to anyone. After that, you would be assessed and a decision made, and even then, it's a nuanced decision about if you are a danger to yourself or others. Throughout his correspondence with me, he was adamant that it is not a default action to have firearms confiscated and it seems to only happen in scenarios where we can probably all agree it should happen.

The reality is, medical and mental health professionals are exactly that – professionals. They are highly trained and don't want to do things to make your life worse. If firearms are a part of your life, as they are mine, and they provide you with some form of joy, it's likely you will be allowed to keep them and be encouraged to continue using them in a safe and legal fashion, as I have been.

You are under no obligation to tell them anything you don't want to tell them, so you can just not mention your firearms ownership, but I do encourage you to be completely honest. After all, if you are a danger to yourself, or others, it may be a good

idea to have someone hold onto your guns somewhere else, at least for a while. The sad reality is that most gun owners are men, often somewhat conservative, many of whom are on the older side, and this is a demographic that does not want to talk about their feelings. Men aged 35 to 55 have the highest rates of suicide in Canada (according to Wikipedia) and the reality is firearms are very effective for that. If you think you might need help, I encourage you to seek it, and if possible, can we all agree to be a little more open about it? 🍷

WALK THE TALK AMERICA

An organization leading the way in bridging the gap between mental health and responsible firearm ownership is Walk The Talk America. Started and now operated by firearm industry leaders, they believe that by improving the quality and availability of mental health resources to gun owners, suicide by firearm can be reduced. They work at educating mental health professionals about gun culture and breaking negative stigmas around mental health for gun owners. They are US-focused, but their website includes free, anonymous, online mental health assessments. www.walkthetalkamerica.org.



MOSSBERG'S PATRIOT RIFLE

Choice is everything
BY NORMAN GRAY

In March of 1919, founder Oscar Mossberg and his sons, Iver and Harold, manufactured the Brownie pistol, Mossberg's first firearm. This .22 calibre, four-shot pocket pistol sold for \$6 and, during its 13-year run, sold over 32,000 units. Oscar understood that a good value was essential to his customers and sold the Brownie at a price everyone could afford. Oscar was also very family oriented and rewarded his employees with company-sponsored events that boosted their morale. This management style would fuel Mossberg's success for all the years to come, with 2019 marking the company's 100th anniversary.

RAISED ON MOSSBERG

My history with Mossberg began as a teenager; I grew up hunting fur, feathers and clays on the weekends with my dad. Even though he passed

in 2000, his Mossberg 500 shotgun allows me to remember all those great memories of him. My latest addition is a Mossberg Patriot rifle chambered in 300 Winchester Magnum. I chose the 300 Win. Mag. largely because it's a .30 calibre bullet, thus providing an incredibly diverse selection of manufactured and handloaded ammunition. My late mentor, Robert (Bob) Shell, taught me handloading from a different point of view. He said, "Some people choose to load inside a box, while others throw the box away." He taught me how to get the right

performance from my loads in this calibre. Either way, manufactured or loaded ammunition isn't much good without an accurate platform to send that bullet to its destination.

PICK YOUR PATRIOT

The Patriot line offers you choices, starting with their Night Train, Youth, Predator, LR Hunter or factory scoped models. Then pick a calibre from over a dozen standard and a few newer calibres, such as the 350 Legend and 450 Bushmaster. I don't have enough time to cover choices in the finish, stock materials and barrel lengths, so I encourage you to visit mossberg.com after reading this article. My Mossberg Patriot is matte blue/black with a synthetic Kryptek Highlander camo stock. It's worth noting that Mossberg no longer manufactures this Kryptek Highlander model, but if you appreciate it as I do, you may be able to find it new or used from online retailers.

MATERIALS MATTER

The battle over wood and synthetic is ongoing, and while I love beautifully finished wood furniture on a rifle, I believe it depends on your hunting conditions. I have hunted Alaska and northern Arizona, and the weather can be unforgiving at both ends of the spectrum, so my material choice was clear. The matte black finish is an excellent ally against rain and snow and it's non-reflective, and as any woman will tell you, black goes with >



TOP: The bolt is a two-lug design with a recessed face and a plunger type ejector..



LEFT: The Patriot rifle's right side is functional, with an easily accessible safety and generously sized bolt handle.

everything. Mossberg has incorporated many extras that you see on higher-end rifles as standard. The barrel has 9.5-inch flutes on the upper half of the barrel – this aids in cooling and subtracts a minute amount of overall weight. The barrel is free-floated to improve barrel harmonics. The muzzle’s crown is also recessed to protect it from becoming damaged and thus causing a bullet to veer off course.

On the right side of the receiver is the safety lever; safe is to the rear and push forward to fire. The left side holds a push-down bolt removal lever, with a metal ear protecting it from being pressed accidentally. The bolt is spirally fluted, with the lower surface of the flute blued, and the top surface is polished for a nice effect. The round bolt handle is large, with a knurled edge for a secure grip with or without gloves. The polymer three-round detachable magazine is sturdy, and although metal rusts, polymer doesn’t have the strength of metal, so it’s a tradeoff. Extra magazines are essential, as a lost or broken magazine will handicap your hunt quickly, and an extra will allow a faster reload if necessary.

Mossberg’s distinctive skeletonized Lightning Bolt Action (LBA) trigger system is the finishing touch. The LBA allows the user to adjust the trigger pull without a gunsmith. A standard screwdriver enables the user to adjust the LBA trigger from two pounds (0.90 kilograms) to seven pounds (3.17 kilograms.) The LBA trigger’s sear engagement design offers a truly crisp, creep-free trigger, optimizing accuracy. The LBA trigger blade blocks the sear from releasing the striker unless the blade is fully depressed, even at the lightest adjustment setting. The trigger assembly is machined from aircraft-grade aluminum, then hard-coat anodized to military specifications, preventing corrosion and minimizing wear over the rifle’s life.

OPTICS READY

The Patriot is shipped with Weaver-style bases and accepted Hawke’s Endurance 2.5-10x50 LR scope with no issues. This choice will do very nicely for beginner and experienced hunters. As need or skills increase, a larger optic can be mounted. This magnification range would be the minimum I would use, as the 300 Win. Mag. has a point-

blank range out to 300 yds (274 metres) on big game. It is easily effective to 1,000-plus yards (914.4 metres) with the proper optics and training. I enjoyed using this optic during accuracy testing, as Hawke’s reticle was clear and bright, with no unnecessary clutter.

RANGE DAY

As I write this, ammunition is at a premium and often hard to find. If you handload, you also know components are scarce. I’ve seen this

before and I like to keep a good stock of ammunition for this very reason, fortunately having some of Hornady’s top-tier ammunition for chronographing and accuracy testing. The numbers attest that the Mossberg Patriot enjoyed the Hornady Full Boar more than the Hornady Custom, but I likely need to keep looking for a good factory load. Handloading has yet to occur and is, of course, essential when you want to wring every bit of accuracy out of a rifle.

FACTORY AMMUNITION CHRONOGRAPH AND ACCURACY RESULTS

	AV (FPS)	SD	AG (IN)
HORNADY CUSTOM 165-GRAIN BTS P	3,010	63.0	4.1
HORNADY FULL BOAR 165-GRAIN GMX	3,106	21.3	3.0

NOTES: Velocity figures are derived from a 10-round average recorded on a Caldwell G2 Ballistic Precision Chronograph placed 15 feet (4.57 metres) from the muzzle. Abbreviations: (AV): average velocity; (SD): standard deviation; (AG): average group; (BTSP): boat tail soft point; (GMX): monolithic ballistic tip.



Mossberg’s Patriot rifle breaks down into typical bolt-action components.

PARTING SHOT

I’ve used Mossberg firearms for a good part of my life and still do; I feel this makes my opinion seasoned regarding their quality from then to now. The draw, in this case, comes from the quality and value you get without breaking your budget. They never forget that their customer base is hard-working people. The Patriot is a design-driven rifle that’s easy to operate and only gets better with use – the bolt became smoother and the trigger broke at a crisp 2.5 pounds (1.13 kilograms.) I was happy with those results. Accuracy is something you have to work on with any firearm, and even though it preferred the Hornady Full Boar, either round would have filled your freezer at 300 yards. That being said, I have no issues with this Patriot rifle or the Hawke optic, they performed flawlessly. Mossberg firearms give you precisely what you pay for and a little extra thrown in for good measure. 🍀

MOSSBERG PATRIOT

CALIBRE: 300 Winchester Magnum

TWIST: One in 10 inches

CAPACITY: Three plus one

ACTION: Bolt action

SAFETY: Manual

BARREL TYPE: Fluted, threaded

BARREL LENGTH: 24 inches

BARREL FINISH: Matte blued

STOCK: Synthetic

LOP: Fixed 13.75 inches

SIGHT/BASE: Weaver-style bases

WEIGHT: 6.5 pounds (2.94 kilograms)

LENGTH: 44.75 inches (113.665 centimetres)

PRICE: \$500 to \$900, depending on features

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THE TSS REVOLUTION

More shot, higher density, deeper penetration

BY JEFF HELSDON



Imagine shot which can transform a .410 Bore shotgun into a turkey or goose gun. With Tungsten Super Shot (TSS) giving #9 pellets the punch of #4 shot, it may just be possible. However, to fully understand the concept, it's necessary to understand the physics behind TSS and look at its development.

