

# CANADIAN FIREARMS JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

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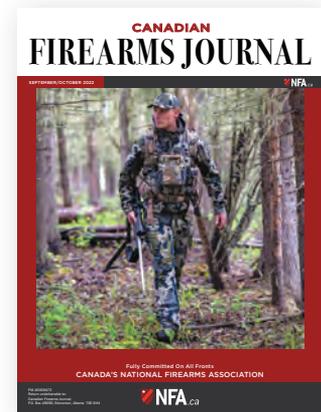
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## MISSION STATEMENT

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

**J**oel Reynolds navigates through a stretch of dark timber in pursuit of black bear during the 2022 spring season. Having premium gear at his disposal, such as the Kuiu Guide DCS jacket, Attack pant and Hanwag Alaska GTX boots makes hunting in unpredictable weather that much more enjoyable. When chasing bears, Joel's preferred rifle is the Sako A7 Pro chambered in 300 Winchester Magnum, topped with a Vortex Viper HST 6-24x50 scope. Joel's hunting partner and photographer, Justin Foster, tagged along on this hunt and captured the moment. 



## Canadian Firearms Journal

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# From The Editor's Desk

Al Voth

## Hunting Season



You'll be receiving this issue of the Canadian Firearms Journal in early September, the time of year when the kids return to school and the thoughts of many gun owners turn to hunting season. With that in mind, we've loaded up this issue with hunting-related content. I trust what you'll find here helps prepare you for the upcoming season and that you have a successful one.

Just remember, success does not necessarily mean bagging the game you're after. Simply getting outdoors with friends, family, perhaps a canine companion and a good gun is all that's needed for success. It's a great way to unwind from the stress the politicians are causing us, and there's no shortage of that.

Of course, our prime minister is doing

his best to spin his actions as something completely different. My favourite quote is in reference to the handgun "freeze," when he said, "I think people need to be careful about misinformation and disinformation in this. We've explicitly and specifically not targeted law-abiding firearms owners." This is so patently false, it reminds me of the kind of thing we hear regularly from the Russian propaganda machine, where blatant lies are unashamedly presented as truth even though the attempt at deception is crystal clear to everyone. Truth is always the first casualty of war and it's always been so in the Liberal's war against gun owners.

Despite his admiration of dictators, Trudeau isn't one, and the ballot box will eventually end the Liberal's

quest for power. We just need patience and a commitment to keep on working until the next election to see a change in government.

On a more positive note, the Outdoor Writers of Canada recently announced the winners of their annual awards program. This is a contest which honours the best outdoor writing, photography and video created by members of that association. There are numerous award categories, with regular contributors to the CFJ represented in many of them, including Brad Fenson, T.J. Schwanky, Vanessa Harrop, Ken Bailey and Jeff Helsdon.

In the Canadian Shooting Sports, Guns and Gear category, sponsored by the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, it was a clean sweep for CFJ content. First place went to Tim Fowler for The Thousand-yard Game: An Intro to F-Class Competition. Second place went to Lowell Strauss for The Fabarm Story and third went to Tim Fowler for The Tiger Pistol: Collecting Lancasters. The Canadian Firearms Journal is honoured to have these talented writers contribute to the magazine and congratulates all of them for their wins.

We'll keep doing our best to bring you great content and be worthy of the trust you place in us for keeping you informed on political issues, new gear and skill building. Let us know what you'd like to see in these pages and we'll do our best to bring it to you. After all, it's your magazine. 



# President's Message

Rick Igercich

## Government Overreach

As I sit on the deck of a remote cottage in northern Ontario, overlooking the now still waters of Mattagami Lake, I cannot help but reflect on the good ol' days of summer. It was a time when I would spend hours with my dad, .22 rifle in hand, shooting groundhogs in the hay fields of southern Ontario. I also find myself thinking about the present and the impact the last few years have had on me and all legal firearms owners in Canada.

The atmosphere over the past few decades has not been firearm friendly, but the last three years have brought huge, sweeping changes that have been detrimental to the way firearms owners can enjoy their personal property. These changes imposed by the Liberal government were propelled forward by the tragic events in Nova Scotia and the US.

What happened in Nova Scotia in April 2020 was horrific. The pain and loss that has been inflicted on families who have lost loved ones and the heartache now being felt by a once peaceful community is unimaginable. The Liberal government looked at this tragedy as an opportunity. Without clear facts, they enacted an Order in Council to ban 1,500 (now approximately 1,800) types of firearms in Canada. As of this writing, it has come to light that the RCMP commissioner and the Liberal government withheld key facts and used false data from the tragedy in Nova Scotia to push forward their anti-firearm agenda. Sadly, I am not surprised. This government has demonstrated again and again that their agenda overrides the truth.

As well as the Order in Council ban, there was the enactment of Bill C-71. This bill has now put into place the long gun registry 2.0 that requires

a transfer number be generated for every sale of a long gun, along with records being kept. The bill also limits where legal firearm owners can transport restricted firearms, in most cases only to an approved shooting range. All other movement requires an authorization to transport (ATT) from provincial CFOs.

Over the last few months, I have personally felt and witnessed the impact of this bill as I attended gun shows in Ontario. It was clear that vendor participation was down, approximately 50 per cent, and patron participation was down, in my estimation, 60 to 70 per cent. Between the failures of the CFO portal to generate a transfer number in a timely manner to complete a purchase and the transportation limitations, there is now a lack of participation in what historically were well-attended events.

The Liberal government's next move was truly the icing on the cake, Bill C-21, which, as of this writing, has passed second reading. The Liberal/NDP coalition could conceivably move this bill forward to committee and third reading, at which point, it will be sent to the Senate. Meanwhile, under the guise of prescribing conditions for the approval of handgun transfers, recently filed Regulations could come into effect as early as September 2022, and effectively preclude most handgun transfers in Canada. The impact this latest Liberal move will have on gun owners, the gun industry and those who earn a living through work in the industry will be devastating.

It is crystal clear that this government is using a strategic, multi-tiered approach in their quest to completely ban all firearms in Canada. They have a plan and it's

slowly coming to fruition.

What is also very clear is that Canada is filled with firearm enthusiasts who, after the Liberals introduced Bill C-21, flocked to gun shops, buying every available handgun in stock, leaving the shelves empty. It is time to harness this enthusiasm and make our voices heard. I encourage you to reach out and talk to your MPs, neighbours, friends and whoever else will listen. Let them know the Liberal government continues to misrepresent responsible gun owners with their rhetoric and that you are angry about this continuous attack on our rights and freedoms as citizens of Canada.

The Conservative Party of Canada leadership race is quickly approaching. Now is the time for Canadians to make the right choice for a strong leader who will win in the next election and repeal these absurd bills and OICs and stop the Liberal's disarmament agenda. Once again, I encourage you to go out and vote and have your voice heard.

As I look forward to the days and years ahead, I continue to be confident there will once again be a time when families, friends and colleagues can be found enjoying, collecting, hunting, standing on the line in a trap shooting competition or shooting targets at a range without a black cloud of government-imposed restrictions. The NFA is fighting hard for you and future generations so that they too will have the same rights and freedoms many of us enjoyed in our youth and where memories were made that will never be forgotten, the days when you were not labeled for the type of property you own and for enjoying what you love to do.

# Message du Président

Rick Igercich

## L'abus De Pouvoir Du Gouvernement

Étant assis sur le balcon d'un chalet loin au fond du nord de l'Ontario, avec une vue imprenable des eaux momentanément calmes du lac Mattagami, je ne peux m'empêcher de me souvenir du bon vieux temps des étés passés. C'était avec mon père à tirer des siffleux avec ma carabine .22 dans les champs du sud de l'Ontario. Je réfléchis aussi sur le présent et à l'impact que les dernières années ont eu sur moi-même et tous les propriétaires légitimes d'armes à feu au Canada.

L'atmosphère des dernières décennies n'a pas été agréable pour nous, mais les trois dernières années nous ont fait subir des changements radicaux qui ont eu un effet néfaste, nous limitant la jouissance de nos biens personnels. Ces changements imposés par le gouvernement Libéral ont été propulsés par les événements tragiques en Nouvelle-Écosse et aux États-Unis.

L'événement d'avril 2020 en Nouvelle-Écosse est horrible. La perte d'êtres chers et la douleur vécue par les familles, le cœur brisé ressenti par toute la communauté qui fut autrefois paisible sont inimaginables. Le gouvernement Libéral a vu cette tragédie comme une opportunité politique. Sans avoir de données précises ils ont décrété l'interdiction de 1,500 (aujourd'hui approximativement 1,800) sortes d'armes à feu au Canada. Au moment d'écrire ces lignes nous apprenons que le commissaire de la GRC et le gouvernement Libéral ont étouffés des faits essentiels et se sont servis de fausses données sur cette tragédie pour pouvoir imposer leur programme anti arme. Malheureusement, je ne suis pas surpris. Ce gouvernement nous démontre sans cesse que leur programme fait fi de la vérité.

En plus du décret d'interdiction, ils ont aussi adopté le projet de loi C-71. Ceci a activé le registre des armes longues version 2 qui oblige

la création d'un numéro de cession pour chaque vente d'une arme longue ainsi que la conservation d'un registre de ces transactions. C-71 impose des limites sur le transport des armes à autorisation restreintes. En général, il est autorisé uniquement dans les clubs de tir agréés. Tous les autres déplacements requiert une autorisation de transport (ATT) de la part des registraires d'armes à feu des provinces.

J'ai personnellement ressenti et été témoin de l'impact de ce projet de loi lorsque je suis allé à des expositions d'armes en Ontario. Cela sautait aux yeux! Il y avait environ 50% de moins de vendeurs et 60% à 70% de moins d'acheteurs. J'ai remarqué depuis quelques mois que le site internet du Centre Canadien des Armes à Feu, une nécessité pour générer un numéro de cession dans un laps de temps acceptable, ne fonctionne plus, les nouvelles limites sur le transport des armes, et en plus nous sommes maintenant témoins de la baisse de participation à des événements qui étaient normalement populaires.

Le prochain geste du gouvernement Libéral fut la cerise sur le sundae. Le projet de loi C-21 qui viens de passé sa deuxième lecture au moment d'écrire ces lignes. La coalition du NPD et des Libéraux pourrait faire avancer C-21 au comité et troisième lecture et sera ensuite envoyé au Sénat. Pendant ce temps, sous le prétexte d'imposer des conditions pour l'approbation des cessions d'armes de poing, les règlements récemment déposés peuvent être en vigueur aussi tôt que septembre 2022 et empêcheront la plupart des cessions déjà entamées au Canada. Ce dernier coup des Libéraux aura un effet dévastateur sur les propriétaires d'armes à feu, l'industrie des armes, et ceux qui gagnent leur vie dans cette industrie.

Il est évident que ce gouvernement utilise une stratégie à plusieurs niveaux

avec l'objectif d'interdire complètement toutes les armes à feu au Canada. Leur plan commence à porter fruit.

Ce qui est aussi évident, c'est l'enthousiasme que les Canadiens ont envers les armes à feu. Lorsque les Libéraux ont présenté le projet de loi C-21, les gens se sont précipités dans les magasins d'armes et ont acheté toutes les armes de poing disponibles, laissant les tablettes vides. C'est le moment de profiter de cet enthousiasme pour nous faire entendre. Je vous encourage à parler à vos députés, amis, voisins et tous ceux qui veulent bien écouter. Dites leurs que le gouvernement Libéral continu de salir l'image des propriétaires responsables d'armes à feu, que les attaques incessantes sur vos droits et libertés en tant que citoyen canadien vous choque profondément.

Le résultat de la course à la chefferie du parti Conservateur (PCC) approche à grands pas. C'est le moment de faire le bon choix pour avoir un chef solide qui pourra gagner la prochaine élection et abroger ces projets de loi et ces décrets absurdes mettant fin au programme de désarmement Libéral. Je vous encourage à nouveau à voter et de vous faire entendre.

Je suis confiant que dans les années à venir il y aura à nouveau un temps, où des familles, amis, collègues pourrons collectionner des armes, chasser, être sur la ligne de feu de compétitions de trappe ou de tir à la cible dans un club de tir sans avoir à ressentir le nuage noir de restrictions imposées par le gouvernement. La NFA se bat très fort pour vous et les générations à venir pour qu'ils puissent jouir eux aussi des mêmes droits et libertés que nous avons vécus durant notre jeunesse. Ces moments sont la source de souvenirs inoubliables - l'époque où nous n'étions pas étiquetés à cause de nos biens personnels ou à cause des activités qui nous plaisent. 



# Vice-President's Message

By Blair Hagen

## Social Re-Engineering

As we move into the fall, Justin and the Liberals will move to fast-track Bill C-21. Handgun freezes, gun bans, red flag laws to target anyone with a firearms license for special treatment and every civil disarmament fantasy dreamed and demanded by the civil disarmament lobby will attempt to be implemented. Its important to document this.

C-21 is an attempt to not only provide the basis for one of the biggest confiscations of rights and property in Canadian history, but also to destroy the Canadian firearms industry and the right and cultural tradition of firearms ownership in Canada. This is social re-engineering in its purest form. Fewer firearms, fewer firearms owners, fewer firearms businesses and fewer firearms activities, with the hope that the result is the neutralization of firearms as a political and economic issue in Canada in the future. The future they want for you, me, every Canadian.

That politicians and bureaucrats would conspire to legislate and regulate solely for political purposes, with full knowledge of the effects on Canadians who did nothing to deserve the destruction of their businesses, property, livelihood, rights and culture, is a complete and utter disgrace. This causes me to harken back to another time the Liberals attacked the rights and freedoms of Canadians, with results that in their elitist arrogance they could have never imagined.

The collective outrage of Canadians in reaction to the Liberals C-68 *Firearms Act* of 1995 and the incredible failure of that program eventually resulted in the defeat of that government in 2006 and the Liberals spending almost a decade in the political wilderness.

However, C-68 also had its intended effect. From 1995 until 2006, confisca-



C-21 is an attempt to not only provide the basis for one of the biggest confiscations of rights and property in Canadian history, but also to destroy the Canadian firearms industry and the right and cultural tradition of firearms ownership in Canada.

tion of rights and property were the order of the day and millions of Canadians were subjected to its excesses, which resulted in the loss of their rights, freedoms, property, businesses and, in many cases, their futures. After 1995, over half of the firearms businesses in Canada were forced to close shop as the legal and regulatory burden became too onerous to overcome and sales slid due to the very sincere belief the Liberals intended to end firearms ownership in Canada. That was the intended effect, and it almost worked.

But Canadians are resilient people. We will not tolerate the efforts of politicians and bureaucrats to destroy the cherished values of our nation. We will always work towards political and legal solutions to remove those politicians from office, bring those bureaucrats to heel and stop civil disarmament efforts wherever they threaten our rights and freedoms.

We built back, fought the political battles that destroyed the credibility of the Liberal gun program, created the political alternatives and solutions necessary to end their attacks and ultimately enacted legislation ending one of the cornerstones of their hallmark civil disarmament legislation, the infamous and failed long gun registry. But now the Liberals are bringing it back, through the back door, and much worse. But guess what? There's light at the end of this dark, creepy woke Liberal/progressive tunnel.

The Conservative Party leadership race is heating up and there seems to be a different feel to this particular

one. Dare I say excitement? Most of the candidates have made positive statements about ending Justin and the Liberals' attacks on the rights and freedoms of Canadians and pursuing fundamental firearms law reforms when they are elected.

Many of the CPC candidates also seem to have fresh and innovative ideas not only on the firearms issue, but on many of the economic and social issues that currently plague Canadians courtesy of Justin and the Liberals. Justin Trudeau's government will be defeated. His Liberal government has wrecked our economy, has deliberately divided Canadians along political and cultural lines, has attacked the basic rights and freedoms of Canadians, has imprisoned, harassed, censored and has perpetrated a war of economic and cultural attacks on the lives of regular, everyday Canadians from coast to coast for over six years.