With any ammunition, energy is a product of mass and velocity. Since the advent of alternative shot products, one of the big criticisms of steel has been it doesn't have the same density as lead and therefore lacks the energy and stopping power. The mass of lead is 11.34 grams per cubic centimetre, as compared to steel at 7.84 grams per cubic centimetre. To compensate for this, manufacturers designed steel shotgun shells to produce more velocity.

Fast forward a decade and the search for alternative metals for shotgun pellets produced products such as bismuth and Hevi-shot. Bismuth weighs in at 9.8 grams per cubic centimetre and Hevi-shot at 12. In recent years, the search for lead alternatives has continued as more jurisdictions have banned lead ammunition.

In an era when it's usually the major manufacturers with huge budgets driving product development, TSS is an exception because it started with grassroots reloaders.

TSS DEVELOPMENT

The late Kyle Smith coined the term TSS and started experimenting with it as a steel shot alternative for waterfowl hunting. Other reloaders followed, including Hal Abbott, who looked at TSS for turkey loads. His efforts started in 2006 and as he shared his success in online forums, other reloaders began using it.

TSS shone in many areas. First, with a density of 18 grams per cubic centimetre, it meant that turkey hunters could move to a much smaller shot size. Smaller shot size means there are more pellets per ounce. This gave them a denser pattern, increasing the number of pellets that strike the relatively small target of a turkey's head and decreasing the chance of a wounded bird.

In a media interview with Petersen's Hunting, Abbott explained pellet lethality is determined by energy per surface area. This isn't a function of just weight, but weight per area. As a result, when two pellets weigh the

RIGHT: 1.5 ounces of #4 lead shot (left) beside 1.5 ounces of #9 TSS shows the difference in pellet count.



same and have similar energy, but one is smaller, the smaller one will penetrate further because the energy is focused on a smaller surface area.

I haven't shot a turkey with #9 shot, but I have taken several with heavier-than-lead loads, including TSS, in larger shot sizes. There is a notable difference in the knock-down power, and this has been observable in some cases. Think of this example: If you were to have two brick-sized objects thrown at you at the same speed, one made from wood and the other from clay, the hit would be harder from the clay brick. Heavier shot gives the pellets more energy to break bones and penetrate further.

Smaller gauges also have less recoil. Having patterned more turkey loads than most hunters, and in both 12 and 20 gauge, I can attest to the recoil of the 20 gauge being considerably less than its larger counterpart. This is something to consider for the recoil weary, or a person looking for a lighter gun.

I had the chance to experiment with Federal TSS ammunition in a 20 gauge with a combination of #7 and #9 pellets. These shells produced the densest pattern I have ever shot, including lead shot patterns from a 12 gauge that featured higher payloads and pellet counts. The ability to use #9 shot has resulted in making the .410 an effective shotgun for turkey hunting. Currently, this is a growing trend in the US, but is not allowed in many Canadian jurisdictions.

In regard to the patterning of shotgun shells, one of the goals is to avoid shot deformation, as this results in fewer uniform patterns. Therefore, shotgun shells designed for the clay sports often feature harder lead shot.

The same is true in the turkey-hunting world. A uniform pattern, and one that holds together at longer ranges, is usually the goal. Using harder TSS shot, turkey hunters can get better patterns. As a result, they can increase their range. I would caution, when using any shotgun shell-choke-gun combination, the hunter should always pattern to determine the maximum range and not go beyond it.

A COSTLY PROPOSITION

The downfall of TSS is it isn't cheap. Prices can be more than \$10 per shell. However, as a gun store salesman once said, "If, after missing, you were given another chance for \$10, would you take it?"

Looking at it another way, one of the pinnacles of turkey hunting is a Super Slam. This involves shooting a turkey in every US state with a season. It involves a lot of travel and hunting in new places. Those who achieve it generally visit each state for a short period and are banking on success. I read a book about those who have achieved this goal and the majority of them were shooting TSS.

THE BIG PLAYERS JUMP ON BOARD

Both Winchester and Federal manufactured premium heavier-than-lead products for more than a decade. Federal launched its HEAVYWEIGHT turkey loads in 2005. This was a tungsten-based product with a density of 15 grams per cubic centimetre. Federal started offering TSS loads in 2018.



LEFT: TSS has made smaller gauges more deadly for turkey hunting. Besides making the .410 practical for turkey hunting, where legal, it also lets a 12 gauge reach out to new distances.

“Due to the popularity of TSS with handloaders and some small ammunition shops, we decided to upgrade our HEAVYWEIGHT lineup to become HEAVYWEIGHT TSS,” said JJ Reich, senior media consultant for Federal. “It has been extremely popular, and we have been growing the line over the past four years.”

The company’s turkey line-up now includes TSS turkey loads, both loaded as pure TSS pellets and as a combination with lead pellets in Third Degree.

On the waterfowl front, Federal is offering Black Cloud TSS, which has a combination of TSS and Flitestopper steel pellets.

Apex Ammunition was also a pioneer with TSS. This company traces its roots to waterfowling. Company co-founders Jason Lonsberry, Jared Lewis and Nick Charney were waterfowl hunting in January 2017 when a shot at a lone mallard showed the effectiveness of TSS. Charney had been experimenting with handloading waterfowl loads with

tungsten shot and had some of his handloads with him.

“Jared and I somehow missed,” said Lonsberry. “But Nick held off until we finished, then proceeded to stone the bird at 60 yards with his TSS. We were so floored by that shot, we pooled our savings and started our own Tungsten Super Shot ammunition company a month later.” Today, Apex offers TSS loads for a variety of purposes, including waterfowl, turkey and deer. It currently is not available in Canada.

Winchester offered its Xtended Range line around the same time Federal started with HEAVYWEIGHT. This was eventually dropped with the popularity of the Long Beard lead loads. Browning, which is loaded by Winchester, added TSS Tungsten Turkey in the last few years. Winchester brought back its Xtended range load, but with bismuth.

And of course, the HEVI-shot company was built on heavier-than-lead products. Its original shot came in at a weight of 12 grams per cubic centimetre. The company now offers a variety of loads, including a TSS turkey load at 18 grams per cubic centimetre. Remington also offers TSS turkey loads in .410 Bore, 20 gauge and 12 gauge.

Will tungsten be the next thing for rifle hunting ammunition in a world searching for lead alternatives? That’s highly unlikely, as controlled expansion gives hunting bullets their effectiveness and tungsten doesn’t expand. In fact, military tungsten loads are considered armour-piercing ammunition.

For those looking for the most efficient turkey ammunition, give TSS a try. As for using a .410 to shoot a goose, it may now be possible, but given the fact many more shells are shot at geese than turkeys, it isn’t economically feasible. 