If anyone you know defends what Justin and the Liberals have done, they deserve a pie in the face, to be covered in silly string and at the very least mocked and politely but earnestly told to go to hell.

We must work and prepare now for

the government that will replace Justin and the Liberals. Change is coming. The next government is likely to wish to legislate firearms law reforms. The firearms laws in Canada today are so far beyond the pale of responsible regulation it is a disgrace. I think I used that word before. I'm sure I'll use it again. Or maybe I'll simply describe them as despicable.

However, those reforms cannot be minor or limited in scope. They cannot attempt to simply amend or ameliorate current *Firearms Act* regulations. I know I tend to sound like a broken record on a permanent skip, and I have said this again and again over the many years I have had a column in the *Canadian Firearms Journal*. The entire vile Liberal *Firearms Act* must be replaced by new legislation that fundamentally changes Canadian firearms laws once and for all, and forever. A clear repudiation of the Liberal Party's civil disarmament agenda. If there are no howls of outrage from mainstream media, journalists, newsroom editors or from the benches of the opposition when that legislation is passed, then something is very wrong.

The C-68 *Firearms Act* and all its edi-

fications, PAL, ATT, all of its restrictions, bureaucratic nonsense and regulatory offenses against Canadian citizenship must be expunged and erased.

We must have made-in-Canada firearms laws for Canadians, not based on American gun control narratives, not based on international civil disarmament initiatives. Laws based on Canadian values and realities that respect the rights and property of Canadians, and instead punish the criminal misuse of firearms. Completely opposite of what is in place now.

The last few years have been lean years, not only for Canadian firearm owners, but also for everyone who believes in rights and freedoms. This will continue for a time while Canadians maintain the process of jettisoning Justin and the Liberals and re-establishing our precious rights and freedoms.

Join me in recommitting to this fight as free people bestowed with the rights and freedoms of our ancestors, to defeat once again those who disarm and relegate Canadians to the status of subjects or privileged serfs; something we are not and never will be. I promise. 



Nathaniel Milljour



# Politics & Guns

Bruce Gold

## The Logic Of Gun Control

Understanding gun control is not easy due to the mix of emotions, rhetoric, bad information and vested interests which converge on the topic. Nonetheless, let us attempt an examination of the basic logic behind it.

There is fundamental agreement across the political spectrum that reducing violent crime is admirable and a perfectly worthy and legitimate goal for our policies. Since violence is supported and empowered by weaponry, it is natural, even obvious, that control and limitation of weaponry will support our anti-violence agenda. It makes further sense, since weaponry by itself is merely a collection of inanimate objects, that suppressing the availability of weaponry can only be addressed through people. That is, people create, manufacture, possess and utilize weaponry. Hence, weapon control unavoidably devolves into people control by limiting what they may (lawfully) create, possess and use. Obviously, if we stop our enquires here, we must conclude that severely controlling or entirely preventing access to weaponry, in this case guns, is a logical and effective means of restricting and reducing violence. Many passionate anti-gunners are convinced and motivated because they have ended their enquires at this point.

### REALITY INTRUDES

Unfortunately, for those who like simple solutions to complex problems, there are a few unstated assumptions in the above paragraph. It assumes that control, including social, legal and political (the top-down imposition of order), is capable of perfection, so a ban will work because everyone will obey. However, this perfect control of people is impossible and has never been achieved even in maximum security prisons. Which brings us to our next assumption.

It also assumes that all violence is bad, therefore weaponry can only be



A weapon is a force multiplier which can be used for evil but also allows the weak to defend themselves from the strong.

used for bad purposes. This is wishful thinking, not reality. Police, courts and individuals routinely use violence or the threat of violence to protect life, property and the public peace. This is necessary because a few hateful, unreasonable and violent persons will happily use violence, and can only be restrained by violence. At this point, many pacifists or other moralizers argue that because their moral imperatives dictate violence should not, in their perfect world, be used, we should assume our current world is perfect (morally) and restrict our policies accordingly. As Don Kates, the criminologist, stated, "Virtually never are murderers the ordinary, law-abiding people against whom gun bans are aimed. Almost without exception, murderers are extreme aberrant with lifelong histories of crime, substance abuse, psychopathology, mental retardation and/or irrational violence against those around them, as well as other hazardous behaviour."

The reality, that peace and safety must be defended, raises the issue of

self-defence, both by individuals and by society. Looking at the individual, it's apparent that a weapon is a force multiplier which can be used for evil, but it also allows the weak to defend themselves from the strong. The old saying that "God made man, Samuel Colt made them equal," was a hard recognition of this truth, even if some people find the truth offensive to their preferences.

We can note here that in their political campaign against firearms, the Liberals absolutely reject self-defence and state without reservation that, in Canada guns can only be used for hunting or sports shooting. This, of course, is not Canadian law, as it recognizes a right to self-defence. Justice Minister Allan Rock testified before the Justice Committee of the House of Commons in February 1995 that handguns that are .25 or .32 calibre or that have a barrel length of four inches or less (about 58 per cent of handguns in Canada at that time) were to be prohibited and confiscated because they were likely to be used for self-defence.<sup>1</sup>

## ILLEGAL GUNS

We can accept that weapon bans will be effective against the law-abiding, whose possession of weapons is not a problem. However, there remain the violent lawbreakers, who were our original target before we sidetracked into peace through gun control. Here, we have several problems. The first and most critical is that people who engage in wilful violence for their own ends are not going to allow their activities to be thwarted by a mere gun ban. Firearms can be smuggled, stolen, manufactured or modified to bypass any gun ban. To underline how ineffective the leverage from gun control to crime control is, we can note that we have had strict handgun registration and control since 1934. The *Firearms Act* of 1995 made simple possession of private property (guns) a criminal offense without a licence. In 1995, the number of homicides in Canada was 587. After 25 years of massive gun control, with ever-increasing restrictions, the homicide number is now 743 (2020). Not much to show for billions spent on paperwork and paperwork crimes to “control guns.”

Why should this surprise? If we look at Statistics Canada data from 1997 to 2005 (they seldom report these stats), we find there were 5,194 homicides. Of these, 118 firearms were identified as registered, on average 13 per year or 7.5 per cent of homicide guns. We must consider the relationship of the 118 registered gun homicides to total homicides. ( $118/5194 = 2.2$  per cent). Having 97.8 per cent of our gun control regulatory efforts land where the problem isn't, the guns of the law-abiding, is pathetic to the point of delusional. (Yes, there are other effects, but it gives a good indication of what sort of efficiencies we are looking at.) This clarifies our basic strategic problem. We are no longer targeting the criminal with a 100 per cent overlap between our target and the cause of the problem. We are targeting law-abiding gun owners, resulting in a 97.8 per cent wastage of effort.

Another assumption in the “we control the guns because we license and register them” is the assumption that we have or can have a closed system where all guns are and must remain



**Targeting law-abiding gun owners in an effort to reduce crime results in a 97.8 per cent wastage of effort.**

in the control system. This assumes that both smuggling and theft can and will be eliminated. Let us begin with smuggling.

Our unguarded border with the US is 5,500 miles long and most of it doesn't even have a fence. The Canadian Border Service recently admitted that only one in a million cargoes going by rail are inspected. Even this fiasco seems to rest on the assumption that guns cannot come across the 99.9 per cent of the border that is not an official entry point. These physical realities make choking off the supply of smuggled guns to criminals at any level they desire a fantasy.

As to the low levels of theft from law-abiding owners: If this was a seri-

ous source of criminal guns, it would show up in the seized guns statistics, which it does not. Even if every legal gun in Canada was confiscated, the small numbers from thefts would be effortlessly replaced by smuggling.

There is also the moral and democratic problem of blaming the law-abiding for being victims of crime and targeting the penalties and restrictions on the law-abiding instead of the criminal.

## THE FREEZE

Trudeau's latest move to freeze handgun ownership in Canada is a perfect example of this process. About \$1 billion in private property will be seized without compensation (slow confiscation as the owners age). This is the biggest seizure of private property in Canadian history with zero evidence of unlawful conduct. Even if you hate guns and gun owners, this attack on the right to private property is a threat to anyone and everyone in Canada who has or wishes to own anything. Like his freezing of bank accounts, this will have international and investment repercussions. Would you invest in a country where property rights were a matter of political brinkmanship?

The divergence of time, money and effort away from violent offenders onto guns and necessarily the law-abiding owners of legal guns results in the desperate underfunding of things that actually have an impact, like border agencies, police, courts and jails. As in much else, the Liberals pursue ideological objectives and enthusiastically spin the facts to target votes from the ill-informed. A friendly, unprofessional press largely in agreement with the Liberals agenda is happy to give support. The firearms community is again being used as an unpopular minority group that can be demonized and scapegoated to distract from Liberal failures, scandals and incompetence. ❗

## Reference:

1 Armed Self Defence: The Canadian Case\*. Gary A. Mauser, Ph D, Institute of Canadian Urban Research Studies and Faculty of Business Administration, Journal of Criminal Justice, Vol 24, No 5, pp 393-406, 1996.

# Preserving Our Firearms Heritage

Gary K. Kangas

## Hunters & Trackers

When I was a boy, the entertainment fiction of the era was compelling, much of it revolving around frontier adventure, 'B' westerns and movies about frontiersmen. However, the most engaging was the TV series *Davy Crockett*. Fess Parker starring as Davy and Buddy Ebsen as George Russell were riveting in their thrilling adventures. I was enthralled enough to acquire a coon skin cap and carve a primitive long rifle. In the same era, my real hunting experiences were hunting upland game and water birds with my Dad, as well as shooting gophers with my three friends on various farms.

As my teens unfolded, I read stories about Buffalo Bill Cody, Jedidiah Smith, Kit Carson and Geronimo. Researching these men led to the discovery that there was much more to these skilled hunters and trackers. Particularly impressive was their technique of observation, understanding topography, the habits of animals, the signs they create, tracks, scat, shed feathers and fur, marks and disturbances of the surrounding brush, grass and even rocks. Primitive man developed these strategies long ago to gather food and survive, plus tracking their tribal enemies. Tracking is keen observation and knowledge acquired by experience, with the observant, skilled tracker having the ability to separate various signs so they can close in on the chosen quarry. The skilled tracker recognizes the specific details of different creatures and situations.

As I matured, I began to read about Frederick Selous, Robert Baden-Powell and Ishi, the famed Yahi First Nation hunter and tracker. The more I read, the broader the list became. Legendary Canadian frontiersmen became my heroes. John George "Kootenai" Brown, an ex-ensign in the British Army made his way to North America. Having led a life of high adventure as a Pony Express rider, scout, guide and hunter,



**ABOVE: The posse who tracked down the Miner gang were (left to right): Tracker Alex Ignace, BC Police Cst. Wm Fernie, unknown special constable, tracker Eli LaRoux, unknown special constable, Special Cst. Young, tracker Michell LeCamp, Special Cst. Joe Graves, tracker Philip Toma, unidentified tracker.**



**LEFT: Jerry Potts worked as a tracker, scout and interpreter for the RNWMP for 22 years.**

Brown became one of my favourites. He became chief scout of the Rocky Mountain Rangers in the rebellion/resistance of 1885. My next favourite was Jerry Potts, a Scots/Cree/Metis plainsman, buffalo hunter, scout, tracker and interpreter. Jerry is noted for carry-

ing two 44-40 Smith & Wesson No. 3 revolvers and a 44-40 Winchester, plus a small hideout gun in his coat. Jerry became the chief scout and interpreter for the NWMP, a position he held for 22 years. I then came upon William "Billy" Manson and his sons, Tom and Donald, who were also renowned cowboys, hunters, trackers and guides.

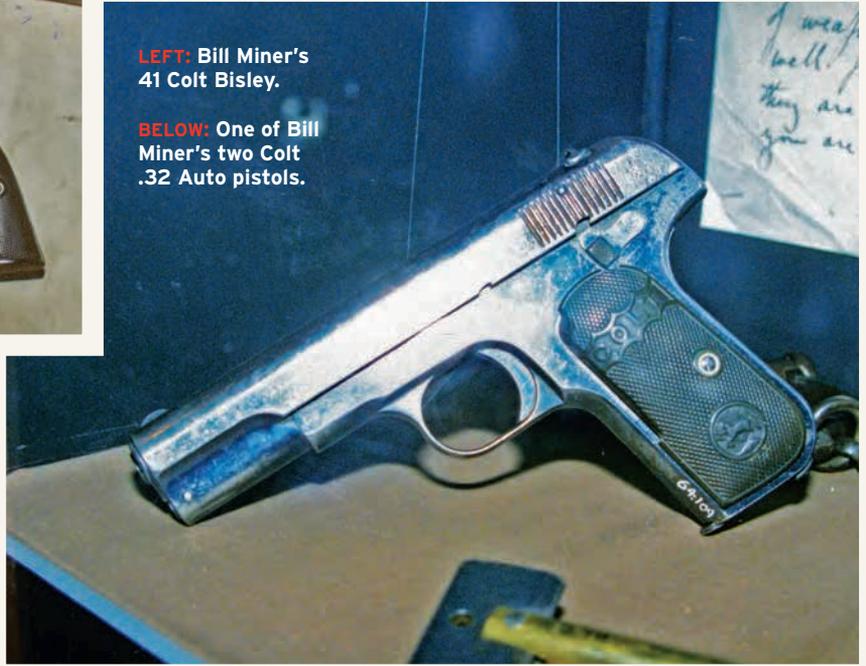
The use of trackers by military forces in Canada began early in our history. The highest-profile trackers were employed during the French and Indian Wars by the British and the French. This trend continued during the Revolutionary War in the United States, when trackers played a pivotal role for both sides. The War of 1812 saw their expanded use by the British-Canadian forces and the US military, who utilized trackers to predict enemy movements.

Trackers being utilized by police began



**LEFT:** Bill Miner's 41 Colt Bisley.

**BELOW:** One of Bill Miner's two Colt .32 Auto pistols.



in a very dark era, the American slave trade in the 1700s, when slave patrols used First Nations trackers to apprehend escaped slaves. After the US Civil War, legitimate police forces in both Canada and the US used these valuable resources to capture criminals.

Fast forward to the modern age. On the southern border of the US, Customs and the DEA, Immigration and Homeland Security have a unit called the Shadow Wolves. These are US First Nations trackers who patrol the US/Mexican border. Founded in 1972, the members of the unit are Tohono Odham, Blackfeet, Lakota, Navaho, Sioux and Yaqui. This tactical unit uses traditional methods of searching for and analyzing sign. They are noted for their skill and daring in their ability to track over the harshest and most rugged terrain, apprehending drug smugglers and illegals.

In Canada's lurid historical past, on May 8, 1906, a train was held up east of Kamloops, BC. The resulting manhunt and tracking of the robbers was the largest pursuit to that date in BC. Unknown at the time, this was the second robbery by Miner, Dunn and Colquhoun, as on Sept. 10, 1904, they had successfully robbed a train at Silverdale near Mission, BC. It was BC's first train robbery. The three had evaded the police and escaped with \$7,000.

The *Island Sentinel* newspaper reported on the Kamloops robbery: "Train Held Up - Three masked men hold up the mail car on the Imperial Limited. The west-bound Imperial Limited CPR Express was held up and the mail car robbed 12 miles east of Kamloops between Ducks and Furrer siding at half past 11 last Tuesday night."

This event ignited the west. The BC Police were on full call out and the

NWMP were also summoned, boarding a train from Calgary to Kamloops. Cowboys were sworn in as Special Constables and First Nations trackers were recruited to bring the bandits in.