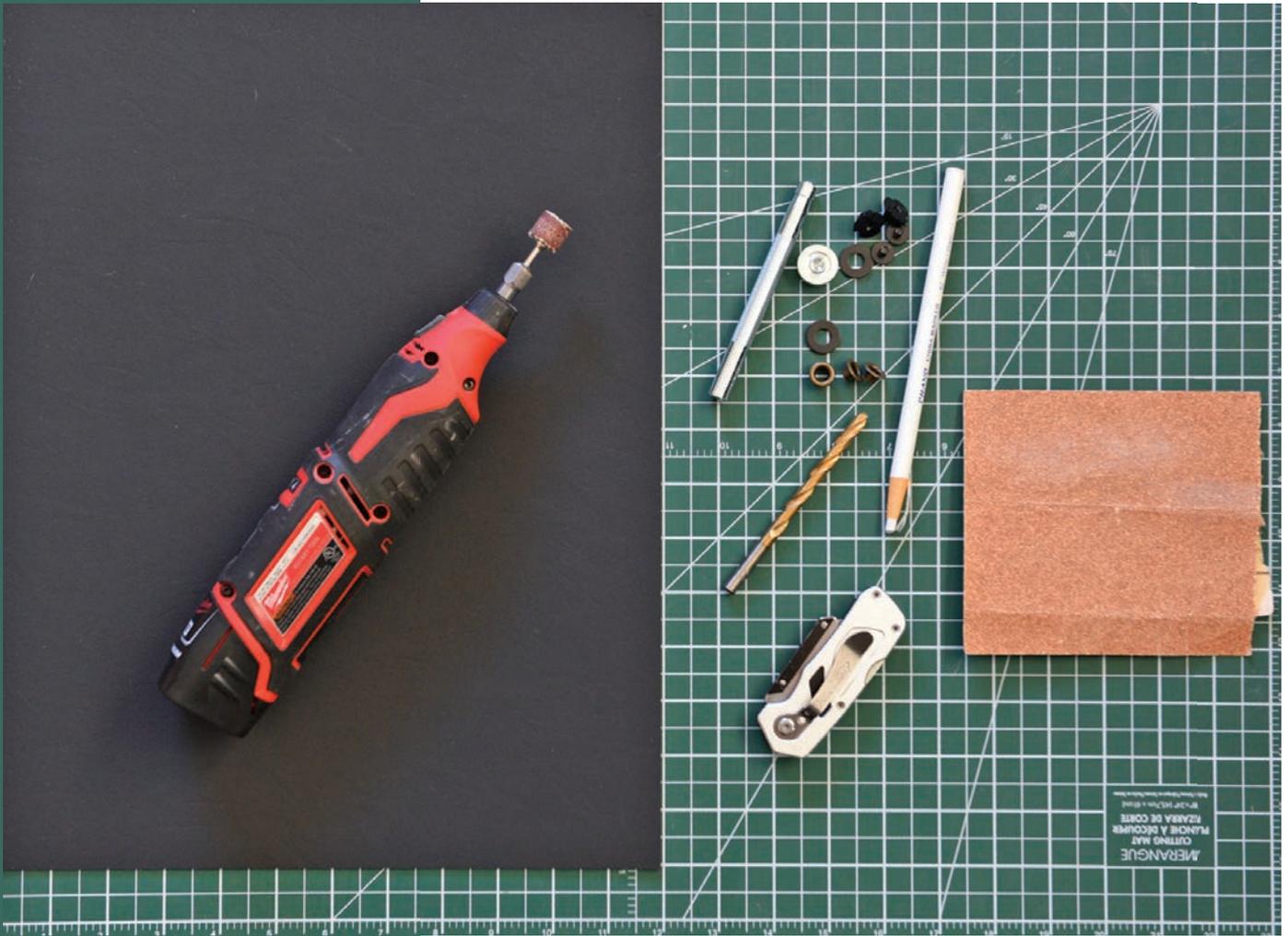
LEFT: A turkey's head is a small target, making a dense pattern a necessity.

MAKING A KYDEX



PISTOL HOLSTER

It's easier than it looks
BY LOWELL STRAUSS



Tools and materials for making a Kydex holster. There are other tools that may be substituted, but these are some of the ones the author used.

I appreciate quality, handcrafted items, especially those that I've made myself. From a carefully developed handload for the ultimate in precision shooting, to fitting a new custom rifle stock, even building a piece of functional shooting kit, it all brings me great satisfaction. Recently, I've noticed a proliferation of custom Kydex holsters, knife sheaths and a myriad of holders for everyday carry items like multitools, flashlights and more. I wanted a custom holster, so I turned to the Internet and learned how to make one from Kydex.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

Kydex is a type of mouldable thermoplastic made from acrylic-polyvinyl chloride. It combines the best properties of both plastics. The acrylic provides rigidity and formability, while the PVC provides toughness

and chemical resistance. Kydex is sold by the sheet and varies in thickness depending on the application; for sheaths and holsters, that's 1.5 millimetres to 2.5 millimetres (.06 to .09 inches) thick. Many DIYers report two millimetres (.08 inches) is ideal for holsters, but I opted for locally available 1.5-millimetre thickness. A wider selection can be found online, so shop around.

Holsters are a fun and easy beginner project, and I discovered there's not too much of a learning curve. The best part is Kydex is a forgiving material. If the first attempt at moulding the holster isn't successful, reheat and try again. I nailed it on my third attempt. The project requires a few basic tools for cutting, moulding, clamping and finishing the Kydex. I had or improvised everything but the eyelet setter punch, which set me back \$10. The materials for the holster cost another \$15. >

MATERIALS

- Kydex sheet (colour of choice), about eight inches by seven inches fits most standard pistols.
- Belt-mounting hardware
- Fasteners (rivets, eyelet, Chicago screw)

TOOLS

- Utility knife for cutting thermoplastic sheets while cold
- Wood spacers to create a sight channel and backer for belt-mounting hardware
- Drill for creating fastener and hardware holes
- Mallet and eyelet punch (for setting eyelets)
- Screwdriver (for tightening Chicago screws)
- Sandpaper for finishing sharp or rough edges
- Heat-resistant gloves
- Oven or heat gun
- Marker or grease pencil
- Saw (coping saw, jigsaw, bandsaw or cut-off wheel on a Dremel tool)
- Dremel tool (optional) makes quick work of cutting, sanding

SHOP-BUILT KYDEX PRESS

- Foam (closed cell) padding or an old towel (I used scraps of carpet underlay)
- Pieces of plywood, two pieces approximately 12 inches by 12 inches each
- Clamps (for rapid tightening)

NOTE: I had a helper, so I didn't take time to make a proper press. Adding hinges to one side would turn this into a one-person operation.

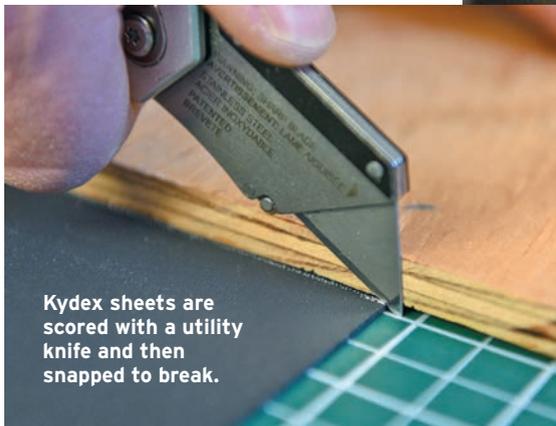
HOLSTER HOW-TO

Step one is creating a holster pattern. The Internet is rich with examples, so after some online inspiration, grab a piece of paper, check the pistol is unloaded and fold the paper to determine the size. Be generous in the pattern, remembering to leave room for fasteners. Removing extra material is easy, but you can't add material to a piece that's too small. Cut the Kydex to a rough shape using a utility knife and a straight edge. Deeply score one side of the sheet and then snap it along the score.

Prepare the pistol for its new custom holster. Lay a strip of wood as high as the front sight, such as a pencil, along the top of the barrel. This creates a channel within the holster that allows the pistol's front sight to slide in freely. On the back, where the belt-mounting hardware will reside, I added popsicle sticks, filling the length and width of the clip on the mould. This creates enough clearance for the fasteners inside the holster, to prevent them rub-

bing on the pistol.

Next, heat the Kydex thermoplastic until it becomes pliable, to about the consistency of a cooked lasagna noodle. A home oven, toaster oven or heat gun all work. When using an oven, pre-heat to about 300 to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and then place the Kydex in the oven for about three to 10 minutes until it's soft and flexible. I found 340 degrees Fahrenheit worked perfectly during my project. Kydex starts to curl, blister and then burn around 400 degrees Fahrenheit, so be careful not to overheat it (which can easily happen using a heat gun). Once it's up to working temperature, wrap it around the prepared pistol like a soft-shell taco (smooth side on the inside). Work quickly. Insert it into the press, clamp and then let it cool to harden. Kydex has a memory, meaning if it doesn't cool enough, it will want to return somewhat to its original shape. Ten minutes of cooling in the press did the trick for me.



Kydex sheets are scored with a utility knife and then snapped to break.



The pistol is prepared by adding wooden spacers for the sight and the mounting hardware, then the heated Kydex is formed around the pistol.

BELOW: Folding hot Kydex into a one-piece holster is akin to making a soft-shell taco.



Pressing the Kydex into the trigger guard forms a detent that creates a positive 'click' when the pistol is inserted, indicating positive retention. This happens when sandwiched between the layers of foam.

Once out of the mould, it's time to trim the excess Kydex. Some folks like to trim the holster to be flush with the barrel and frame. I left mine alone, liking the results I got from the initial forming. I cut out a space around the ejection port using a Dremel with a cut-off wheel. I trimmed to the edge of the trigger guard but not past it, because totally covering the trigger guard is a safety feature. Note: If the holster is for use in competition, be sure you know the rules regarding



LEFT: A homemade Kydex press is made with foam, plywood and quick clamps. Here, the Kydex holster is cooling around the pistol.

BELOW: Out of the mould, the author's first attempt at forming Kydex turned out well.

holster design.

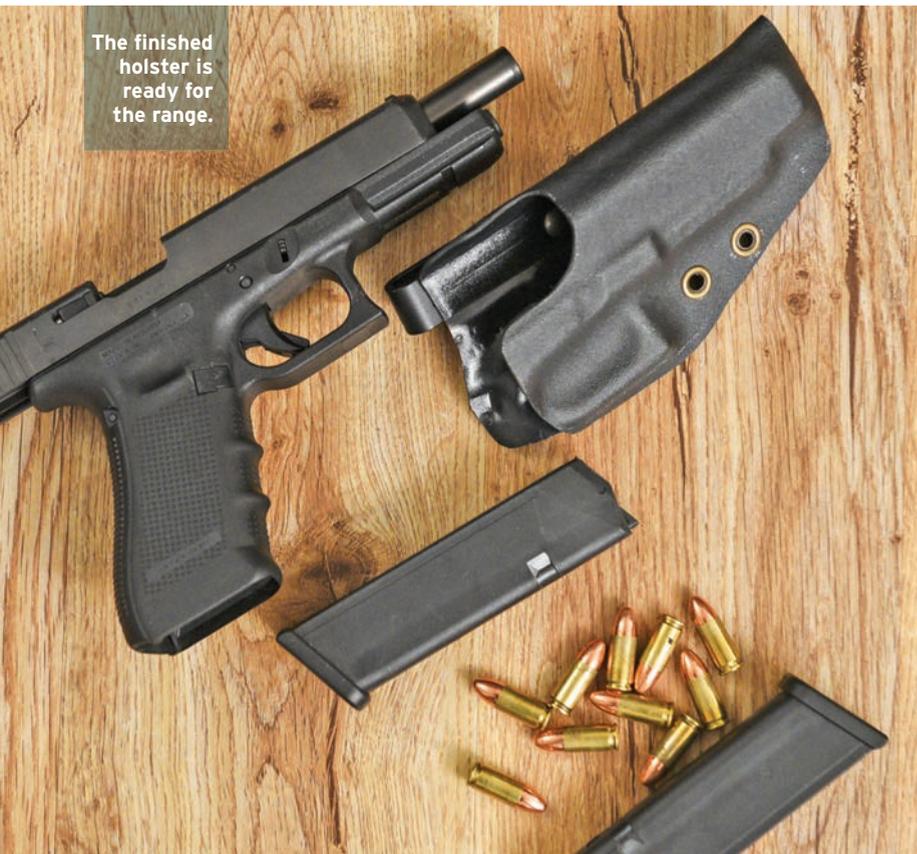
Joining the front and back of the holster together requires fasteners. These can be done with Chicago screws, eyelets or rivets. I liked the look of rivets, so I used them for my holster. Select the correct sized fastener for the thickness of Kydex used in the project. I attached a belt clip with two Chicago screws.

FINISHING

Once the fasteners are installed, it's time to cut off the excess material and smooth the edges using sandpaper. Again, I pressed the Dremel into action, this time with a mini sanding drum. Using painter's tape protects



The finished holster is ready for the range.



hardware during the sanding process. A felt wheel on a Dremel tool makes quick work of sanding and burnishing the edges but be careful, this tool creates a lot of heat and can quickly melt and damage the holster. I rounded off the corners that might catch on my clothing and was pleased with the finished look.

FINAL THOUGHTS

If you want a custom holster or knife sheath, creating one with Kydex is easy to do. I was surprised at the fun and satisfaction of moulding thermoplastic. My holster turned out great – better than I expected! Now not only do I have a custom holster, but I have also tooled up and learned a new skill. I can't wait to get started on my next custom Kydex project, maybe a multi-tool sheath.

Give it a shot. Working with Kydex is easier than it looks. 

SHOT SHOW

— 2022 —

The trade show that mostly happened

BY AL VOTH



As most readers will know, it's long been traditional in the firearm industry to make all major product announcements in mid-January to coincide with the Shooting Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show. That pattern has seen some huge disruptions in the last few years, not all of which can be blamed on COVID-19 and its effect on large public gatherings. While SHOT is still a big deal, we're seeing more new products being announced throughout the year than ever before. Thanks to COVID-19, SHOT was

completely canceled in 2021, and so there was a valiant effort put forth to make it a virtual event. I think most people considered it a complete failure, which is why efforts were redoubled this year to go back to a traditional trade show with personal attendance. However, viruses don't much care what plans we make, they have their own agenda, and so this year's show had to deal with that reality.

The SHOT Show is always booked into its venue a few weeks after the Christmas/New Years holiday season,

when travel and human interaction peaks. And it doesn't take much research to find that this is the time for virus infections to crest. Therefore, many companies and individuals, myself included, reluctantly decided not to attend this year. Fortunately, it's still possible to bring you some highlights from the show. As usual, please be aware that except where noted, I haven't used these products personally. These are just some notable announcements of new and interesting products.



The first Ruger-produced Marlin is this lever-action chambered in 45-70 Gov't.

RIFLES

One of the most anticipated rifle releases of 2022 is the rebirth of the Marlin lever-action line, courtesy of Ruger. They've been working hard at starting production of the Marlin guns after buying the company and the tooling at the Remington auction last year. They've elected to start with the Marlin 1895 in 45-70 Gov't as the first gun to be offered. It'll feature stainless steel construction, a laminated wood stock, large loop lever and a 19-inch barrel with threaded muzzle. Shot capacity is six plus one, with bullets directed to the target via ghost ring rear aperture and a fibre optic front sight, but with a long Picatinny rail included for optic mounting. Suggested retail is \$1,400 US.

Numerous manufacturers are offering new versions of existing models and there seems to be an emphasis on high-end products versus economy models. Browning's X-Bolt Mountain Pro with a carbon fibre barrel and priced at \$2,500 US is a good example. Savage has carbon fibre barrel options in their 110 line too, including a new left-hand version of the UltraLite, but it's closer to \$1,500 US.

A notable exception to the lack of new rifle designs is the CZ 600 series, available in chamberings ranging from 223 Rem to 300 Win. Mag. There are four models of this bolt-action design, covering a wide range of stock materials, barrel profiles and action lengths. But the most fascinating feature is the ability to swap calibres >

without a gunsmith, using an optional conversion kit.

Precision rifle competition is still a hot market and there are several new offerings to meet the needs of these shooters. CADEX, the Canadian manufacturer, announced their CDX-SS Seven S.T.A.R.S. Pro. This is a chassis rifle available in all the popular competition calibres, including 6 BR Norma and 6 Dasher. The barrel is by Bartlein and 5R single-cut-rifled, the chassis is fully adjustable, as is the trigger and mag release, and it comes in

some cool colours.

Savage introduced a version of their straight-pull Impulse action, equipped for PRS-style competition as well. It has an MDT chassis, heavy barrel and is available in chamberings up to 338 Lapua Mag. Price is \$2,500 US. Fortunately, they have a cheaper option as well, their Model 64 Precision. This is their classic semi-auto Model 64 in 22 LR, set up for rimfire PRS-style shooting. It has a synthetic MDT chassis and a heavy barrel for \$300 US.

Benelli's 828U gets a major upgrade in 2022.



SHOTGUNS

In the shotgunning world, Mossberg has added a turkey version to their semi-auto 940 Pro line, which was launched in 2020. There are two variations of the 940 Pro Turkey, one with an 18-inch barrel and another with a 24-inch barrel. They will both handle up to three-inch shells, have oversized controls and are covered in Mossy Oak Greenleaf camo for concealment. Fibre optic sights are standard, with the ability to mount optics provided. MSRP is \$1,120 US for either version.

For 2022, Benelli is releasing a limited edition of its 828U over/under shotgun. It has all the great features of this gun, plus lots of engraving, AA wood and Benelli's surface treatment to the metal, which carries a 25-year guarantee against rust and corrosion. Only 200 units are being built, so you'll have to act fast to get one – and no doubt dig deep into your wallet.

Savage is adding a personal defence model to its relatively new Renegade line of shotguns. It's called the Renegade Security, is only available in 12 gauge and handles shells up to three inches in length. Barrel is 18.5 inches with a reported magazine capacity of six. Since it's a semi-auto, they'll have to make a Canadian version with a five-round magazine before we see it on this side of the border.