The well-armed criminal trio were on the run. Bill Miner was armed with two Colt .32-calibre semi-auto pistols and a 41 Colt Bisley. Shorty Dunn had a Luger semi-auto pistol and Louis Colquhoun carried a nickel-plated Smith & Wesson .38-calibre revolver.

The First Nation trackers were on the case, initially accompanied by Special Constables Young and Joe Graves with blood hounds. The trackers soon discovered the robbers' camps and were hot on the trail. The three men were tracked from Campbell's Meadows via Fish Lake to Douglas Lake. The robbers tried to throw the trackers off the trail by using various strategies, such as duck walking backwards over soft ground to confuse the posse. However, none of the ploys worked.

By this time, the pursuit focused on a particular area of Douglas Lake. There, Constable William Fernie spotted three men leaving the road and going into the bush. He sent word to NWMP Sgt. Wilson and his contingent of six constables. Seeing the smoke from the campfire, they were able to ride to the camp where Sgt. Wilson and his constables found three men

having lunch by the campfire. Sgt. Wilson dismounted and confronted the men and suggested they might be the people who robbed the train. Bill Miner introduced himself as George Edwards, a resident of the area and said they were just prospecting. During the interview, Shorty Dunn became agitated and yelled, "It's all up, boys," and opened fire. As he was running away, it's reported that 10 to 12 shots were exchanged and Dunn was shot in the leg. The miscreants were quickly arrested. As it began to rain, Miner and his two accomplices were cuffed and put into a wagon. The point riders were BC policemen, with the NWMP guarding the rear of the wagon as they proceeded to Kamloops.

The rest is history. The gang of three was tried in Kamloops; Miner and Dunn were sentenced to life and Louis Colquhoun was given 25 years in the British Columbia Penitentiary.

A genuine wild west hunt and a part of our firearms heritage. 

#### Sources:

*Island Sentinel* newspaper May 1906. The Canadian Encyclopedia, Wikipedia, History Library, *Kootenai* Brown by William Rodney





Some padding  
between a  
rifle and a  
hard support  
helps  
accuracy.

# BLACK JACK

21 tips & tricks for shooters  
BY LOWELL STRAUSS



**G**randpa leaned back in his chair, animatedly recounting another hunting story. And though I'd heard this tale a hundred times, I always loved hearing it again. Each of the old-timer's tales were full of adventure – successes, failures and, most importantly, lessons learned along the way. I never pass up the chance to use grandpa's pearls of shooting wisdom, some of which I'll share here. >

**DOMINATE THE SKIES** – Knowing your dominant eye is important for shotgun shooters. Don't believe me? Point at a spot about 30 metres away, and without moving your finger, close one eye. Are you still pointing at the object? If not, the eye you closed is dominant and it may not match your dominant hand. An apparent shift in target sighting with a non-dominant eye makes it nearly impossible to hit targets. Use eye dominance (not handedness) to determine the correct shooting side. Remember, eye dominance can change over time due to health or injuries. Start new shooters out on the correct side for success.

**CARBON REMOVER** – Fouling wreaks havoc on rifle function and accuracy, particularly in black powder guns and small-calibre cartridges. In a muzzle-loader, swabbing the bore every couple of shots with a damp patch followed by a dry patch removes the worst of the carbon, allowing another volley of shots before repeating the field-expedient process. Cartridges like centrefire .17s lose accuracy more quickly than larger calibres due to

fouling; a pull-through with a bore snake about every dozen shots quickly restores accuracy.

**BARREL COOLING** – When testing a rifle's accuracy, it's important to cool the barrel between shot strings; failing to do so may result in groups opening up. I speed barrel cooling by moving the rifle to the shade and keeping the action open, facing into the breeze. I also use physics to my advantage. Because hot air rises, placing a rifle upright in the rack with the action open allows cooler air to be drawn through the action and up the bore like a chimney, cooling it much faster than lying flat on the shooting bench.

**FROZEN FIX** – Combining moisture, sub-zero temperature and firearms is a recipe for disaster. Taking a gun from the cold into the warm and back out into the cold may cause a frozen action. Lock de-icer is one quick fix if you find yourself in this sticky situation. De-icer is simply isopropyl alcohol, but because it has a much lower freezing point than water (-89 degrees Celsius), it melts the problem-causing moisture.

**LOCKED TIGHT** – Loose bases and rings are an annoyance and cause errant shots at the most inopportune times. A drop of the blue (medium strength) thread-locking fluid on base and ring screw threads helps prevent loosening under recoil. It's also a good practice to check and periodically retorque the screw to factory specs.

**TUNING WITH A TORQUE WRENCH** – Shooters looking for better rifle accuracy should tinker with action screw torque values. Tightening the action screws changes the rifle's harmonics. Finding the sweet spot that the ammunition likes may be a simple way of shooting tighter groups. Start low and increase torque, shooting different shot strings to test the torque's effect on group size. Some manufacturers specify the maximum torque values for their firearms, so double check and stay within these parameters.

**STUCK CHOKE PREVENTION** – Screw-in chokes are a marvel of modern shotguns. Without periodic maintenance, interchangeable chokes can quickly become a fixed choke – seized in the



**Tape the muzzle to prevent debris and moisture from entering, then add a wind string.**



To prevent seized choke tubes, remove, clean and lubricate the threads regularly.

shotgun for all eternity. It's easy to prevent. Every time you clean the bore, remove and clean the choke, then lubricate the threads of the tubes before reinstalling. Any lubricant will work, from gun oils and greases to automotive-style anti-seize compounds.

**MAXIMUM POINT-BLANK RANGE (MPBR)** – This simplifies hunting shots by allowing the hunter to aim at the centre of the vitals and hit from close range to the calculated max range. An animal's vitals zone size and the cartridge ballistics determine the distance for a dead-on hold. For example, if a deer's vitals measure nine inches, using a .308 Win shooting a Hornady ELD-X bullet at 2,600 feet per second, the max point-blank range is 308 yards (a happy coincidence). With this calculation, the shooter would sight in 3.91 inches high at 100 yards for a dead-on hold out to the maximum range. It's fast, intuitive and practical for hunting. Try it for yourself with this online calculator: [www.shooterscalculator.com/point-blank-range.php](http://www.shooterscalculator.com/point-blank-range.php).

**PADDED SUPPORT** – In the field, it may be necessary to shoot from an improvised rest. In those instances, I've learned that some sort of padding is essential. Shooting off a hard fence post, for example, creates different vibrations than the sandbags used for

zeroing at the range and may throw the shots. I use a glove or my forearm to act as a shock absorber. It makes a big difference.

**DIAL DOWN & ZOOM OUT** – Hunting guides often encounter this problem with clients. The guide spots an animal, but the hunter can't find it in the scope because of too much magnification. Or when they do fire, the shot sails over the animal's back because they forgot to dial down the turrets. These two problems are easily avoided by always zooming to the lowest power and dialing back to zero. Commit to making this a habit.

**MUZZLE MAGIC** – In wet or snowy conditions, taping the muzzle prevents moisture from entering the bore. Either masking or electrical tape works fine. Wrap extra tape around the barrel as a replacement. And don't worry, this tip doesn't affect rifle accuracy – the pressure inside the bore blows the tape free long before the bullet exits. As a bonus, secure the end of a fine thread to the wrap, which acts as a DIY wind indicator.

**AEROSOL SOLVENTS SAVE THE DAY** – I've learned my lesson. Always take a can of aerosol gun cleaner into the waterfowl blind, especially if running semi-autos. Dirt, debris and foul-

ing can slow the action and prevent chambering, extraction or firing. A quick blast of cleaner and you're back in the hunt.

**ONE-SHOT SIGHT-IN** – If the cost of ammunition has got you down, try sighting in your rifle with just one shot. For this task, you'll need a steady rest and a paper target. Start by bore sighting the gun (it needs to hit paper on the first shot). Next, aim at the centre of a 25-metre target and fire. With the scope's crosshairs still pointed at the centre, hold the rifle firm and carefully dial the turrets until the crosshairs align with the bullet hole. To confirm, shoot a second shot (or not). It should now be sighted on the bullseye. Of course, this requires more shooting at different distances, but this is a practical way of getting close with just one shot.

**COLD BORE & COLD SHOOTER** – Shooters know that the first shot from a cold bore will often be a flyer. Or could it be the shooter that's cold? Target shooting athletes warm up before a match and take a series of sighter shots before settling into the competition. If you're shooting a rifle to measure group size or for a competition, consider dryfiring or firing some warm-up shots before things get serious. >



Always return elevation adjustments to zero immediately after dialing up.

**ZERO CHECK** – A point of impact shift is not uncommon from field shooting positions. A zero from the bench may be different than from standing or prone. Further, shooting supports can also influence barrel harmonics and bullet impacts. Confidence starts with knowing where a gun shoots. Check the zero with the gear and positions you plan to use in the field for better success.

**ON THE LEVEL** – Have you ever shouldered a rifle only to find that the riflescope reticle is canted to one side? This drives my eyes crazy and affects scope windage and elevation adjustments, as well as long-range accuracy. Wheeler Engineering (and others) make scope levelling kits that simplify the process. Without these specialized tools, you can still level a scope with acceptable results for most shooters. Keep the rifle level while aligning the crosshairs with a plumb line like the corner of a wall. Once everything lines up, snug the scope rings and double-check. Our eyes are amazingly good at noticing anything that's out of alignment.

**FRONT SIGHT FOCUS** – Do you want to improve your iron sight shooting? If so, keep a razor-sharp focus on the front sight. This is particularly true for handgun shooters, but it also applies

to rifles using open or peep-style sights. The human eye is incredibly good at aligning the front and rear sight (sight picture) and aiming it on the target. However, for optimal performance, the brain must clearly determine the spacing of the front sight with the rear and this is done by focusing on the front.

**REFLEX REMEDY** – Red dot sights provide an illuminated parallax-free view of the target, allowing a point-and-shoot sighting system for close-range shooting. One shortcoming with these sights is the dot may appear as a starburst pattern. Eye astigmatism exacerbates the problem. But there is a simple fix. Turn down the sight's brightness settings; one or two steps will sharpen the aiming dot while still being bright enough to see on the target.

**EVERYTHING IN MODERATION** – Some guns like running wet, others like it dryer, but one thing is sure: too much lubricant can cause more problems than too little. Lubricant traps dirt and fouling, eventually causing malfunctions. Manufacturers suggest a film of oil for best performance. I place a drop or two on the bolt or other friction points, wipe it with my finger into a thin film and remove the ex-

cess with a cloth. In the winter, I get rid of any excess lubricant (practically running it without oil) to prevent malfunctions like firing-pin problems. In Canada, some lubricants are superior to others in the cold, so read the label to ensure it'll work in your shooting conditions.

**CORROSIVE CAUTION** – Sweat and blood are part of a gun's life in the field, but these body fluids quickly corrode metal surfaces and promote rust. A damp cloth is all that's needed to neutralize and remove the worst of the mess in the field, preventing permanent damage. A silicone-impregnated cloth designed for this job provides longer-lasting protection.

**FIRST AID** – Accidents sometimes occur in the field, from scrapes and cuts to gunshot trauma. I've seen eyebrows cut with a scope, fingers sliced in a semi-auto action and hands burned from a ruptured shotshell. And while I hope never to need a tourniquet to stop the bleed, having one and knowing how to use it may save a life, so I'm prepared and have a first aid kit ready.

I've learned a lot about shooting from the advice and stories of old-timers I respect. I hope these tips help you to shoot better too. 

**BANNED IN  
2020**

**WAS NOT A  
PROBLEM  
PRIOR.  
AND STILL  
ISN'T ONE.**



# LESS MESS

Rio's biodegradable shotshell wad  
*BY JEFF SMITH*



Shotgunners have long known the importance of leaving as little trash as possible behind when they leave the field. This typically just means picking up the spent hulls they and others have fired. The plastic wad which contains the shot is usually left behind, as it is propelled into the water or deep grass and there's little hope of finding it. There it will simply become an eyesore, as plastic doesn't significantly decompose. However, since the introduction

of non-toxic shot has become accepted, the search for a way to clean up the hunting fields has continued among ammunition makers. At SHOT Show 2020, Rio Ammunition introduced their biodegradable shotshell wad to the hunting community. After speaking with a couple of company representatives there, I became quite intrigued by this product. I left SHOT with a couple of sample wads and the promise of some ammunition to try out.

Rio describes the wads as being hydro soluble in 24 hours, after which they become a nutrient-rich sludge. To achieve this, the wad is created on a vegetable base. Upon examination, the wad very closely resembles, in both looks and feel, a traditional plastic wad. The hulls are still traditional plastic with high brass bases. While waiting to acquire loaded shells, I came up with a realistic scenario to test the biodegradability of the wads I was given. I collected a jar



**LEFT:**  
Rio ammunition proved effective on late-season geese.



**LEFT:**  
Wad after one hour in pond water.

**BELOW:**  
Decomposed wad in pond water.



of water from a local wetland I hunt over. Leaving the jar open to the elements, I placed a wad into the water, where it quickly sank to the bottom as a fired wad would do. Over the next two days, I observed the wad for degradation. After 32 hours, the wad had dissolved into a mush, which disappeared into the soil when poured into my garden.

To test the wad when used in a field shoot, I built a simulated field which I also left exposed to the elements. While it took several months

to decompose, the wad did finally disappear into the soil. I attributed the longer time frame to the extreme drought we experienced here in southeast Alberta during the test. Moisture appears critical to the decomposition of the product. I am satisfied with the manufacturer's claims and can report that the wads did in fact decompose.

So, how did the shells perform in the field? The Rio shells I hunted with were 12 gauge, 3-inch, BB. I used these shells exclusively for all

my goose hunting, most of which occurred over decoys in local pea and bean fields. Test firing pre-season, I found they patterned quite well in my Benelli Nova choked improved modified and in my CZ Mallard over/under choked IM/M. If I did my part while hunting, I was killing geese at 40 yards easily.

Rio makes these shells in sizes BB through 8. Size 2, 4, and BB are supplied in 10-round boxes, with the remainder supplied in 25-round boxes. 🦆



# CHOOSING GLASS

The basics of selecting riflescopes  
*BY KEVIN WILSON*

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**S**top for a moment and think about how often you've contemplated which scope to get for a firearm. If you're a gun junkie, then you've likely gone through this exercise numerous times, as you have quite a few optic-equipped firearms, each gun paired up with a suitable optic which serves a specific purpose. If, on the other hand, you're new to firearms ownership, you may need a little help working your way through the world of optics and understanding where to spend your heavily taxed dollars.

Selecting a riflescope is an exercise I've completed numerous times for my own use, and as a guide and outfitter I have also seen the results of other people's choices -- good and bad. The following is my advice regarding some of the primary categories which should affect rifle-scope choice. They include topics like image clarity, magnification, functionality, application and price point, with a good place to start being the physical size of the scope.

## **TUBE SIZE & OBJECTIVE LENS**

Today's riflescopes come in one-inch or 30-millimetre tube diameter and a range of objective lens sizes. The

smaller-diameter tubes make for a lighter scope, while the 30-millimetre tube allows for a larger adjustment range, as when dialing for elevation. However, that 30-millimetre tube doesn't allow more light transmission as is commonly believed.

As a rule, I like bigger objective lenses, as they do let in more light and provide a larger exit pupil. With my aging eyes, I believe this gives me a huge leg up when shooting under low-light conditions. To maximize exit pupil and available light, I like to go with a 50-millimetre objective lens or greater. I even have scopes with 52-millimetre and 56-millimetre lenses. While many hunters are moving to these larger lenses, the 40-, 42- or 44-millimetre lenses are still most common. On lower-magnification scopes, like a 1-6x for example, a 24-millimetre objective is common.

## **MAGNIFICATION CHOICES**

To determine which magnification is right for you, it's important to first understand a few numbers. The lower the magnification, the greater the field of view (FOV). The higher the magnification, the lower or nar-

rower the FOV. However, changing both can also affect eye relief. Manufacturers need to balance all three of these factors when bringing a scope to market. So, evaluate all three to ensure you're getting the product you need.

Fixed power riflescopes (e.g., 4x) are available, but variable powers are the norm these days. Typical variable magnification choices for rimfire, muzzleloader and shotgun are often in the 1-6x or 2-7x range. Popular choices for North American big game rifles include a wide assortment in the 2-18x range, with the common 3-9x still available and certainly popular.

When it's time to choose a scope, it's all about determining your own magnification preference. The best way I can illustrate this is by offering several examples. I tend to use my rimfires for pest and varmint control. Shooting gophers, beavers or even the odd coyote at distances ranging from 20 to 80 yards, a less expensive, lower magnification riflescope is more than sufficient for me. For instance, I just picked up a Bushnell Elite 4500 in a 1-4x magnification. It has a 24-millimetre objective lens, so it's superb for small targets out to

50 yards. By comparison, I mounted a Bushnell 3.5-10x 36-millimetre scope specifically calibrated for my 17 HMR. Since this is a rimfire with a longer reach, it allows me to shoot out to 100 yards on smaller critters.

Moving up in size to mid-sized target species like coyotes, where shots can often range between 200 and 300-metres, I'm a firm believer in choosing a riflescope with a bigger magnification range. While I've used scopes that go as high as 32x and, yes, they're awesome, lately I've gone in the other direction. Because most of my fur-taking efforts take place in winter, I can be shooting in lower light, flat light or even obstructed conditions with snowfall. I also tend to put a lot of rounds through my centerfires. For this reason, clarity and durability are priorities. On my 22-250 Rem., I use a Swarovski Z5i 2.5-15x44P HD. On my 243 Win., I mounted a Swarovski 5-25x52P. This riflescope really brings far-away targets up close and personal, but a stable rest, like a Harris bipod, is imperative when using the higher magnifications.

As far as my big game rifles go, there's a bit of variation, but for the most part I personally want crystal clarity, durability, bigger objective lenses and magnification options. The rifles I use for hunting deer, bear and moose, for example, have higher-end riflescopes like the Swarovski Z6 3-18x50 L. However, for long-range hunting and shooting out past 500 yards, I stayed with what I viewed as the best glass I could afford and mounted a Swarovski Z8i in 3.5-28x50P. With a custom ballistic turret, I mounted this one on a custom-made 300 WSM. Truly a special rig, it does it all, with amazing accuracy.

#### RETICLE

The word reticle is a technical term for the configuration of the crosshairs or aiming point visible through the glass. As we have adopted a more technical and precise approach to ballistics, manufacturers have refined not only our aiming points, but also our ability to use the reticle to adjust for windage and elevation. Simple, uncluttered reticles are still available, but dialing for distance isn't necessary if the reticle has a series of accurately calibrated hash marks which



**ABOVE:** The ability of a riflescope to clearly identify and resolve an animal from its background in dim light is critical.

**RIGHT:** Many of today's riflescopes have the parallax adjustment mounted on the left side of the scope. This is more convenient than the traditional position on the objective bell.



can be used as aiming points.

Each riflescope manufacturer offers its own proprietary reticle selection. For instance, Leupold's TMOA reticle features marks in one MOA increments on the vertical and horizontal crosshairs, which allow for accurate range estimation, wind drift and bullet drop compensation. Another example is Swarovski's basic cross-hair or Plex reticle. Over time, I've become particularly fond of illuminated reticles. The bright, illuminated red-dot reticles in Swarovski's Z6i and Z8i riflescopes create a focusing point that's amazing, especially in lower-light conditions or when aiming at darker targets like black bear and moose.

#### BALLISTIC TURRETS

With the rapidly growing popularity of long-range shooting, many hunters are choosing a scope with a ballistic turret. After a laser range-

finder determines the distance to the target, these precisely calibrated turrets allow the shooter to dial the elevation turret to the correct setting, so the shooter can hold exactly on the target. Calibrated for specific bullets at a particular velocity, and for specific environmental conditions, they are engineered to ensure remarkable downrange accuracy. Markings on the turrets can be for minute-of-angle, milliradians, or distance (expressed in metres or yards).

#### PARALLAX

Many riflescopes feature a parallax adjustment mounted on either the left side of the tube or built into the objective bell of the scope. This is intended to ensure the reticle appears on the same focal plane as the target and helps to ensure the target is perfectly in focus. It's a useful feature whenever you're trying to squeeze every bit of accuracy from a rifle system and it's

usually adjustable from 50 yards/ metres to infinity. Riflescopes without this feature are normally set to be parallax free at a fixed distance ranging from about 100 to 150 yards. On fixed parallax rimfire scopes, it is often set at 50 yards, while shotgun scopes are typically set at 60 or 75 yards.

#### CLARITY MATTERS

Before making your final decision, it's a great idea to handle, experiment with and compare different scopes. Ask the retailer if you can try them outside the store. Evaluate each under natural light conditions and, if possible, under lower light as well. A worthwhile trick is to look up towards

the ceiling and find the darkest, furthest corner in the building. Look there to evaluate clarity and light transmission. You're certain to notice a big difference between higher, medium and lower-grade optics. Image clarity is partly a product of focus, but it's even more determined by quality of the glass and how that glass is refined, polished and coated. These days it really pays to go with an HD glass if available.

#### PRICE

Peruse the optics counter at your local store and you'll see a wide range of price points. You can spend as little as \$100 or invest well over \$3,000.

Most consumer-level rifle-scopes are priced in the \$300 to \$900 range.

As you look for your next riflescope, research where the glass and components are made and assembled. Consider what type of glass is used, how it is finished, if and to what extent it is waterproof/fogproof/shockproof, what the price is and determine the warranty details.

Austrian and German manufacturers have a proven reputation for engineering the finest glass in the world. But know that with this comes with a higher price tag.

North American manufacturers tend to outsource components, often having the glass refined elsewhere to lower production costs. So again, it's impor-

tant to research what you're getting. I've visited the Swarovski factory in Austria and can tell you firsthand that the craftsmanship, arduous testing, research and development spares no expense to maintain their hard-earned reputation.

#### THINK APPLICATION

Today's manufacturers offer a wide assortment of specialized optics best suited for specific shooting needs. However, they also offer general-purpose products designed to handle a multitude of chores. With the myriad of options to choose from, it's important to determine exactly what your needs are. For instance, will the rifle and scope combo be used for long-range shooting out past 600 metres? Is this optic for a big bore rifle intended for shooting dangerous game at close range? Maybe the intent is to shoot deer in heavy timber with a shotgun or muzzleloader. Or maybe it's intended to trick out a rimfire for shooting varmints. Then again, perhaps we want to rig up a good all-around centrefire rifle for hunting everything from moose to deer. With the diversity in riflescope technology, today's options are seemingly endless. The beauty is, with a little research, and sound advice, it's possible to narrow the search quickly.

In the end, it's up to you. If you find the sea of optics overwhelming, take a deep breath, make a checklist of your own priorities, get into your local hunting store and start evaluating what will work for you. 🏆



**ABOVE:** Ballistic turrets are a valuable feature for making longer shots. This one is calibrated in minutes of angle.

**BELOW:** Choosing a riflescope includes evaluating and considering objective lens size, reticle type, magnification, parallax, image clarity and price.





# MOUNTAIN RIFLES

How light is too light  
*BY T.J. SCHWANKY*

The author prefers lower recoil rifles in the mountains, as most shots are taken from the prone position.



You don't need to read much about mountain or sheep hunting on social media to see that the trend for all gear these days is faster and lighter. This is especially true when it comes to rifles. I got to handle a 4.5-pound, custom-built rifle the other day, and the owner looked at it as the ultimate sheep rifle. He had no idea how it shot or how it handled, but it was the lightest rifle the builder had ever constructed, so it had to be the best. The truth is that mountain hunters have gone a bit lightweight crazy.

Sure, having light gear is critical, especially on extended backpack hunts, and a rifle is the most awkward weight you'll pack, but it still must be functional. I know for a fact I don't shoot extremely lightweight rifles well. The truth is, most people don't. Many seem to have forgone function for weight savings when it comes to mountain hunting.

At one time, lightweight mountain rifles were the exclusive domain of custom builders, but with the recent popularity of mountain hunting, sev-

eral mainstream rifle manufacturers have jumped on the bandwagon with extremely lightweight off-the-shelf offerings. It makes it worthwhile to look at the anatomy of the perfect mountain rifle. Well, at least what I think is a perfect mountain rifle.

## RIFLE STYLE

As much as I enjoy shooting my single-shots, pumps, semis and lever-actions, the perfect mountain rifle is unquestionably a bolt-action. One of my requirements for a perfect moun-

tain rifle is one capable of shooting long distances, and the design and manufacturing tolerances of the bolt-action typically ensure an accurate rifle. Most off-the-shelf rifles these days are capable of MOA groups with factory ammunition, and with a little tinkering most can do better.

The obvious advantage of the bolt-action over the single-shot is that it is a repeater, capable of multiple shots without reloading. While a second shot should never be on your mind when pulling the trigger, we are talking about the perfect rifle here and the availability of a quick follow-up shot is desirable if required. Bolt-actions also offer a wider variety of cartridge choices than the other styles, and their simple design makes them virtually bombproof in a hostile mountain environment. Fortunately, there are a bevy of lightweight, factory bolt-actions to choose from these days.

#### THE STOCK

While not the most aesthetically pleasing to all, there is little question the perfect mountain rifle wears a synthetic stock. Fibreglass and carbon fibre stocks especially, but also injection molded are extremely durable and practical, as weather has little effect on them. Wood stocks can be prone to slight warping when exposed to weather extremes and this can lead

to changes in zero, and they tend to get a lot of dents and scratches up in the rocks. While high-quality wood stocks can withstand some pretty severe weather conditions, wood will never be as impervious to moisture as a synthetic stock.

Synthetic stocks are also typically lighter in weight than their wood counterparts. Yes, the perfect mountain rifle needs to be lightweight; preferably less than 6.5 pound bare and slightly less would be even better. There aren't many wood-stocked factory rifles out there that can meet this requirement. For those with a favourite rifle with a wooden stock they'd like to shave some weight off, there are several aftermarket stock manufacturers offering a wide variety of fibreglass and carbon fibre stocks for factory rifles. Carbon fibre is definitely the ultimate, but it does come with a hefty price tag.

There are numerous stocks that have a carbon fibre pattern stenciled on them, but don't be fooled into believing they are the real thing. They are typically just fibreglass or injection-molded plastic with a pattern applied to the exterior. Rifles with injection-molded stocks, like the Tikka, do get a bit of a bad rap for the stocks feeling cheap, but they are amazingly durable and, for those on a budget, they are a great option. We've taken rifles with

injection-molded stocks on numerous mountain hunts without a hiccup. They definitely aren't as pretty, nor do they feel as good as carbon or fibreglass, but they are functional.

#### THE BARREL

A barrel is little more than a cylindrical piece of steel with a hole drilled in the middle and it is typically the heaviest part of a rifle. There are numerous ways to reduce weight on the barrel and the primary way is to taper it. Other than rifles equipped with bull barrels, all have some degree of taper and the more material removed from the barrel, the lighter it is. The lightest barrels typically found on mountain rifles have a #2 contour. These barrels are quite thin in profile and the trade off for the lighter weight is that they heat rapidly from multiple shots, aren't as rigid and can lose accuracy due to sling or bipod pressure. The longer the barrel, the more rigidity becomes an issue. Many rifle manufacturers choose to counteract this issue by using a #3 contour barrel and fluting it. The fluting will remove several ounces, plus it will result in a more rigid barrel than a round #2 contour. For barrels longer than 22 inches, the fluted #3 contour is definitely a better option.

Obviously, the shorter the barrel, the lighter it is, plus a shorter barrel

Custom-built  
270WSM  
with Marco  
Polo horns in  
Kyrgyzstan.





Mountain rifles must survive extreme variations in weather.

comes with increased rigidity. Some cartridges perform better in shorter barrels than others and cartridge selection for me is more about losing weight on the rifle than it is about having a favourite chambering.

A more recent trend in lightweight mountain rifles has been carbon fibre barrels. The barrels are actually not pure carbon fibre, but rather carbon fibre wrapped around a thin, cylindrical steel liner. These barrels are quite large in profile and reported to dissipate heat well and offer the stiffness of a much heavier steel barrel. For those looking for a rifle with a longer barrel, these do seem to be a good option and there are several factory rifles now offered with carbon barrels and several manufacturers offer them for custom builds as well.

#### THE CARTRIDGE

While choice of cartridge is definitely a personal one, for me there are a handful of fairly specific criteria, with the first being that it fits in a short action. It's easy to shave a half pound off

a rifle just by utilizing a short action versus a long action. Second, it would need to perform well in a 20 to 22-inch barrel. Third, it needs to, at minimum, launch a 140-grain bullet between 2,700 to 3,000 feet per second. For a dedicated mountain rifle, 6.5mms are hard to beat, but there are a few options in .277, 7mm and .30 calibre as well.

In the 6.5 calibres, the Creedmoor has earned a reputation as a solid performer in the mountains and the newer 6.5 PRC is rapidly becoming a favourite among sheep hunters. I've hunted in the mountains all over the world with a Creedmoor and certainly never felt under gunned, but I've recently switched to the PRC just for the slightly higher velocity and extended effective range it offers. Both these cartridges perform extremely well with a 20-inch barrel. The great thing about the short-action cartridges is not only the weight savings in rifles, but also most are extremely efficient in a shorter barrel with minimal velocity loss.