Federal's 30 Super Carry



AMMUNITION

The only new cartridge I'm aware of is Federal's 30 Super Carry. As the name suggests, it's designed specifically for concealed carry handguns. Of course, that use is a non-starter here in Canada, and the diameter of the bullet might ensure we never have pistols chambered for it here as well. That's because it uses a .312-inch bullet. Traditionally, that would be called a .32 calibre, and guns for those calibres are prohibited in Canada. Of course, it's not a .32 calibre in reality or in name, so will the guns be prohibited? It's just another example of how silly some of our firearm laws are.

Federal is also offering a new load in their shorty (1¾-inch) shotshells. Called Force X2 Shorty, they are loaded with six segmenting buckshot pellets and intended for personal defence. Also in 12 gauge is their new High Over All shell, designed for clays competition. Featuring high antimony

shot and a one-piece Podium wad, Federal claims handloaders will get more reloads out of these shells than with any other.

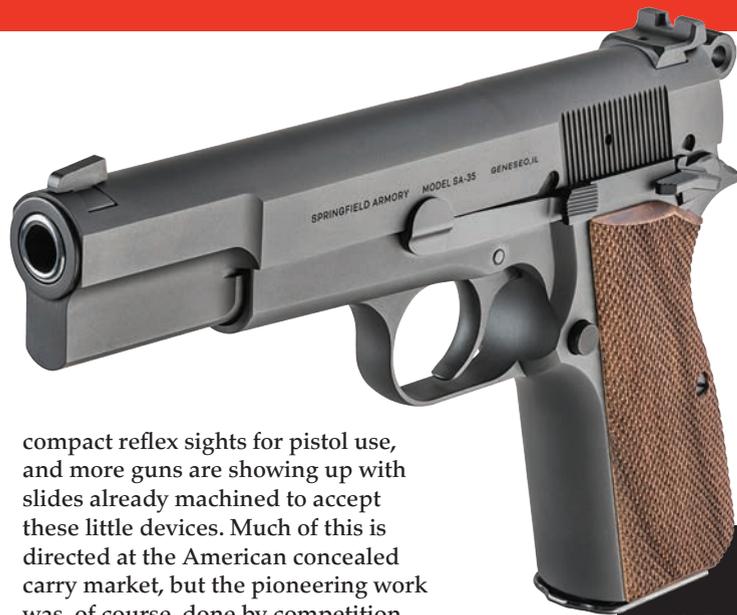
Remington is back producing ammunition now that it's under new ownership, and I've already seen it on Canadian store shelves. As expected, most of their energy has gone into getting back into production. However, they've managed to add several new items, most notably a polymer tip to their famous Core-Lokt bullet. Called the Core-Lokt Tipped, it's available in a great selection of chamberings, ranging from 243 Win. to 300 WSM.

Winchester is launching a line of bismuth shotshell ammunition in 12 and 20 gauge. All are three-inch shells with either #1 or #4 shot. These loads will be safe in all chokes, making them particularly suitable for older guns with a fixed full choke. Winchester says to expect solid 60-yard performance on birds.

HANDGUNS

An interesting development in the world of handguns is the sudden flurry of Browning Hi-Power pistol copies. Browning discontinued production of the gun recently and now some major players are stepping up to fill the gap. FN is calling theirs the High Power, and it features ambidextrous controls, extended beavertail, grip frame texturing, no magazine disconnect and new colour options. Springfield Armory calls their version the SA-35, and it looks to be more of a classic design. It boasts modern sights, checkered walnut grips and a matte blued finish. The value option of the trio promises to be the Turkish-made Girsan MC P35. It's got an ambidextrous safety and is available in three finishes.

A growing trend in handgunning is that of optical sights. More manufacturers are building small,



compact reflex sights for pistol use, and more guns are showing up with slides already machined to accept these little devices. Much of this is directed at the American concealed carry market, but the pioneering work was, of course, done by competition shooters, who proved it to be a viable concept. Newly announced sights in this category include products from Leupold, Burris, Bushnell and others. I'll predict that it'll soon be common to see new handguns sold with optics supplied and mounted, just like we see with rifle/scope packages.

A trio of Hi-Power copies were announced at SHOT. This is Springfield Armory's version.



The Vortex Razor HD Gen III is a 6-36x56mm optic intended for long-range shooting.

OPTICS

Leupold's newest rifle optic is called the Patrol 6HD. It's a 1-6X scope built on a 30-millimetre body. Intended for close to medium-range shooting, it's extremely lightweight and comes with a couple of reticle options, both of which are illuminated. Zeiss has a new scope as well, but this one is designed for long-range, precision work. With a 34-millimetre tube, there's a choice of 3-18x50mm or 5-25x56mm models. MOA or MRAD reticles are available, with adjustments done via large elevation and windage knobs, equipped with zero stop and locking features. Vortex is launching a new long-range scope

as well. The Razor HD Gen III is a 6-36x56mm FFP optic equipped with their EBR-7D reticle in MOA or MRAD configuration. It uses a 34-millimetre tube as well and weighs in at a hefty 45 ounces.

Leica has a new rangefinding binocular in a size considerably more compact than what we're used to in this category. Called the Geovid Pro 32, much of the size reduction (weighing 870 grams or 31 ounces) is credited to the smaller 32-millimetre objective lenses. Available in 8x32mm and 10x32mm sizes, it's claimed to measure distance on non-reflective targets out to 2,500 yards. It comes with Applied Ballistics software installed, as well as a GPS tracking function that helps guide a hunter to the specific location of a last ranged measurement. >

MDT's new hunting chassis weighs in at only 26 ounces.

RELOADING

Manufacturers of handloading components are having so much difficulty keeping up with demand, there's little time to develop new products. Berger, for example, is announcing only one new bullet, a .30-calibre, 245-grain LRHT (Long Range Hybrid Target.) It's intended for use in the biggest of the .30-calibre magnums and for shooting out past 1,500 metres. They are predicting delivery in the fall. Price is unknown.

Lapua has no new bullets but has added the following cartridge cases to its line of top-quality brass: 6.5 PRC, 284 Winchester, 300 PRC and 300 Winchester Magnum. I have no word

on availability or price.

Hornady has updated their GMX line of bullets into what they are calling the CX line. These are still mono-metal bullets, but with a redesign which improves their aerodynamic performance and yields a higher ballistic coefficient. This line includes 24 bullets, starting with an 80-grain 6mm and ending with 250-grain .375 slugs. Packaging is in 50-round boxes.

Sierra's additions for 2022 include two .30-calibre bullets: a 115-grain HP and a 177-grain MatchKing which replaces their 175-grain MK. A couple of new 9mm bullets complete their offerings. These are 147-grain and 124-grain hollow points.



ACCESSORIES

Kestrel is well known for its weather monitoring instruments used by long-range shooters, and they have now added a shot timer to their line. Called the KST1000, it's even claimed to be compatible with dry firing. With two screens and an intuitive menu with lots of buttons, it's also waterproof, dustproof and drop tested to a military standard. It looks like a serious upgrade to the world of shot timers. Cost is about \$400 CAD.

MDT has been particularly busy designing new products. They have a

Gen 2 version of their ACC chassis, as well as their first dedicated hunting chassis, the HNT 26. I've been using the latter all winter and it's a great way to modernize a hunting rifle. But the carbon fibre, magnesium and titanium construction used to keep the weight at 26 ounces means it's not cheap. Expect to part with \$1,500 to own one. MDT has also gone slightly classic by designing a chassis/stock system which incorporates wood. It's fittingly called the TMBR Stock. Add in a couple of new

bipods, a muzzle brake and some competition-specific accessories and it's tough keeping up with what these guys in British Columbia are building next.

We'll be working on getting our hands on some of these products and others over the coming year and giving them a thorough shakedown. Considering the supply shortages we're currently seeing everywhere, it looks like we'll have enough new products to provide plenty of opportunity to spend our tax refunds. 🍷



NFA

FREEDOM.
SAFETY.
RESPONSIBILITY.

THE OWNERSHIP SHUFFLE

Changes continue for firearm companies

BY JEFF HELSDON



The massive ownership changes that we've seen in the firearms and ammunition world have been continuing unabated. Here's a quick synopsis of some of the changes we've seen, and what the future holds.

REMINGTON

Things are beginning to return to normal in the wake of Remington's bankruptcy. Roundhill Group, which purchased Remington firearms, has the federal license needed to manufacture firearms and reached an agreement with the union. The 870 shotgun was trumpeted as the first gun to be produced, and sure enough, as I write this there are reviews of the first production models appearing on the web.