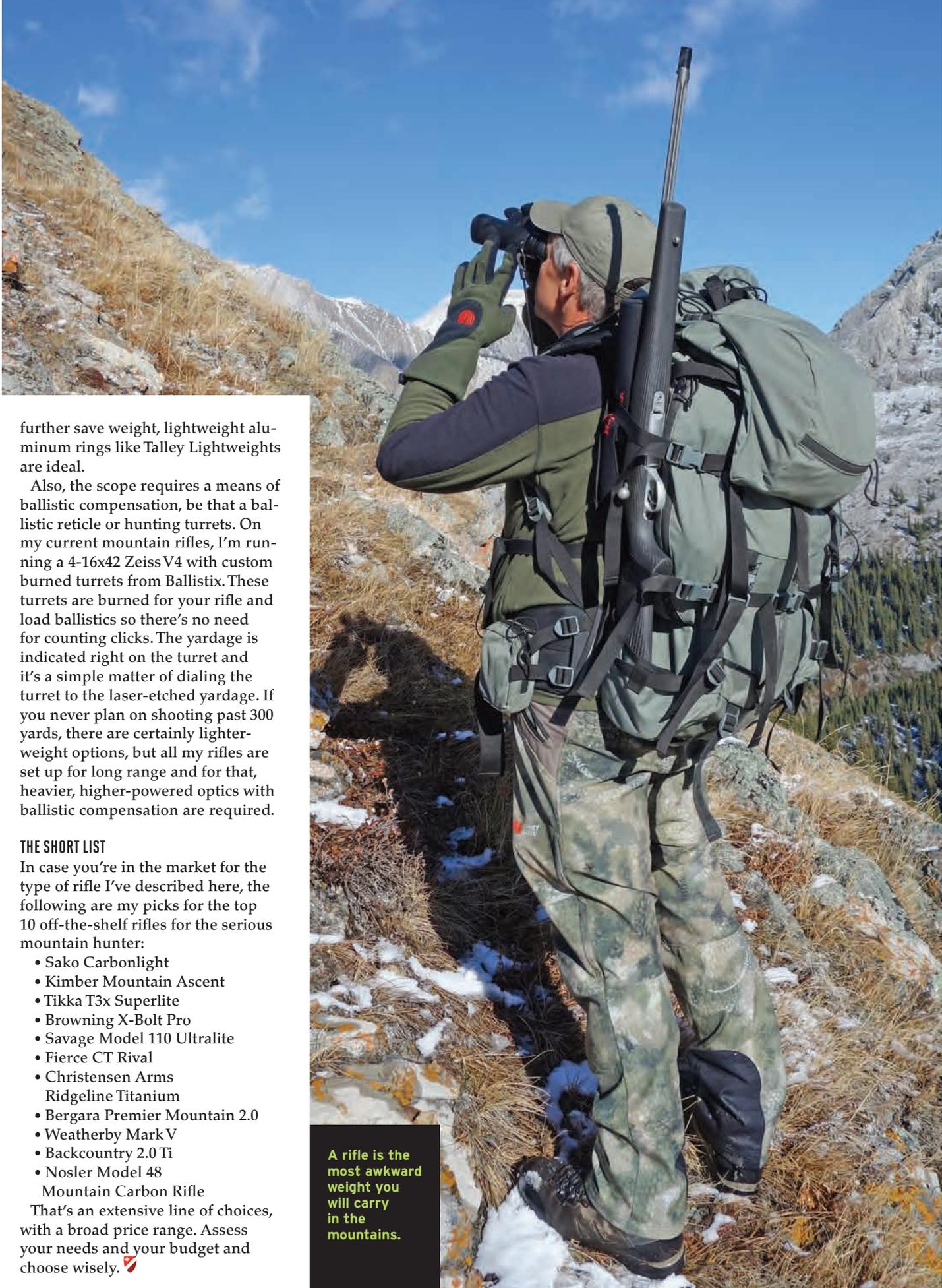
The first serious mountain rifle I had built was chambered in 270 WSM and I've hunted everything from Marco Polo sheep in Kyrgyzstan to tahr and chamois in New Zealand with it. Most of the short magnums have somewhat fallen out of favour in the past decade, but the 270 seems to have endured. If there's a downside to the 270 WSM, it's that it has fairly significant recoil in a lightweight rifle. In addition to the easily calculated recoil, many shooters complain the cartridge has an extremely sharp recoil, likely due to the steep pressure curve the cartridge has. The new 6.8 Western is another option, but again, it offers stout recoil in a lightweight rifle and it is only available in a limited number of factory rifles.

In the 7mm category, I'm going to throw out a cartridge that few likely consider for mountain rifles, and that is the venerable 7-08 Remington. At a modest 2,800 feet per second shooting 140-grain bullets, the 7-08 is a pleasure to shoot but it's also a realistic 500-yard cartridge on mountain game. I've packed a 7-08 extensively in the mountains of Alberta and taken animals from sheep to elk with it. Several other short-action 7mm cartridges have come and gone over the past few decades, but the 08 is the only one to really retain much popularity. It seems the 7mm is primarily the realm of long-action cartridges.

For the .30 calibres, the 308 Winchester can't be overlooked. In a market flooded with long-action speedsters in .30 calibre, the 308 gets little respect, but it fits a short action and is extremely efficient in a short barrel, so other than it's not new and sexy, there's really nothing not to like about it. For those looking for a mountain rifle that needs to do double duty on large game like moose and elk, this is where I would look first.

#### THE SCOPE

I'm willing to go with a bit heavier scope on my mountain rifle than many are and consider something in the 1.5-pound range maximum. My mountain rifles need to be capable of hold-on-hair accuracy to a minimum of 500 yards and therefore I prefer at least 14-power as the top-end magnification. Combined with a 40 to 44-millimetre objective lens, this is a great weight-saving compromise. To >



further save weight, lightweight aluminum rings like Talley Lightweights are ideal.

Also, the scope requires a means of ballistic compensation, be that a ballistic reticle or hunting turrets. On my current mountain rifles, I'm running a 4-16x42 Zeiss V4 with custom burned turrets from Ballistix. These turrets are burned for your rifle and load ballistics so there's no need for counting clicks. The yardage is indicated right on the turret and it's a simple matter of dialing the turret to the laser-etched yardage. If you never plan on shooting past 300 yards, there are certainly lighter-weight options, but all my rifles are set up for long range and for that, heavier, higher-powered optics with ballistic compensation are required.

#### THE SHORT LIST

In case you're in the market for the type of rifle I've described here, the following are my picks for the top 10 off-the-shelf rifles for the serious mountain hunter:

- Sako Carbonlight
- Kimber Mountain Ascent
- Tikka T3x Superlite
- Browning X-Bolt Pro
- Savage Model 110 Ultralite
- Fierce CT Rival
- Christensen Arms Ridgeline Titanium
- Bergara Premier Mountain 2.0
- Weatherby Mark V
- Backcountry 2.0 Ti
- Nosler Model 48 Mountain Carbon Rifle

That's an extensive line of choices, with a broad price range. Assess your needs and your budget and choose wisely. 🏆

A rifle is the most awkward weight you will carry in the mountains.



**NO COMPROMISE.**



# MUZZLELOADER REVOLUTION

Traditions' NitroFire rifle & Federal Premium's Firestick ammunition

BY BRAD FENSON

The sunrise was spectacular, and the only thing making it even better was spotting a giant whitetail buck with his nose to the ground. The deer was hot on the trail of a doe, and I raced to get in front of him. With a bullet already seated in the barrel, I opened the action of the Traditions muzzleloader and inserted a 100-grain FireStick. The hunt was on.

Hiking as fast as possible, I crested a hill and spotted the buck at 156 metres. I leveled my crosshair on the vitals and slowly squeezed the trigger. The deer ran uphill a short distance and tipped over at the rifle's report. That buck was the first critter I took with the new Traditions NitroFire rifle and Federal Premium FireStick ammunition.

## WHAT IS IT?

Engineers at Federal Premium designed the FireStick, a polymer-encapsulated propellant charge that loads from the breech of an inline muzzleloader, while Traditions Performance Firearms worked with Federal to engineer the NitroFire inline muzzleloader to accept this new ammunition.

There are many advantages to the new rifle and charge that will undoubtedly generate questions about whether it's really a muzzleloading system. However, it's important to know the bullet is loaded down the barrel just like all muzzleloaders. It ends up seated onto a shelf just above the powder charge (FireStick), which is loaded from the breech. There is no breech plug, as the FireStick replaces the need for containing propellant below the bullet. The polymer stick containing the powder has an insertion point for a primer.

Hodgdon was part of the development team as well and came up with a new blackpowder substitute called Triple Eight. The new propellant is extruded, creating lots of surface area to ignite and burns quickly and efficiently. Triple Eight produces little fouling, making cleanup and maintenance easier. Cleaning the firearm after a day on the range was extremely easy compared to shooting any blackpowder or substitute I've used in the past.

Long before my successful deer hunt, I spent a couple of days at the Federal Premium factory testing the new firearm, powder and engineering design of the FireStick. A NitroFire rifle was used with Federal Premium 100-grain FireSticks to chronograph two different bullets and generate >



**The FireStick system contains the primer and blackpowder substitute within a plastic "cartridge," which is loaded (and unloaded) from the breech.**

three-shot groups. At that point, there was no data on energy, accuracy or consistency, and hours of shooting allowed us to gather that information.

After two years, the NitroFire rifle and Federal Premium FireSticks are now available in Canada. Our testing was done just weeks before Covid-19 hit, and then the world pandemic changed travel and product availability. Getting this product into Canada was also held up by our department of transportation requiring more information on the new powder.

### CONSISTENCY

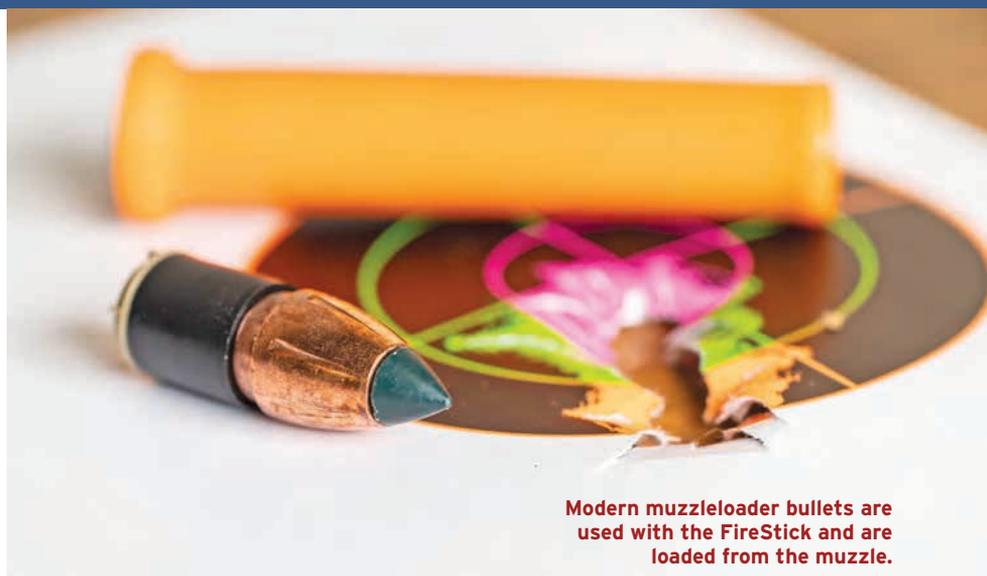
Following industry standards, a chronograph was set up 10 feet from the barrel to record the velocity of five shots for each of the two bullets. The ignition source was Federal Premium Muzzleloader 209 primers. Using Traditions Smackdown Carnivore 250-grain bullets with sabots produced an average velocity of 1,973 feet per second, with an extreme spread of 44 feet per second.

Federal Premium's Trophy Copper 270-grain bullets with their B.O.R. Lock MZ System feature an expanding polymer base cup and produced an average velocity of 1,957 feet per second, with an extreme spread of just 37 feet per second.

Thus, the NitroFire and FireStick system exceeded the acceptable industry tolerance of 75 feet per second variance. Interestingly, the velocities are similar to other propellants, like Pyrodex, Blackhorn 209 and Triple Seven.

### ACCURACY

Three groups of three shots at 100 yards were used to measure the accuracy of the NitroFire and FireStick



Modern muzzleloader bullets are used with the FireStick and are loaded from the muzzle.

with two different bullets. During the test, Champion Sandbags were used to stabilize the rifle on the shooting table.

*Federal Premium 100-grain FireStick Traditions Smackdown Carnivore 250-grain bullet*

Smallest group: .375 inches  
Largest group: 1.625 inches  
Group average: 1.167 inches

*Federal Premium 100-grain FireStick Federal Premium Trophy Copper 270-grain bullet with B.O.R. Lock MZ System*

Smallest group: .50 inches  
Largest group: 2.0 inches  
Group average: 1.333 inches

The accuracy and consistency of the NitroFire and FireStick would make most muzzleloader enthusiasts jump for joy. The smallest groups with both bullets would rival most centrefire

rifles, and I suspect the larger groups were more shooter error than firearm related.

### PRACTICAL FACTORS

An afternoon on an outdoor range, shooting from sandbags, produced similar groups to those shot indoors and reported above. The powder was tested for cleanliness with 10 consecutive shots, with no noticeable decrease in accuracy and little fouling from the Triple Eight powder. The barrel cleaned quickly and easily compared to most blackpowder substitutes. The consistency and clean-burning characteristics of the powder are a bonus to the NitroFire and FireStick system.

A timed speed-loading test took approximately 17 seconds between two shots. It was a fun exercise that showed a significant advantage to the system; a FireStick is much faster to load than dumping a powder charge



LEFT: Accuracy testing was done on a 100-yard indoor range and produced excellent three-shot groups.

down the barrel. A primer already inserted into the FireStick makes the process even faster.

The NitroFire rifle offers enhanced features, like a dual safety system and Traditions' new Elite XT trigger system. The Elite XT system has a rebounding hammer, a captive half-cock and manual cross-block trigger safety. The trigger design allows the action to be broken open with the cross-bolt safety engaged, allowing the user to load or unload the muzzleloader and view the chamber.

A significant benefit of this system is that there is no way to double charge or overcharge the rifle. Also, the action can be opened to look down the barrel and see if a bullet is seated on the shelf, preventing the user from loading two projectiles. The ramrod can even be used to push the bullet back up and out of the barrel. And there is no need to fire this muzzleloader to remove the charge at the end of the day, just open the action, remove the ignition and powder charge and reload it the next day without worrying about moisture or failed ignition.

Other pros of the NitroFire and FireStick system are keeping ignition consistent by protecting the powder, even during storage. The loading process is easy, and the primer can be left in the FireStick or removed without compromising the charge. Additionally, the NitroFire and FireStick do not restrict the choice of bullets and 209 muzzleloader primers, meaning hunters and shooters can stick with proven favorites.

The recoil of the 100-grain FireStick was similar to Pyrodex or Triple Seven. Both were accurate, but firearm control is challenging with the available 120-grain charges. Those 120-grain FireSticks have noticeably more recoil.

The FireStick charges are designed to keep moisture out, so we tested one at the range by placing it in a puddle of water for 60 seconds. It was then loaded into the rifle and shot at the same speed and accuracy as the others. The way the powder capsules are sealed suggests that storing powder for years, even in a humid climate, is no longer an issue. The integrity of the powder shouldn't be compromised, and it remains ready to insert and shoot.

The FireStick looks similar to a shotshell, especially when a primer

is inserted into the base. The polymer sticks are intuitive to load and only go into the barrel one way. The charge sits tight to the bullet to ensure consistency and the premeasured charges removes any variance from brass measures and loose powder. It also prevents the chipping or crumbling of pellets in speed loaders or storage containers.

#### YES, IT'S A MUZZLELOADER

The NitroFire and FireStick combination is a muzzleloading system. The bullet is still seated down the barrel with a ramrod and the propellant is a blackpowder substitute. The velocities of the combination described are similar to the most popular propellants used by muzzleloader hunters. There is no performance deviation from other modern inline front-stuffers shooting a blackpowder substitute and modern bullet. A breech plug is no longer required, but the components of muzzleloading remain the same – bullet, powder and primer.

The NitroFire and FireStick system does not significantly change the range, projectile or ignition used in standard inline muzzleloaders.

#### SUMMARY

Loading a bullet, FireStick and 209 primer is fast and straightforward. Make sure the rifle hammer is not cocked and the safety is on. Use a ramrod and appropriate jag to push a bullet down the length of the barrel until it seats on the bullet shelf. Open the rifle's action and install a Federal Premium FireStick into the breech. Insert a 209 primer into the FireStick and close the action. The primer can be inserted into the FireStick first. Cock the hammer on the rifle, move the safety to the fire position and fire when ready.

If the rifle isn't fired during the day, open the action and remove the FireStick easily with your fingers. The primer can be left in the FireStick for future use or removed. The bullet shelf allows sufficient clearance for a ramrod to push the bullet from the open breech and back out through the muzzle.

The engineered advances of this system come on many levels and include cleaning and consistency. Additionally, the increased safety of the system, especially the ability to unload easily, is difficult to overlook. 