On the ammunition side, Vista Outdoors is ramping up production of Remington ammunition again. As Vista's Jason Vanderbrink, Remington's president, said, "Big Green is

back." Manufacturing of Remington ammunition is taking place in the Lonoke, Ark., plant again. Note that Remington ammunition and Remington guns are now manufactured by two separate corporate entities.

Vista also owns the rights to Remington licensed products, such as clothing and accessories. This is also ramping up. In particular, they have announced the return of the Remington bullet knife, with the 2021 edition called The Prospector. And while discussing Vista acquisitions, it's important to note the company purchased HEVI-shot in late January 2021. The intention is not to change this line.

HOLLAND & HOLLAND

LONDON 1835



MARLIN

Ruger, as most people know, purchased the Marlin line at the Remington bankruptcy auction and is working towards manufacturing Marlin guns again. During a quarterly earnings call, Ruger CEO Chris Killooy said the goal is to have Marlin guns out by late this year. The company moved 100 tractor-trailer loads from the Remington facility to Ruger's three plants. The initial focus will be the centrefire lever actions, particularly the Model 1895, followed by the 1894, 336 and the .22 rimfires. By the time you read this, the first guns may be available in Canada.



COLT

In February of 2021, for \$220 million and shares, Czechoslovakia-based Ceska Zbrojovka Group SE (CZG) purchased Colt Holding Company LLC, which is the parent company of Colt Canada Corp. CZG is best known for CZ firearms, but also owns Dan Wesson and Brno. Colt has been struggling for decades and most recently emerged from bankruptcy protection in 2016, according to a Reuters report.

"With this acquisition, we have created a strategic relationship between CZG and Colt, which will bring significant opportunities for the group," said Lubomir Kovarik, chairman and president of CZG. "We will focus on continuing to provide high-quality products to our customers in a seamless manner as we harness the many synergies generated by this acquisition."

Meanwhile, Dennis Veilleux, president and CEO of Colt, said they "look forward to continuing to deliver our high-quality products, while also investing in innovation and new product offerings in the near future."

HOLLAND & HOLLAND

Famed British double gun maker Holland & Holland was purchased by Beretta in February of 2021. Dating back to the 1880s, the company is known for its side-by-side rifles, the development of the venerable 375 H&H magnum cartridge and fine double shotguns.

Beretta purchased Holland & Holland from Chanel, the French fashion company, who had apparently purchased it with an eye to using the H&H name. Under Chanel, H&H introduced new cartridges and invested in new gun-making technology, as well as clothing lines and fashion accessories. However, the company found outside of shooters, the consumer wasn't aware of H&H. Beretta was close to purchasing the company in 2005, but the owners reportedly changed their mind at the last minute.

In a Feb. 1 company press release, it states Beretta was looking to acquire a "premium luxury brand" for some time and H&H is well suited. Besides the gun manufacturing facility, the purchase includes H&H's famed shooting ground.

In a separate deal, Beretta's Benelli Group also purchased Chapuis Armes in France. This company is another premium manufacturer of double shotguns and rifles, as well as straight pull bolt-action rifles.



GSM OUTDOORS

GSM Outdoors isn't a name familiar to most hunters or shooters, but it's a parent company of many familiar brands and it's growing. The owner of brands such as Flextone, HS Strut and Zink, GSM recently added Birchwood Casey and Truglo to its stable of brands. It grew once again when Pure Fishing, the world's largest fishing tackle company, purchased Plano in April. As part of the purchase, GSM will not only add Plano's gun and archery cases, but also Wildgame Innovations, Ameristep, Tenzing, Zink, Halo Optics, Flextone, Avian X, Evolved, Barnett and Zero Trace.



BERETTA
500 YEARS. ONE PASSION.

REDFIELD

Famed American scope manufacturer Leupold and Stevens Inc. announced the sale of its Redfield brand of scopes to Academy Sports + Outdoors, an American sporting goods and outdoors retailer with 259 stores. Although Redfield was once a well-known American scope manufacturer, the company went bankrupt in 1998. It changed hands twice before Leupold purchased the company in 2008. Leupold manufactured scopes under the Redfield brand, but this has dwindled in recent years.

Korth Group, the Canadian importer for Leupold, does not deal with Academy, so the future of Redfield in Canada is unlikely, especially since it seems to have become the store brand for Academy. Leupold will continue to honour warranty on Redfield scopes which it manufactured.

THE COVID FACTOR

Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association president Wes Winkel explained COVID-19 is the driving force behind so many of these amalgamations because of raw material supply issues. "If you're not a large company, you're having challenges sourcing raw materials," he said. "These companies are ripe for the picking because they don't have the raw materials." He explained the consumer could see differences with pricing and availability in some cases because of the amalgamations. 🏹



Legal corner

Guy Lavergne, Attorney at Law

Firearms & Mental Health – A Legal Perspective

As you may surmise, this month's column is related to the article by Tyson Sommerville, *Mental Health & Guns*, also included in this issue. As Mr. Sommerville notes, there is a general perception, by both gun owners and the general public, that possession of firearms and mental health issues are incompatible. I will discuss that topic here from a legal perspective.

ELIGIBILITY TO HOLD A FIREARMS LICENCE

The criteria to be eligible for holding a firearms licence are listed at Section 5 of the *Firearms Act*. The relevant excerpt is as follows:

PUBLIC SAFETY

5 (1) A person is not eligible to hold a licence if it is desirable, in the interests of the safety of that or any other person, that the person not possess a firearm, a cross-bow, a prohibited weapon, a restricted weapon, a prohibited device, ammunition or prohibited ammunition.

MARGINAL NOTE: CRITERIA

- (2) In determining whether a person is eligible to hold a licence under subsection (1), a chief firearms officer or, on a reference under Section 74, a provincial court judge shall have regard to whether the person
 - (a) (...)
 - (b) has been treated for a mental illness, whether in a hospital, mental institute, psychiatric clinic or otherwise and whether or not the person was confined to such a hospital, institute or clinic, that was associated with violence or threatened or attempted violence on the part of the person against any person;
 - (c) has a history of behaviour that includes violence or threatened or attempted violence or threatening conduct on the part of the person against any person;



A firearms licence is either in effect or revoked. There is no middle ground.

Un permis d'armes à feu est soit en vigueur, soit révoqué. Il n'existe pas de statut intermédiaire.

- (d) (...)
- (e) (...); or
- (f) for any other reason, poses a risk of harm to any person.

Thus, a person's mental health is a consideration which a chief firearms officer (CFO) must take into account when determining whether a person is eligible to hold a firearms licence. This includes the issuance, renewal or revocation of that licence.

It is important that it is not any and every mental health issue that must be considered by a CFO. Rather, per the letter of the law, it is only those conditions that pose a risk of violence which must be considered. This would include psychotic disorders (i.e., schizophrenia and paranoia), as well as some forms of depressions, especially when suicidal thoughts and tendencies are present.

Violence "against any person" includes violence against oneself. Thus, suicidal tendencies or previous suicide

attempts will be considered by a CFO and might disqualify a person from holding a firearms licence. I say might because, at least in theory, the CFO has discretion to issue, renew or maintain a licence, even when there is a prior history of mental illness with a violence component. At the very least, a person in that situation would have to satisfy the CFO that either: i) the condition no longer exists; or ii) is being properly addressed, with little or no risk of relapse.

In theory, mental health disorders that do not include a violence factor should have no incidence on a person's eligibility to hold a firearms licence. That would include neurosis, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, as well as other like conditions.

WHAT ABOUT SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP?

In theory, fear of losing one's firearms should never be a bar to obtaining professional help, when faced with a mental health condition. As a general

principle, health care professionals are held to privilege, which means they cannot legally disclose any non-public information they have become aware of as part of their relationship with a patient. However, there are exceptions. In certain situations, as determined by applicable provincial legislation, health care professionals may be either required or merely allowed to report certain situations to government authorities. Examples of mandatory disclosure would include instances where the safety of children is at risk, or where a condition may preclude a person from driving.

As to optional disclosure, by way of example, in Quebec, provincial legislation enacted as part of Bill 9 (a series of legal provisions supposedly in response to the Dawson College shooting), healthcare professionals and other personnel are legally allowed (albeit, not required) to report situations where a person, believed to be dangerous to oneself or to others, is known to have access to firearms.

It is also worth noting that even though healthcare professionals are held to privilege, law enforcement officers are not. Hence, if the police are called upon to intervene because an individual with mental health issues is in crisis, you can bet the farm they will verify whether that individual holds a firearms licence and will initiate, at the very least, a preventive seizure. They may also petition a provincial court for a prohibition order, under Section 111 of the *Criminal Code*, and will likely refer the underlying information to the provincial CFO. In those circumstances, a licence revocation almost always automatically ensues.

I wish to note that, as a general rule, a judge issuing a prohibition order is expected to order the confiscation and destruction of all firearms found in the possession of the person targeted by the order. This is true even in mental health situations. Judges have the discretionary power to forego confiscation, but that power is seldom used. Thus, people who are subject to preventive prohibition orders are often being punished, although they have done nothing wrong.

HOW ABOUT WITHHOLDING MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION FROM THE CFO?

Whilst one is not legally obligated to report a mental health issue to either police or the CFO, the disclosure of certain mental health conditions is required as part of an application for the issuance or renewal of a firearm. Indeed, an applicant must answer certain questions as to whether they have been treated or diagnosed with a mental health condition characterized by violence or the threat of violence to oneself or others. There are also questions about depression and suicide. Failing to answer those questions truthfully is most definitely not advisable, as it is a criminal offence.

My recommendation to clients in a similar predicament is always to be honest and tell the truth. Most often, I also recommend they seek a written opinion from their doctor or psychologist, explaining why, despite current or past mental issues, they are not a threat to themselves or others if they have access to firearms. I have even seen situations where doctors have opined that access to firearms would actually be beneficial to the patient, with CFOs and courts accepting such opinions.

When a person has had mental health issues while being the holder of a firearms licence or prior to same, that person should seek such a letter of opinion well before the renewal date of their licence, to allow sufficient time to obtain and submit it to the CFO for consideration as part of a firearms licence application or licence renewal application.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The current gun control scheme is one of criminal law. It makes little or no room for accommodation of mental health issues, whether temporary or not. A firearms licence is either in effect or revoked. There is no middle ground, and no possibility of reinstatement after revocation, otherwise than through the reference process, as per Section 74 of the *Firearms Act*.

To address this lack of flexibility, I have heard of licensed gun owners

who, when they went through a rough patch in life, voluntarily surrendered their firearms and license to a friend until sunnier days came around. They also informed their family members of their actions. By doing so, they certainly diminished the possibility that someone might call the police fearing they might shoot themselves. Unfortunately, the Canadian Firearms Program, as it stands, does not treat individuals who act thusly with any more leniency.

The Canadian Firearms Program pretends to be rooted in prevention. Yet, the way it is being implemented is often more akin to repression and confiscation. Canadian gun owners are under the constant threat of seeing their firearms licences revoked and their firearms seized and confiscated merely because they might be ill, even when they have done nothing wrong. As far as I am concerned, rules that punish individuals, through the confiscation of legally acquired property, in the absence of wrongful conduct, should not exist in a free society. I do not know of any other type of property that is confiscated by the government when the government believes that one has become temporarily unable to safely use it. In my humble opinion, this reflects the strong bias of our governments against the possession of firearms by private citizens for lawful purposes.

Although I have no delusion that the current licensing system will disappear in my lifetime, I sincerely hope that it can be improved to encourage firearms owners to openly address their mental health issues, without fear of losing their property or gun rights. A system that would allow for a temporary suspension of gun possession rights during stretches of poor mental health, with a genuine possibility of reinstatement of those same rights upon improvement of one's condition, would certainly be preferable to the current system of revocation and confiscation. It would help if such a system were to consider the opinion of health professionals, as opposed to relying almost solely upon police. 



Rubrique Juridique

Guy Lavergne, avocat

Armes À Feu Et Santé Mentale: Une Perspective Juridique

Ma chronique de ce mois-ci est liée à l'article de Tyson Somerville (*Santé mentale et armes à feu*) également inclus dans ce numéro. Comme le fait remarquer M. Somerville, tant les propriétaires d'armes à feu que le grand public ont généralement l'impression que la possession d'armes à feu et les problèmes de santé mentale sont incompatibles. J'en discute ci-après, d'un point de vue juridique.

ADMISSIBILITÉ À DÉTENIR UN PERMIS D'ARMES À FEU

Les critères d'admissibilité à la détention d'un permis d'armes à feu sont énumérés à l'article 5 de la Loi sur les armes à feu. L'extrait pertinent est le suivant:

SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

5 (1) Le permis ne peut être délivré lorsqu'il est souhaitable, pour sa sécurité ou celle d'autrui, que le demandeur n'ait pas en sa possession une arme à feu, une arbalète, une arme prohibée, une arme à autorisation restreinte, un dispositif prohibé, des munitions ou des munitions prohibées.

NOTE MARGINALE: CRITÈRES D'ADMISSIBILITÉ

- (2) Pour l'application du paragraphe (1), le contrôleur des armes à feu ou, dans le cas d'un renvoi prévu à l'article 74, le juge de la cour provinciale tient compte des éléments suivants:
- (iii)
 - qu'il ait été interné ou non, il a été traité, notamment dans un hôpital, un institut pour malades mentaux ou une clinique psychiatrique, pour une maladie mentale caractérisée par la menace, la tentative ou l'usage de violence contre lui-même ou autrui;
 - l'historique de son comportement atteste la menace, la tentative ou l'usage de violence ou le comportement menaçant contre lui-même ou autrui;
 - (...)
 - (...)
 - pour toute autre raison, il pourrait causer un dommage à lui-même ou à autrui.



A person's mental health is a factor which a CFO must consider when determining whether a person is eligible to hold a firearms licence.

La santé mentale de la personne concernée est un des facteurs que le Contrôleur des armes à feu doit considérer, afin de déterminer si une personne est admissible à détenir un permis d'arme à feu.

Ainsi, la santé mentale d'une personne est une considération dont un Contrôleur des armes à feu (CAF) doit tenir compte lorsqu'il détermine si une personne est admissible à détenir un permis d'armes à feu. Cela s'applique tant à la délivrance, au renouvellement et à révocation d'un tel permis.

Il est important de noter que ce ne sont pas tous les problèmes de santé mentale qui doivent être pris en compte par un CAF. Au contraire, selon la lettre de la loi, seules les conditions qui présentent un risque de violence doivent être considérées. Cela inclurait les troubles psychotiques (tels la schizophrénie et la paranoïa), ainsi que certaines formes de dépression, en particulier lorsque des pensées et des tendances suicidaires sont présentes.

La violence « contre toute personne » comprend la violence contre soi-même. Ainsi, les tendances suicidaires ou les tentatives de suicide antérieures seront prises en compte par un CAF et pourraient rendre une personne inadmissible à détenir un permis d'armes à feu. J'écris au conditionnel parce que, du moins en théorie, le CAF a le pouvoir discrétionnaire de délivrer, de renouveler ou de maintenir un permis, même s'il existe des antécédents de maladie mentale comportant une composante « violence ». À tout le moins, une personne se

trouvant dans cette situation devrait convaincre le CAF que: i) la condition n'existe plus; ou ii) qu'elle fait l'objet d'un traitement approprié, avec peu ou pas de risque de rechute.

En théorie, les troubles de santé mentale qui n'incluent pas de facteur de « violence » ne devraient pas avoir d'incidence sur l'admissibilité d'une personne à détenir un permis d'armes à feu. Cela inclurait la névrose, comme le trouble obsessionnel-compulsif ainsi que d'autres conditions similaires.

UN PROPRIÉTAIRE D'ARMES À FEU DEVRAIT-IL CHERCHER DE L'AIDE POUR SA SANTÉ MENTALE?

En théorie, la peur de perdre ses armes à feu ne devrait jamais être un obstacle à l'obtention d'une aide professionnelle, lorsqu'une personne est confrontée à un problème de santé mentale. En règle générale, les professionnels de la santé sont tenus au secret professionnel, ce qui signifie qu'ils ne peuvent légalement divulguer aucune information non publique dont ils ont eu connaissance dans le cadre de leur relation avec un patient. Cependant, il y a des exceptions. Dans certaines situations, comme le prévoient les lois provinciales applicables, les professionnels de la santé peuvent être tenus ou simplement autorisés à signaler certaines situations aux autorités gouvernementales. Voici des

exemples de divulgation obligatoire: les cas où la sécurité des enfants est en danger ou lorsqu'une condition de santé peut empêcher une personne de conduire.

En ce qui concerne la divulgation facultative, à titre d'exemple, au Québec, la législation provinciale adoptée dans le cadre du projet de loi 9 (une série de dispositions législatives adoptées en réponse à la fusillade du Collège Dawson), les professionnels de la santé et les autres membres du personnel médical sont légalement autorisés (bien que non requis) à signaler les situations où une personne est considérée comme dangereuse pour elle-même ou pour autrui, lorsque l'on sait qu'elle a accès à des armes à feu.