**BELOW: Traditions' NitroFire rifle is currently the only muzzleloader compatible with the FireStick system.**



#### SPECIFICATIONS

##### FEDERAL PREMIUM FIRESTICK

- Sealed polymer capsule filled with Hodgdon Triple Eight powder
- 100 and 120-grain options
- Accepts 209 shotshell primer
- Sold in 10-count packs

##### TRADITIONS PERFORMANCE FIREARMS NITROFIRE RIFLE

**TYPE:** Muzzleloader

**CALIBER:** .50 calibre

**BARREL:** 26-inch ultralight Chromoly steel, fluted and tapered barrel, 1:28-inch twist rifling

**TRIGGER:** Elite XT trigger system

**SIGHTS:** No sights

**SAFETY:** Trigger block safety

**STOCK:** Composite, available in black, Realtree Edge camo, Mossy Oak Breakup Country camo and Go Wild Rockstar camo.

**LENGTH OF PULL:** 14.25 inches

**METAL FINISH:** Cerakote finish in stainless steel or burnt bronze

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 42 inches

**WEIGHT:** 6.6 pounds

**ACCESSORIES:** Available with a scope only or with scope, sling and case.



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# LIGHT & FAST

Weatherby's Orion 20-gauge  
*BY LOWELL STRAUSS*

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I started off believing that a 12 gauge was the only reasonable choice for wild pheasants. Then I watched my hunting buddy consistently tumble roosters with his 20 gauge, often before the big guns fired. Roosters grow old by being smarter, faster and tougher than the dogs and hunters pursuing them. So, when an old long-tail flushes, it takes a fast, solid, well-placed hit to crumple it. My buddy had discovered the advantages of a light, nimble shotgun, where a quick first shot and a good pattern trump more birdshot downrange. Despite the 20's lighter payload, it still delivers its shot at the same velocity as the 12 gauge. And the birds never know the difference.

Now, I too favour the 20 gauge over its heavier, shoulder-thumping big brother, and I'm not alone in this sentiment. According to Wyoming-based Weatherby, a 20-gauge version of the company's popular Orion over/under has been their number one requested shotgun in recent years.

Customers asked, and Weatherby listened. In 2021, three new 20-gauge models became a reality. Today, we'll explore that line, specifically the Orion 1, a shotgun which I think delivers value in terms of quality, price and performance.

## OVERVIEW

Weatherby redesigned the Orion

20 gauge from the ground up, while honouring the original design. A scaled-down receiver -- not merely 20-gauge barrels shoehorned onto a 12-gauge frame -- slims and lightens the new models. The line includes two field shotguns and a sporting shotgun. While each inherits the features which made the Weatherby Orion one of the best-in-class shotguns, these new models are correspondingly lighter for improved handling.

I field-tested the Orion 1 for this review, with 28-inch barrels and a gloss wood finish. The Orion Matte Blue model includes shorter 26-inch barrels and, true to its name, has a muted finish on both the metalwork and wood. The glossy Orion Sporting model features 30-inch ported barrels. Barrels all feature a ventilated top rib with brass or fibre optic front sight, depending on the model. The Weatherby name in gold lettering adorns the receiver and a matching gold-coloured, single-selective trigger adds a touch of class, complementing the walnut stock. Like the original Orion, the new shotguns feature an ambidextrous manual tang safety, which doubles as a barrel selector.

Hard chrome lining protects the bores from modern non-toxic shot, prevents corrosion and makes cleaning faster and easier. All are provided with a 3-inch chamber for shooting any 20-gauge load. Orion shotguns

also feature automatic ejectors, a feature not commonly seen in shotguns at this price point.

Over/under shotguns are less complicated than other action types; still, things can go wrong in real-world conditions. The Weatherby team pushed the new platform to its limits before going to market.

"We did extensive pre-production testing, firing thousands of shells before we finalized the design with our Turkish manufacturer. We're confident the Orion 20 gauge will stand up to whatever shooters put it through," remarked Kyle Killen, Weatherby International sales manager and in-house Orion product tester.

The A-grade Turkish walnut exhibits a beautiful grain figure on the stock and forend. The field versions feature a Prince of Wales grip with a gentler curving radius rather than a standard pistol grip and a rounded grip cap. This hybrid European design incorporates elements of the traditional straight-grip found on classic English double shotguns and the standard pistol grip of many modern single-trigger shotguns. The Sporting model comes with a standard pistol grip that provides precise control for shooting clays and a four-way adjustable comb for fine-tuning the shotgun's fit to the shooter. Cut checkering on the grip and forend of all three models provides excellent grip in all conditions, >



**ABOVE: The 20-gauge Weatherby Orion 1 is not under-gunned in the waterfowl blind.**

while a modern, soft rubber recoil pad buffers the shooter's shoulder from heavy-recoiling loads.

Orion shotguns include a set of interchangeable chokes -- three flush-mount chokes for field models and five extended/knurled chokes on the Sporting model. Weatherby Orion factory chokes are steel rated up to the modified constriction. The Orion also fits a wide variety of aftermarket chokes with the Win-Choke/Browning Invector/Mossberg Accu-Choke (Integral Multi-Choke) thread pattern.

Weatherby Orion 20-gauge street prices vary across the country, but at the time of writing, I found Orion 1 and Matte Blue model listings in Canada as low as \$1,135 and the Sporting model from about \$1,355.

#### FIELD TESTING

I've already extolled the virtues of the 20 gauge in the upland fields, but I also found the Weatherby Orion 1 worked flawlessly in the duck blind and at the range.

The first thing I noticed was the quality, fit and finish of the shotgun. A high-gloss finish on the metalwork and wood is tastefully done and lends itself to the Euro-styling of the

shotgun. Dark blued metal surfaces are uniform from muzzle to breech. It's A-grade Turkish walnut stock and forend exhibit interesting grain patterns without being too ornate. It's a shotgun you'll be proud using in the field, but not so nice that it's relegated as a 'safe queen.' The stock and forend marry perfectly with the metal receiver, trigger guard and barrels.

The top lever operates smoothly and the action opens efficiently without being too tight or too loose. The manual safety slides easily, and barrel selection is straightforward and intuitive with the safety on. The internal parts are polished and fit perfectly, something I've come to expect from Weatherby, and the chambers, forcing cones and choke transitions are smooth, which minimized fouling and made field cleaning a breeze.

Its 28-inch barrels are well-suited for field shooting, allowing a smooth swing without being long or cumbersome. The loaded shotgun's weight balances evenly on its receiver trunnion; it's neither forend nor stock heavy, making it fast to shoulder and point. Impeccable craftsmanship extends to the recoil pad, which is expertly fit and consists of a grippy

rubber material that stays put once mounted.

At 6.2 pounds, this shotgun is a dream come true for the upland hunter. Its weight is noticeably lighter than some other over/unders and, more notably, 12.8 ounces lighter than its bigger brother, the Orion 12 gauge. My dog and I approve of a lightweight gun because it means longer days afield.

The Orion's 3-inch chambers allow shooting any shotshell load, from light target loads to heavy magnums. Test shells slid effortlessly in and out of the polished chambers. Chrome-lined bores are a nice touch and provide peace of mind that the bores won't rust in wet weather. I discovered the hard chrome finish also resisted fouling buildup and was easy to field-clean with a bore snake.

I fired hundreds of rounds through my testing and the automatic ejectors worked flawlessly -- launching spent shells and retaining unfired rounds by opening the action. Auto-ejectors expedite reloading times. This premium feature allowed several hasty reloads



Ejectors are a nice feature for fast reloads in the field.

for a shot at late-flushing birds.

The trigger is heavy but not excessively so, breaking on average at 5.5 pounds. Although I prefer a lighter trigger, the Orion's works well, and a heavier trigger is okay when shooting with a gloved hand.

The Orion 1's flush-mount chokes are nothing fancy, but they worked and patterned well with the selection of lead and steel-shot ammunition I tested. And because of their common choke-thread pattern, an aftermarket choke is an easy upgrade if needed.

The Orion 1 fit me particularly well, and the Prince of Wales grip was a big part of what I liked about it. Because of the grip's curve, it is comfortable on the hand, but unlike a standard pistol grip, my hand position can easily move forward or back for a custom reach to the trigger and allows for easy switching from bare to gloved hands. I also grew to love the low-profile receiver. In conjunction with the ventilated top rib, it allowed faster target acquisition and centered patterns. I found it particularly useful when shooting from a layout blind during a waterfowl hunt.

#### PARTING THOUGHTS

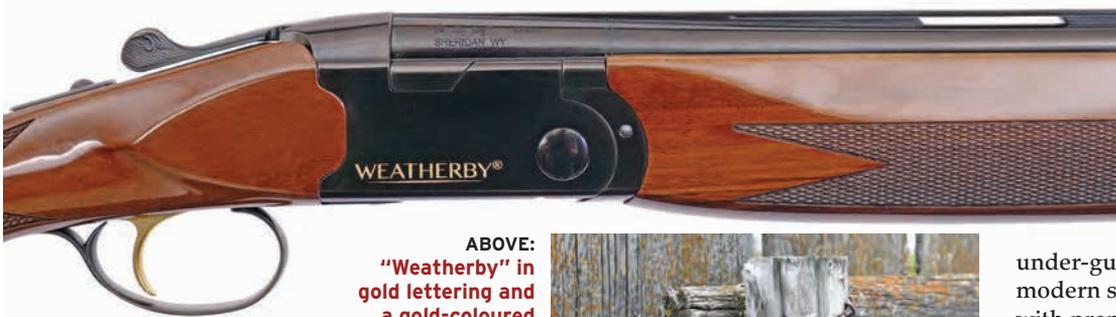
Weatherby answered the request of its loyal customers when they designed the Orion 20 gauge. Not only is it loaded with features that appeal to any shotgun shooter, but its price also makes it an attractive option for those in the market for a multi-purpose shotgun. With three models to choose from, there is one that will fit everyone's style.

A 20 gauge over/under shotgun is an excellent choice for the upland hunter. It's a lightweight package

that offers a quick pick of barrels (and chokes) for a variety of game. It works equally well at the range for smashing clays. And for the shot-gunner who wants one shotgun to do it all, the 20-gauge shotgun is not

under-gunned in the duck blind, and modern shotshell ammunition loaded with premium tungsten alloy shot will further boost performance.

If you're in the market for a new lightweight shotgun, consider the Weatherby Orion 20 gauge. Your arms will thank you, and the pheasants will never know what hit them. 🦌



ABOVE: "Weatherby" in gold lettering and a gold-coloured trigger enhance the Orion 1's looks

RIGHT: The fit and finish on the Weatherby Orion 1 are superb.







Janice Moerman liked the higher rib, which shoots 65/35, for trap shooting.

# A VERSATILE CLAY BUSTER

Reviewing the Fabarm ELOS N2 Allsport

BY JEFF HELSDON

Imagine a clays shotgun that can shoot high for trap and flatter for sporting clays, skeet and five-stand. Fabarm has taken that concept and built it into its ELOS N2 Allsport over/under. Promoting the gun as “the most versatile target shotgun ever created,” the Allsport has two interchangeable ribs. The higher of the two, designed for trap, makes the gun shoot 65/35.

The other rib shoots 50/50 for sporting clays, skeet or five-stand.

To take a step back, for those not familiar with the company, Fabarm is an Italian company dating back to 1900. I first became aware of the brand through its advertising for the XL-5 semi-automatic shotgun. That sparked a sense of curiosity about the guns and the company, and then

when I shot an XL-5 I was impressed. However, I was more impressed with the ELOS N2 Allsport.

#### LOOKING GOOD

The first thing I noticed was the enhanced grain on the Turkish walnut stock. Laurent Gaude, sales and marketing director for Fabarm Italy, explained the company introduced >



The ELOS N2 Allsport is designed to be a versatile clays gun, with interchangeable ribs to either shoot high for trap or flatter for other sporting disciplines.

a stock finish they call TRIWOOD in 2002 to enhance the walnut grain while offering more water resistance.

This grain enhancement is completed using an immersion graphic, a process similar to camouflage film finishing. A semi-gloss acrylic varnish is then applied over the stock.

“TRIWOOD maintains the warmth and feel of wood. The key point is to have the perfect mix between the original and the additional grains,” he explained.

“After 20 years of experience, we can say that the TRIWOOD is extremely strong and durable,” he said. “Its waterproof quality is the best, especially for trap/sporting shotguns. The stocks remain elegant even after years and years of use. On the other side, we all know that with an oil-finish, the grip and the comb would unfortunately become a little bit black and dirty after intensive use.”

The next thing that struck me was there was more engraving on this gun than a lot of competitors in this price range. There is a fine pattern that starts on the metal component of the forearm and continues along the top of the

receiver. The same pattern is also on the release. Checkering on the forearm and stock is typical and well done.

The ELOS N2 Sporting has a classic look with a little bit of a modern flare. The receiver is rounded on the bottom and the action release has a more modern shape.

#### THE REPLACEABLE RIB

Having an adjustable rib is not a new concept. Many higher-end trap guns have an adjustable rib which allows the shooter to fine tune how high the gun shoots. These aren’t interchangeable though or promoted as a gun for all sports – which is what makes this gun unique.

“The quick-release rib (QRR) system allows us to provide a lower flat rib than one with an adjustable mechanism, where the mechanism takes some space,” Gaude said.

The QRR removes by pushing out a pin at the rear, it then slides forward and lifts off. The procedure is simple and takes less than a minute. The gun I shot was new and I found it took a little force as I nervously pushed the pin out, making sure not to slip and

scratch anything. It was easy to push back in and came in and out easier after the first time. Once the pin is out, the rib slides forward and lifts off. It’s put back by reversing the process. The rib is 10 millimetres wide at the back and tapers to eight millimetres at the front. This gun is outfitted with a white Bradley-style front bead and a silver mid bead.

#### OTHER FEATURES

The gun finish is blued with a semi-gloss appearance to match the wood. Barrels are chrome lined, as are the five extended choke tubes which come with the gun. Chokes are skeet, improved cylinder, modified, improved modified and full.

The Micro-Metric 3D comb is adjustable for cast and drop by loosening an Allen key. It’s finished in a matte black, different than the remainder of the stock. Gaude explained this serves

two purposes: it gives a lifelong finish and provides a smooth surface so the shooter will never have recoil burn.

The trigger mechanism fires the second shot using the recoil energy from the first shot. The shooter can select which barrel fires first with a switch on the safety. The trigger is adjustable by loosening an Allen key to move it to one of four positions to change the length of pull.

The Microcell recoil pad is soft and spongy, with the pad on my gun measuring 22 millimetres; however, different thicknesses are available to change the length of pull. Note that the Allsport regular model is intended for the growing youth and high school market and has a 14-inch length of pull. The XL model has a 14.75 length of pull, but the changeable pads and adjustable trigger make the gun versatile enough to fit anyone.

Opening tension is adjustable by changing the pressure the forend bracket puts on the barrel tenon. This allows it to be set for individual preference or tightened as the gun wears after extensive use.

This gun comes with a locking hard acrylic Negrini case. Inside, there is a smaller box to store the choke tubes and Allen keys used to adjust the trigger position and the adjustable stock.

#### ATTENTION GETTER

I felt like the kid with the new car when taking the Allsport to the range. Shooting it at three different gun clubs, it garnered attention at all three. This has occurred before, but never to this degree. Those who looked closer, shot or held it had good things to say.

Sometimes double barrels are tight opening when new. I have seen some so tight it's a workout to close the gun. The ELOS N2 Allsport was a little tight but remember this is adjustable. The trigger broke at four pounds on the top barrel and was slightly less on the lower.

My first experience was with the high rib at the Otter Valley Rod and Gun Club. I have to be upfront and say I struggled a little with this, as I am not a shooter who usually shoots a high gun on trap. The gun broke targets well when I was on them, and even broke some out further with the modified choke. The pleasant surprise

was the low recoil for a relatively light gun (seven pounds, 11 ounces.) I sometimes have a problem with trap guns hitting me in the cheek and was pleased this one did not.