Il convient également de noter que même si les professionnels de la santé sont tenus au secret professionnel, les agents de la paix ne le sont pas. Par conséquent, si les policiers sont appelés à intervenir parce qu'une personne ayant des problèmes de santé mentale est en crise, les policiers vérifieront si cette personne détient un permis d'armes à feu et effectueront, à tout le moins, une saisie préventive. Les policiers peuvent également demander à un tribunal provincial une ordonnance d'interdiction, en vertu de l'article 111 du *Code criminel*, et ils transmettront les renseignements sous-jacents au CAF provincial. Dans ces circonstances, une révocation de permis s'ensuit presque toujours automatiquement.

Je tiens à souligner qu'en règle générale, un juge qui rend une ordonnance d'interdiction ordonne la confiscation et la destruction de toutes les armes à feu trouvées en possession de la personne visée par l'ordonnance. Cela est vrai même dans les situations de santé mentale. Les juges ont le pouvoir discrétionnaire de passer outre à la confiscation, mais ce pouvoir est rarement utilisé. Ainsi, les personnes qui font l'objet d'ordonnances d'interdiction préventive sont souvent punies, bien qu'elles n'aient rien fait de mal.

CACHER LES PROBLÈMES DE SANTÉ MENTALE AU CONTRÔLEUR DES ARMES À FEU

Bien que l'on ne soit pas légalement tenu de signaler un problème de santé mentale à la police ou au CAF, la divulgation de certains problèmes de santé mentale est requise dans le cadre d'une demande de délivrance ou de

renouvellement d'un permis d'arme à feu. En effet, dans le formulaire de demande, un demandeur doit répondre à certaines questions afférentes à son historique de santé mentale. Il y a aussi des questions sur la dépression et le suicide. Ne pas répondre honnêtement à ces questions n'est certainement pas conseillé, car il s'agit d'une infraction criminelle.

Ma recommandation à mes clients dans une situation similaire est toujours d'être honnête et de dire la vérité. Le plus souvent, je leur recommande également d'obtenir et joindre à leur demande une opinion écrite de leur médecin ou de leur psychologue, expliquant pourquoi, malgré des problèmes de santé mentale actuels ou passés, ils ne constituent pas une menace pour eux-mêmes ou pour les autres, s'ils ont accès à des armes à feu. J'ai même vu des situations où des médecins ont estimé que la reprise d'activités de chasse ou de tir serait bénéfique pour le patient et tant le CAF que les tribunaux ont accepté de telles opinions.

Lorsqu'une personne a eu des problèmes de santé mentale alors qu'elle était titulaire d'un permis d'armes à feu ou avant de l'être, cette personne devrait demander une telle lettre d'opinion bien avant la date de renouvellement de son permis, afin de lui laisser suffisamment de temps pour l'obtenir et la soumettre au CAF pour examen dans le cadre d'une demande de permis d'armes à feu ou d'une demande de renouvellement de permis.

COMMENTAIRES FINAUX

Le régime actuel de contrôle des armes à feu relève du droit criminel. Il laisse peu ou pas de place à l'accommodement des problèmes de santé mentale, qu'ils soient temporaires ou non. Un permis d'armes à feu est soit en vigueur, soit révoqué. Il n'y a pas de juste milieu et aucune possibilité de remise en vigueur après révocation, autrement que par le biais du processus de renvoi, conformément à l'article 74 de la Loi sur les *armes à feu*.

Pour remédier à ce manque de souplesse, j'ai entendu parler de propriétaires d'armes à feu titulaires d'un permis qui, lorsqu'ils ont traversé une période difficile de leur vie, ont volontairement remis leurs armes à feu et leur permis à un ami jusqu'à ce qu'ils aillent mieux. Ils ont également

informé les membres de leur famille de leur initiative. Ce faisant, ils ont certainement diminué la possibilité que quelqu'un appelle la police de peur qu'ils ne commettent l'irréparable. Malheureusement, le Programme canadien des armes à feu, dans sa forme actuelle, ne traite pas les personnes qui agissent ainsi avec plus de clémence.

Le Programme canadien des armes à feu prétend être ancré dans la prévention. Pourtant, la façon dont il est mis en œuvre s'apparente souvent davantage à la répression et à la confiscation. Au Canada, les propriétaires d'armes à feu sont constamment menacés de voir leur permis d'armes à feu révoqué et leurs armes à feu saisies et confisquées simplement parce qu'ils pourraient être malades, même s'ils n'ont rien fait de mal. En ce qui me concerne, les règles qui punissent les individus, par la confiscation de biens acquis légalement, en l'absence de comportement fautif, ne devraient pas exister dans une société libre. Je ne connais aucun autre type de bien qui soit confisqué par le gouvernement, parce que le gouvernement considère qu'un individu est devenu temporairement incapable de les utiliser en toute sécurité. À mon humble avis, cela reflète les préjugés de nos gouvernements à l'encontre de la possession d'armes à feu par des citoyens, à des fins légales.

Bien que je ne me fasse pas d'illusions à l'effet que le système actuel de permis, avec ses nombreuses carences, disparaîtra de mon vivant, j'espère sincèrement qu'il pourra être amélioré pour encourager les propriétaires d'armes à feu à s'attaquer ouvertement à leurs problèmes de santé mentale, sans craindre de perdre leurs biens ou leurs droits. Un système qui permettrait une renonciation temporaire aux droits de possession d'armes à feu pendant les périodes de mauvaise santé mentale, avec une possibilité réelle de rétablissement de ces mêmes droits après amélioration, serait certainement préférable au système actuel de révocation et de confiscation. Il serait certainement désirable qu'un tel système tienne compte de l'opinion des professionnels de la santé, plutôt que de refléter presque exclusivement les préoccupations des policiers. 



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My first experience with steel targets was on an outdoor silhouette range. Each row was at correspondingly farther distances – first the chickens, then pigs, turkeys and rams. Centerpunching one of these targets ensured it toppled. Challenging! That introduction to steel targets got me hooked.

Fast forward 20 years. My gun club wanted both new and replacement steel targets for our indoor and outdoor ranges, so I took a deep dive into that world. There are some big-name target manufacturers in the US who produce a quality product. Unfortunately, steel is heavy and cross-border shipping was cost-prohibitive. An Internet search led me to XMetal Targets, a Quebec-based company specializing in high-quality steel targets. They design and produce a lot! They offer static targets shaped like bison, tombstones and cowboys – sure to be popular with the cowboy action folks. XMetal Targets also makes NRA animals, gongs suited to long-range shooters and a collection of reactive steel targets for action shooters. In addition, they build target stands for quick and convenient setup.

XMetal builds many of its targets to withstand the punishment of hard-hitting centerfire ammunition. Most of their targets are made from premium AR500 steel, a hard, tough, abrasion-resistant steel used in everything from grader blades to vehicle armour.

If shooters are looking for an afternoon of plinking fun or a challenging long-range target with a rimfire, XMetal has specific targets for them too. Rimfire targets are made from AR400 steel, which is well-suited to the lower energy rimfire bullets. While not as hard, the steel with-

RIGHT: XMetal IPSC target, with centre and hostage paddles, offers a variety of shooting options. This model is one of the author's favourites.

stands more impacts without cracking or shattering. From my experience, these targets handle thousands upon thousands of rounds with little sign of wear.

Centerfire targets come in two standard thicknesses: 3/8 inch and 1/2 inch. While both handle most handgun and rifle rounds at a recommended minimum distance and impact velocity, thicker targets will stand up better to the long-term punishment of high-energy rounds. For gun clubs, thicker targets are a good investment. The recreational shooter at an informal range will get many years of enjoyment from a thinner target; at 3/8-inch thick, they are lighter for transport and less expensive. A heads-up: pitted targets cause bullets to ricochet unpredictably, which is why target manufacturers all warn against using damaged targets. Shot-out steel was the reason my club was looking for new targets and how I discovered XMetal Targets in the first place.

One of my favourite XMetal Targets is the IPSC torso with centre and hostage reactive paddles. This three-in-one training target tests my skills in different shooting scenarios and delivers the instant feedback I've grown to love from steel. The target combo includes their FTS (foldable target support). The FTS is armoured on the leading edge of the leg, protecting it from splatter and errant shots. After years of use, this target is going strong, still soaking up hits from pistol and rifle rounds.

XMetal Targets are available directly from XMetal (xmetaltargets.com) and select dealers across Canada. 



ABOVE: XMetal Targets' folding target support is modular, meaning it can hold different targets and configurations.

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