After a rib change, the next challenge was skeet at Waterford Sportsmen's Club. I was shooting with club president Janice Moerman, and neither of us is a regular skeet shooter. The gun was outfitted with skeet and improved cylinder chokes. I was impressed with the performance of the Allsport here and my scores were better than typical.

Moerman was impressed enough she wanted to try the gun on the trap range with the higher rib. She said her gun is set up to shoot higher. She did well and I even heard the peanut gallery joking, "She shoots that better than her own gun."

The last stop in the Allsport workout was five-stand at Oxford Fish and Game Club. I find the variety of targets with five-stand require more reflexive shooting. The gun fit well, and I found I could break targets well with it. As many shooters know, struggling with one angle is common. I didn't have this problem with five-stand and the Allsport.

#### AVAILABILITY

Introduced in 2019, the ELOS N2 Allsport has been well accepted.

"The ELOS N2 Allsport is one of our top worldwide sellers, immediately after the regular N2 Sporting with its solid rib," Gaude said.

This gun comes in a few model variations and both 30 and 32-inch barrels are available. Besides the two versions with differing lengths of pull, there are also left-hand versions available, with the cast designed to work better for a southpaw. The retail price is \$3,449.

Canadian shooters will now find Fabarm on gun store shelves more commonly, as the Korth Group took over Canadian distribution in March 2020.

"We're looking to bring new products to a broader market," said Adam Patterson of Korth. "This gun is 100 per cent built in Italy. They do not outsource to other countries."

Overall, the ELOS N2 Allsport packs a lot of features into a gun and is worthy of a look for anyone shopping for a competitive shotgun. 🏆



**Clever Mirage T1 shells were a great combination with the Allsport.**

#### CLEVER AMMUNITION

Clever ammunition isn't a brand shooters at Canadian trap or skeet clubs talk about every day, but it is a brand that competitive shooters are quite aware of.

I was given the opportunity to shoot Clever's Mirage T1 Supertarget while testing the ELOS N2 Allsport and have to say I was impressed. I found the recoil was light and the patterns were consistent. Although this isn't what one would think of as a trap handicap load, I had no problem breaking targets from longer distances with it.

The round I was shooting was not the competitive load though. There is the T2 Competitive, which is a round for American trap and skeet competitors, and the T3 Grand Italia. The latter is the shell the company says is, "The shotshell with which many international champions have won everything humanly possible in the world."

The clay target line has several other options, including shells tailored for longer range. Most of the line is designed for lighter recoil. There is also a full hunting line, with shells designed for everything from upland game to doves and waterfowl. Clever started in Italy in 1952 with the Chiampan brothers and two friends loading their own shells. The company grew from there and has continued to be family owned.





# SHOOTING STICKS

Give yourself an advantage in the field

*BY JEFF SMITH*

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**T**he large mule deer buck was slowly feeding across the open field as I glassed it from the bush line. Ranged at 350 metres, it should be an easy shot, except there wasn't anywhere to rest my rifle to get it steady. Getting closer wasn't an option either. However, I was able to make a killing shot by deploying a set of hastily assembled sticks I could use for support.

Having a means of stabilizing your rifle while in the field is an important way to ensure an accurate and ethical kill. This can be accomplished by resting the rifle on a fence post, over a pack or via a mounted bipod. Additionally, there are bipods and tripods, which are carried separately, available in all sporting goods shops. These set-ups often cost into the hundreds of dollars. Alternatively, you can build your own. This option will save you money and provide a few hours of quality time as a family project.

Shooting sticks have a long history dating back into the days of the buffalo hunter in the American west.

These hunters used rifles that fired a heavy load designed to kill tough animals at great distances, reputedly at up to 1,000 yards, although 250 to 500-yard shots were likely more common. These rifles often weighed in at over 10 pounds to help tame the substantial recoil generated by these heavy loads. To gain any form of accuracy, the shooter had to find a method of stabilizing his rifle, often for hundreds of shots throughout the day. To stabilize their rifles, the shooters, for impromptu shots, would grab a stick with a fork in the top and a single leg to balance upon. As these hunts became common, the hunters devised a set of crossed sticks to form either a bipod or tripod which travelled with them. This allowed them to set up in one location and shoot many buffalo before having to move on, leaving the dead buffalo for the skinners. The buffalo were killed for both their meat to feed the camps, which were springing up as the railroads moved west, and the hides for the fur trade. >

The sticks were made by lashing two or three saplings of an inch or so in diameter into the desired shape and then resting the rifle in the fork created. By lashing the sticks instead of simply holding them in place, the hunter could rest the butt of his rifle on the ground before taking the next series of shots versus having to rebuild the stick set-up each time. This set-up was quite a bit steadier too, with the sticks secured by the leather or rope binding. When it was time to move, he would simply lift up on the joint, then collapse the legs inward to carry.

Today, tall wood shooting sticks are commonly used by hunters visiting Africa. The sticks are usually crafted from local wood. It is advised, however, that you practice shooting from sticks prior to your trip. Additionally, there are good reasons to use them at home too. Most of my hunting, for example, takes place on wide open prairie, with little to no high cover. Where there is cover, it often consists of low sagebrush, which is too high to shoot over from prone, so I often kneel to shoot. A set of sticks allows me to steady my rifle while utilizing the brush for concealment. And, if for no other reason, using homemade sticks will add a bit of nostalgia to your hunt. 🗡️

#### BIPOD CONSTRUCTION

- 2 X 4-foot long 5/8-inch dowels
- 1 X 2-inch brass connector bolt with nut.
- Tanned leather scraps
- Leather glue
- Wood stain

#### STEP 1:

Measure approximately four inches from top and drill a hole in each dowel.

#### STEP 2:

Stain dowels, stopping just at the bolt hole.

#### STEP 3:

Cut, then glue leather patches on each dowel slightly above bolt holes as padding.

#### STEP 4:

Touch up dowel with stain at bottom of padding, then install bolt to assemble sticks.

To adjust the height of the bipod, simply loosen the bolt, move sticks in or out and re-tighten the bolt. Alternatively, with a little trial and error you can find a tension level which allows you to collapse the sticks for carrying but still holds them in place when the legs are spread for shooting.



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# NFA

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# AMMUNITION ERRORS

This is not a mix-and-match game

BY AL VOTH

**L**ike any handloader worthy of the name, whenever I'm at a shooting range, I keep an eye out for useful brass another shooter has discarded. That habit of keeping one eye on the ground has turned up some unusual cartridge cases. There are three in my collection which tell a story we can all learn from.

Refer to the nearby photo and look at the stubby case on the left. It's a 40 S&W case, but it's bulged out of shape and split. It looks like that because someone fired it in a 45 ACP chamber. Ouch!

The middle cartridge case is headstamped as being a 303 Savage round. But the case is deformed into the correct shape for 303 British chamber, minus the neck. No, a 303 Savage is not the same as a 303 British.

And lastly, the right-hand case is headstamped as a 300 Winchester Magnum. We know that cartridge has a short neck, but it's not that short. In this case, it's apparent the shooter fired the 300 Winchester in a much longer 300 Weatherby chamber.

From the appearance of the cases, I suspect the guns and shooters all survived these episodes. And since I only found one example of each, I'm hopeful the shooters noticed their error after the first shot. However, it's not hard to imagine a catastrophe resulting from firing the wrong ammunition in a firearm. The Internet is full



of such stories. Is it any wonder the ammunition companies are paranoid about cartridge interchangeability?

If you work with numerous guns, it's a good idea to utilize a few techniques that can help avoid ammunition errors. For handloaders who use plastic ammunition boxes, like the wonderful ones made by MTM, it's a good idea to use different colours for different calibres. And that's in addition to putting big labels on the lids as to which gun that ammunition is for.

Between the labels and the colours, I usually manage to grab the right box when I'm headed out the door. If you shoot factory ammunition and own several guns, it's important to keep the cartridges in the factory box or transfer them to something like an MTM box that is properly labelled. Ammunition in an unmarked container is a good way to begin a misfit situation.

If you're in the field and shooting only one gun, there's not much to go wrong in regard to ammunition interchanging. However, when we go to the range, we might take several guns. Then more care is required. Get in the habit of keeping only one gun on your shooting bench at a time, along

with the appropriate ammunition. If you switch to another calibre, ensure only the ammunition for that gun is on the bench. I learned this lesson when I tried to chamber a 204 Ruger cartridge in a 223 Remington rifle. Fortunately, it doesn't fit.

In summary, know your gun, know your ammunition and pay attention when the two go together. I don't want to be picking up more samples for my what-was-that-shooter-thinking collection. 🍷



# Legal corner

Guy Lavergne, Attorney at Law

## Bill C-21: The Liberals Ban Handgun Transfers In Canada



On May 30, 2022, in the wake of a tragic mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas, the federal government filed Bill C-21, as well as amendments to the firearms regulations in the House of Commons.

Coincidentally, this new bill bears the same designation as the Liberals' last gun-control bill that died on the agenda in 2021, when the prime minister decided to call an early election. However, it is markedly different from its predecessor. An adequate discussion of all aspects of this proposed legislation would be too long for the maximum allowed length of this column. Hence, for this once, I will focus on the main and most striking aspects of the bill and regulations: an almost complete ban on the legal transfer of handguns.

### THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE BAN

First, unlike the May 1, 2020, Order in Council making certain firearms prohibited with immediate effect, Bill C-21 has no immediate effect. To come into effect, it requires assent by both houses of Parliament: The House of Commons and the Senate. This will take some time, since Parliament goes

into summer recess and only resumes in September.

As I write this column during Canada Day long weekend, the bill has cleared second reading in the House of Commons and has been referred to the Public Security Committee. It is impossible to predict when it will be considered by the committee, whether any amendments will be proposed or when it will go back to the House of Commons for third reading and adoption. Considering the recent Liberal-NDP pact, and the Bloc's traditional anti-gun stance, it is safe to assume that the bill will be passed in its current form at some point before the end of the current parliamentary session.

Together with the bill, the government has filed new proposed regulations that purport to restrict the conditions under which a handgun may be transferred, even before the bill is adopted. Pursuant to the *Firearms Act*, such regulations would come into effect 30 "sitting days" after they are filed in the House of Commons. There are other considerations, but for the sake of simplicity, one can assume that

**Bill C-21 does not recognize shooting disciplines such as PPC as legitimate, for the sake of handgun transfers.**

**Le projet de loi C-21 ne reconnaît pas certaines disciplines de tir telles le PPC comme légitimes, aux fins des cessions d'armes de poing.**

these draft regulations will come into effect in October 2022. They are unique in that they purport to restrict transfers of handguns, under the guise of prescribing conditions under which such transfers may take place. It amounts to bringing yet-to-be-enacted legislation into effect. A legal challenge of the proposed regulations may occur. That topic alone would be adequate for an entire column and then some. For now, let us go back to Bill C-21.

### THE SCOPE OF THE BAN

First, the proposed restriction on transfers applies only to individuals, not businesses. Indeed, the bill purports to add the following section to the *Firearms Act*:

12.2 A registration certificate for a handgun must not be issued to

an individual.

Since a registration certificate is a requirement to acquire and possess a handgun, that section will effectively prohibit the transfer of a handgun to an individual, notwithstanding the fact that the proposed transferee is duly licensed.

Second, it applies only to handguns, not to other types of restricted firearms. The definition of a handgun is found at Section 84 of the *Criminal Code*:

**handgun** means a firearm that is designed, altered or intended to be aimed and fired by the action of one hand, whether it has been redesigned or subsequently altered to be aimed and fired by the action of both hands.

Third, there are exceptions, albeit narrow. The proposed new Section 97.1 carves out very narrow exceptions to the prohibition on transfers:

- 97.1 Sections 12.2 and 19.1 do not apply in respect of an individual who
- (a) holds an authorization to carry in respect of a handgun; or
  - (b) meets the prescribed criteria and provides a letter to a chief firearms officer from a provincial or national sport shooting governing body indicating
    - (i) that they are training, competing or coaching in a handgun shooting discipline that is on the programme of the International Olympic Committee or the International Paralympic Committee,
    - (ii) the disciplines in which they train, compete or coach, and
    - (iii) that the handgun in question is necessary for training, competing or coaching in those disciplines.

Since authorizations to carry are only issued in respect of lawful occupations, such as trappers, some security guards and prospectors working where large predators may be encountered, and exceptionally (i.e., hardly ever) for personal protection, subparagraph 'A' is of very limited application. Likewise, subparagraph 'B' only applies to pistol shooting disciplines that are on the Olympic program. Hence, the bill does not recognize shooting disciplines such as bullseye, IPSC, IPDA, PPC, three-gun and CAS as legitimate shooting disciplines, for the sake of handgun transfers.

Finally, the prohibited transfers are those that transfer ownership, such

as a sale, barter (trade) or gift, per Section 21 of the *Firearms Act*. "Gift" includes a bequest pursuant to a will. Thus, unless you fall within one of the two very narrow exceptions discussed previously, any handgun that you have at the time that Bill C-21 comes into effect will be yours until it is either legally exported, surrendered to police, confiscated by law, transferred to a firearms business (including to a museum) or until (after your death) your executor must choose between one of the foregoing options.

Likewise, unless again you meet one of the previously discussed exceptions, you will never be legally able to acquire a new handgun.

As was the case with previous prohibitions, the number of individuals legally possessing handguns will diminish over time, and will one day be close to zero, as RPAL holders will either abandon the sport or decease.

If the bill passes, and is not subsequently invalidated, it might affect existing testamentary provisions where an individual has bequeathed a handgun to an individual, be it a family member or a friend, and dies after the subject provisions of the bill come into effect. This, in turn, will create significant problems for executors. I would not be surprised if the police were to become quite pro-active in pressuring executors to surrender firearms which form part of an estate.

There is no immediate confiscation of handguns mentioned in the proposed legislation. I would not be surprised if one is proposed in a subsequent mandate.

#### PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The immediate effect of Bill C-21's filing in the House of Commons has been an immediate increase in the number of handgun transactions. RPAL holders seized what may be their last opportunity to acquire their first handgun, or to dispose of handguns that they no longer use, or of which they do not want to risk seeing the value annihilated. This has resulted in an inordinate number of calls to the Canadian Firearms Program by individuals wishing to initiate a handgun transfer. It is worth noting that the recent implementation of the reference number scheme in respect

of non-restricted firearm transfers also likely contributed to the increase in call traffic, without a commensurate increase in resources.

Section 12.7 of the *Firearms Act* currently authorizes the transfer of a 12(6.1) handgun manufactured before 1946 to a close relative of the current owner. Bill C-21 does not explicitly abrogate subsection 12(7) of the *Firearms Act*, despite the fact that new Section 12.2 purports to prohibit the issuance of a registration certificate to the proposed transferee. This is an issue that will need resolution, likely by a court of law.

A prohibition on handgun transfers to or between individuals may constitute an infringement upon provincial jurisdiction on property and civil rights in the province. An eventual constitutional challenge is a distinct possibility.

Finally, even though the official narrative is that Bill C-21 purports to address public safety issues, the only persons who are unaffected by the proposed legislation are those who traffic, make or procure handguns on or for the black market, which includes the overwhelming majority of those who commit so-called gun crimes. Hence, Bill C-21 affects only those who possess or wish to possess handguns legally. It does not affect criminals who will continue to operate outside of and despite the law.

Someone might want to try to explain to the Liberal MPs that gun crime is not a gun problem, but a crime problem. That would be futile. They already know that and do not care. Indeed, Bill C-21's only justification is that it is seen by Liberal strategists as likely to garner public support, given the recent prevalence of urban shootings amongst gang members. Public support translates to votes, which is all that most politicians care about. Once again, law-abiding gun owners are being sacrificed as convenient scapegoats by Liberal politicians.

Here's hoping when those opportunists are voted out of office, another government will repeal Bill C-21 and the new regulations. This will require both a voting majority in Parliament and a certain dose of political courage, as I suspect the mainstream media will hardly be supportive of same. 🇨🇦



# Rubrique Juridique

Guy Lavergne, avocat

## Projet De Loi C-21: Les Libéraux Interdisent Les Cessions D'armes De Poing

Le 30 mai 2022, à la suite d'une tragique fusillade de masse à Uvalde, au Texas, le gouvernement fédéral a déposé le projet de loi C-21 ainsi que des amendements aux Règlements sur les armes à feu à la Chambre des communes.

Coincidence, ce projet de loi porte la même désignation que le dernier projet de loi libéral sur le contrôle des armes à feu qui est mort au feuillement en 2021, lorsque le premier ministre a décidé de déclencher des élections anticipées.

Cependant, il est nettement différent de son prédécesseur. Une discussion adéquate de tous les aspects de ce projet de loi serait trop longue pour la longueur maximale autorisée de cette chronique. Par conséquent, je me concentrerai sur les aspects principaux et les plus frappants du projet de loi et des nouveaux règlements, soit une interdiction presque complète des cessions d'armes de poing.

### DATE D'ENTRÉE EN VIGUEUR DE L'INTERDICTION

Premièrement, contrairement au décret du 1er mai 2020 qui prohibe certaines armes à feu avec effet immédiat, le projet de loi C-21 n'a pas d'effet immédiat. Pour entrer en vigueur, il doit être sanctionné par les deux chambres du Parlement: la Chambre des communes et le Sénat. Cela prendra un certain temps, puisque le Parlement entrera en vacances d'été et ne reprendra qu'en septembre.

Au moment où j'écris cet article pendant la longue fin de semaine de la fête du Canada, le projet de loi a franchi l'étape de la deuxième lecture à la Chambre des communes et a été renvoyé au Comité de la sécurité publique. Il est impossible de prédire quand il sera examiné par le Comité, si des amendements seront proposés ou quand il sera renvoyé à la Chambre des communes pour troisième lecture et adoption. Compte tenu du récent



**C-21 applies only to handguns, not to other types of restricted firearms.**

**C-21 ne s'applique qu'aux armes de poing, et non aux autres types d'armes à feu à autorisation restreinte.**

### LA PORTÉE DE L'INTERDICTION

Premièrement, la restriction proposée sur les cessions ne s'applique qu'aux particuliers, et non aux entreprises. En effet, le projet de loi ajoute l'article suivant à la Loi sur les

armes à feu:

12.2 Le certificat d'enregistrement pour une arme de poing ne peut être délivré à un particulier.

Étant donné qu'un certificat d'enregistrement est une exigence pour acquérir et posséder une arme de poing, cet article interdira effectivement la cession d'une arme de poing à un individu, nonobstant le fait que le cessionnaire proposé est dûment titulaire d'un permis. Deuxièmement, elle ne s'applique qu'aux armes de poing, et non à d'autres types d'armes à feu à autorisation restreinte. La définition d'une arme de poing se trouve à l'article 84 du Code criminel:

**arme de poing:** Arme à feu destinée, de par sa construction ou ses modifications, à permettre de viser et tirer à l'aide d'une seule main, qu'elle ait été ou non modifiée subséquemment de façon à requérir l'usage des deux mains.

Troisièmement, il y a des exceptions. En effet, le nouvel article 97.1 de la LAF prévoit des exceptions très étroites à l'interdiction des cessions:

97.1 Les articles 12.2 et 19.1 ne s'appliquent pas au particulier qui, selon le cas:

a) est le titulaire d'une autorisation de port à l'égard d'une arme de poing;

pacte entre les libéraux et les néo-démocrates et de la position anti-armes à feu traditionnelle du Bloc, on peut supposer que le projet de loi sera adopté dans sa forme actuelle avant la fin de la présente session parlementaire.

Parallèlement au projet de loi, le gouvernement a déposé de nouvelles propositions de règlements qui visent à restreindre les conditions auxquelles une arme de poing peut être cédée, avant même que le projet de loi ne soit adopté. En vertu de la Loi sur les armes à feu, ces règlements entreraient en vigueur trente (30) jours de séance après leur dépôt à la Chambre des communes. Il y a d'autres considérations, mais par souci de simplicité, on peut supposer que ce projet de règlement entrera en vigueur en octobre 2022. Cette réglementation est unique en ce sens qu'elle restreint les cessions d'armes de poing, sous le couvert de conditions prescrites selon lesquelles de telles cessions peuvent avoir lieu. Cela revient en quelque sorte à mettre en œuvre une loi qui n'a pas encore été adoptée. Une contestation judiciaire du projet de règlement peut survenir. Ce sujet seul suffirait pour une chronique entière, et même davantage. Pour l'instant, revenons au projet de loi C-21.

b) satisfait aux critères réglementaires et fournit au contrôleur des armes à feu une lettre d'un organisme national ou provincial de réglementation des sports de tir précisant que le particulier s'entraîne, compétitionne ou est entraîneur dans une discipline de tir à l'arme de poing qui fait partie du programme du Comité international olympique ou du Comité international paralympique, que l'arme de poing lui est nécessaire pour ce faire et la discipline en question.

Étant donné que les autorisations de port ne sont délivrées qu'à l'égard de professions légales, telles que les trappeurs, certains agents de sécurité et prospecteurs travaillant là où de grands prédateurs peuvent être rencontrés, et exceptionnellement (c.-à-d. presque jamais) pour la protection personnelle, l'alinéa a) a une application très limitée. De même, l'alinéa b) ne s'applique qu'aux disciplines de tir au pistolet qui font partie du programme olympique. Par conséquent, le projet de loi ne reconnaît pas les disciplines de tir telles que le tir de précision, l'IPSC, l'IPDA, le PPC, le Three Gun et le CAS comme des disciplines de tir légitimes, aux fins des cessions d'armes de poing.

Enfin, les cessions interdites sont celles qui transfèrent la propriété, telle une vente, un troc (échange) ou un don. Un Don comprend un legs en vertu d'un testament.

Ainsi, à moins que vous ne tombiez dans l'une des deux exceptions très étroites dont il a été question précédemment, toute arme de poing que vous possédez au moment de l'entrée en vigueur du projet de loi C-21 vous appartiendra jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit légalement exportée, remise à la police, confisquée en vertu de la loi, cédée à une entreprise d'armes à feu (y compris à un musée) ou jusqu'à ce que (après votre décès), votre exécuteur testamentaire doive choisir entre l'une des options susmentionnées.

De même, à moins que vous ne vous qualifiez pour l'une des exceptions mentionnées précédemment, vous ne pourrez jamais légalement acquérir une nouvelle arme de poing.

Comme c'était le cas avec les prohibitions antérieures, le nombre de personnes possédant légalement des armes de poing diminuera avec le temps et sera un jour proche

de zéro, car les détenteurs actuels abandonneront le sport ou mourront.

Si le projet de loi est adopté et n'est pas invalidé par la suite, il pourrait avoir une incidence sur les dispositions testamentaires existantes lorsqu'une personne a légué une arme de poing à un tiers, qu'il s'agisse d'un membre de sa famille ou d'un ami, et qu'elle décède après l'entrée en vigueur des dispositions du projet de loi. Ceci, à son tour, créera des problèmes importants pour les liquidateurs de succession. Je ne serais pas surpris que la police devienne très proactive en faisant pression sur les liquidateurs de succession pour qu'ils remettent à la police les armes à feu qui font partie d'une succession.

Il n'y a pas de confiscation immédiate des armes de poing envisagée expressément dans le projet de loi. Je ne serais pas surpris qu'une telle initiative soit envisagée dans le cadre d'un mandat ultérieur.

#### CONSIDÉRATIONS PRATIQUES

L'effet immédiat du dépôt du projet de loi C-21 à la Chambre des communes a été une augmentation immédiate et significative du nombre de transactions d'armes de poing. Les détenteurs de permis ont saisi ce qui pourrait être leur dernière occasion d'acquérir soit leur première arme de poing ou une certaine arme de poing, ou de se débarrasser d'armes de poing qu'ils n'utilisent plus, ou dont ils ne veulent pas risquer de voir la valeur anéantie. Cela s'est traduit par un nombre démesuré d'appels au Programme canadien d'armes à feu par des personnes qui souhaitent initier une cession d'arme de poing. Il convient de noter que la mise en œuvre récente du système de numéros de référence en ce qui concerne les transferts d'armes à feu sans restriction a probablement également contribué à l'augmentation du trafic d'appels, sans augmentation proportionnelle de ressources.

L'article 12.7 de la Loi sur les armes à feu envisage la cession d'une arme de poing mentionnée au paragraphe 12 (6.1) fabriquée avant 1946 à un proche parent du propriétaire actuel. Le projet de loi C-21 n'abroge pas explicitement le paragraphe 12(7) de la Loi sur les armes à feu, malgré le fait que le nouvel article 12.2 interdit la délivrance d'un certificat

d'enregistrement au cessionnaire proposé. Il s'agit d'une question qui devra potentiellement être résolue par un tribunal.

L'interdiction de transférer des armes de poing à un individu ou entre individus constitue potentiellement une atteinte à la compétence provinciale en matière de propriété et de droits civils dans la province. Une éventuelle contestation constitutionnelle à cet égard est une possibilité réelle.

Enfin, même si le narratif officiel est que le projet de loi C-21 prétend régler un problème de sécurité publique, les seules personnes qui ne sont pas touchées par le projet de loi sont celles qui trafiquent, fabriquent ou se procurent des armes de poing sur ou pour le marché noir, ce qui comprend l'écrasante majorité de ceux qui commettent des soi-disant crimes commis avec une arme à feu. Par conséquent, le projet de loi C-21 ne touche que ceux qui possèdent ou souhaitent posséder des armes de poing légalement. Il n'affecte pas les criminels qui continueront d'opérer en dehors du cadre légal et malgré celui-ci.

Quelqu'un pourrait vouloir tenter d'expliquer aux députés libéraux que la criminalité armée n'est pas un problème d'arme à feu, mais un problème de criminalité. Ce serait probablement peine perdue. Ils le savent déjà et s'en fichent. En effet, la seule justification du projet de loi C-21 est qu'il est perçu par les stratèges libéraux comme susceptible d'obtenir l'appui du public, compte tenu de la survenance récente de nombreuses fusillades en milieu urbain, entre membres de gangs. Le soutien du public se traduit par des votes, ce qui est tout ce qui intéresse la plupart des politiciens. Encore une fois, les propriétaires d'armes à feu qui agissent dans la légalité deviennent les boucs émissaires des politiciens libéraux.

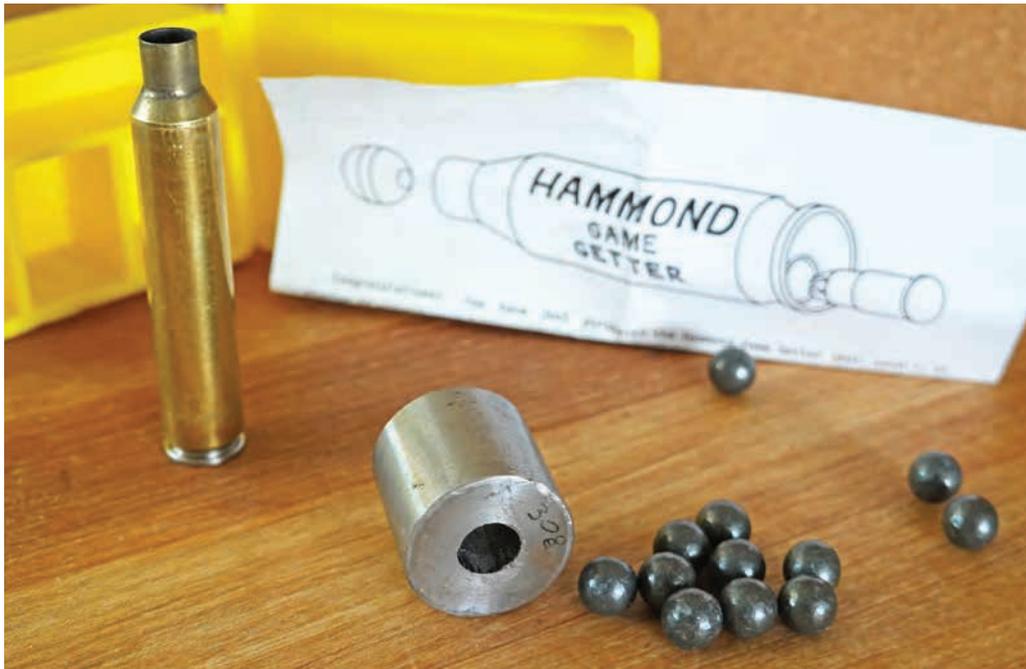
J'espère que lorsque ces opportunistes seront chassés du pouvoir, un autre gouvernement abrogera le projet de loi C-21. Cela nécessitera à la fois une majorité de vote au Parlement et une certaine dose de courage politique, car je soupçonne que les médias grand public ne soutiendront guère une telle initiative. 



# Made in Canada

Timothy Fowler

## The Hammond Game Getter



If necessity is the mother of invention, Brian Hammond might be her grandson. How many times have you thought, I wish I had a pistol, or at least a rimfire, when you were big game hunting and spotted a grouse or hare for the pot? To answer this need, Brian has invented the Hammond Game Getter.

He told me, "I used to do a lot of sheep hunting, and I was seeing all these big blue grouse and ptarmigan. So, I made a simple swage to make .277 lead bullets, stuck them in the front end of a highly modified cartridge case and put a .22 blank behind them. Turns out, I could drive nails. That set-up was incredibly accurate."

This success led Hammond to develop a range of custom-made reloadable cartridges that fit in specific centerfire rifles, just like a regular round. Hammond drills out the original case head and installs a replacement stainless steel insert, into which a .22 rimfire industrial blank is inserted. The hole is offset to allow the centerfire firing pin to strike the rim of the blank and ignite the powder reliably.

His Game Getter system includes lead balls (buckshot) and a calibre-specific stainless-steel swage to slim down these balls to fit precisely in the bore of your chosen centerfire. All of this comes in a plastic box, which fits in a shirt pocket.

Hammond provides comprehensive instructions with the device and suggests shooters test the Game Getter with a variety of loads, noting that industrial .22 blanks of varying power are used in powder-actuated tools and are available from hardware stores. Memorize your required hold-over with a particular load instead of adjusting your scope. For the heaviest (yellow and green) blanks, Hammond suggests shooters lubricate the projectile before inserting it into the cartridge, while with the lighter loads lubricant is optional. Use a hammer and a wooden or metal dowel to swage the projectile, placing the exit hole over an opening to receive the swaged bullet.

I recently used the Hammond Game Getter with swaged .36 calibre lead balls from Hornady. Forcing the

lead ball through the swage worked perfectly. I slipped the .22 blank in the case head and inserted the swaged lead bullet in the mouth of the Game Getter cartridge, closed the bolt, took aim and squeezed the trigger. Yellow blanks drive the 55-grain slug just over 1,000 fps, so there is next to zero recoil. The noise is equivalent to a 22 Short. The Game Getter extracts easily but removing the .22 blank took some coaxing with my jackknife blade. Subsequent loading of bullets is easy, just make sure there is a bit of bullet tip showing when the cartridge is loaded. The resulting group at 40 yards was about an inch – perfect for collecting small game at close range. Reloading for a subsequent shot takes less than a minute.

You can buy a Game Getter for \$45, and I recommend you do it soon as Brian has been making them for 30-plus years and who knows how much longer he'll be at it. Order yours here: [www.gamegetter.ca](http://www.gamegetter.ca). It's the perfect solution to collecting small game while big game hunting. 

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