

CANADIAN

FIREARMS JOURNAL

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023



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CANADA'S NATIONAL FIREARMS ASSOCIATION

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CANADIAN **FIREARMS JOURNAL**

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 NFA

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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

This month's cover image comes from the talented camera of Justin Foster, who tells us, "Premium components are only as good as the dies you assemble them with. The combination of the Whidden Gunworks Click Adjustable FL Bushing Sizing Die and L.E. Wilson Chamber Type Bullet Seating Die with micrometer adjustment seen here guarantees the pinnacle of repeatable precision. This particular pairing is in 308 Winchester and is responsible for the Lapua 308 Winchester Palma case and Berger 185-grain Juggernaut projectile combination being featured. Die pairings like this will be used throughout the winter months as the primary focus shifts from shooting to handloading and preparing for next year's season." 



Canadian Firearms Journal

The Official Magazine of



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NATIONAL
FIREARMS
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PM 40009473

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Canadian Firearms Journal,
P.O. Box 49090, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 6H4
PRINTED IN CANADA



From The Editor's Desk

Al Voth

New Year's Ramblings



Well, that was an interesting year for Canadian gun owners. The events of 2022 included:

1. No resolution to the “jailing” of all those guns scooped up in the May 1, 2020, OIC,
2. a ban on the transfer of handguns, and
3. the requirement to call the Canadian Firearms Centre to verify the PAL of anyone we’re transferring a non-restricted firearm to.

It’s getting to be a full-time job just keeping up with the changes.

Of course, nothing has changed for the criminals who use guns. For them, it’s business as usual:

1. Buy a smuggled gun in the back alley,
2. do your business with it,
3. if caught, get released with a firearms prohibition order,
4. go buy another smuggled gun and repeat, repeat, repeat.

And I don’t expect anything will change for them in 2023.

For us, however, you can rest assured the Liberals and the NDP aren’t done


with us yet. While I suspect our May 1 OIC guns will continue to rest in purgatory, we’ll likely see some new magazine restrictions. Just how onerous those will be remains to be seen, but I’m sure we won’t like them. Criminals, by definition, will exempt themselves from whatever we are stuck with.

On a brighter note, the first few months of 2023 are traditionally trade show season in the firearms world. This includes events like the SHOT Show, SCI Convention, NRA Annual Meeting and CSAAA trade shows. Some of these major events are restricted to industry types only, while others are open to the public. Lots of local gun shows happen during this time of year as well, and it’s always a great idea to get out and support those. And who knows what sort of bargains you might find there.

We are certainly all in need of bargains these days. Ammunition prices are crazy, as are those for handloading components, if you can find them. If you’re like me, you have handloading recipes which require specific ingredients, and

many of them can’t be found anywhere, at any price. Hopefully, that will improve in 2023. However, much will depend on what happens on the US political front. If there’s a big surge in new gun owners down south, as we’ve seen over the past few years, or hoarding takes off again, then things will remain bleak in Canada, on both the price and supply side of the equation.

A press release from Vihtavuori recently crossed my desk advising that firm is starting construction of a primer factory in Europe, so this should help the worldwide supply of that scarce commodity. It’s a 33-million-Euro investment with military to be supplied first when it comes online in 2025, and then the commercial market in 2027. So, patience is still required.

Fortunately, an NFA membership is still inexpensive, a great deal, and you can have it right away. You get all the usual member benefits and this magazine as a bonus. We have lots of great content planned for 2023, so stay tuned for what’s coming your way. After all, it’s your magazine. 



President's Message

Rick Igercich

The Year Ahead

There's a new year in front of us, so where do we stand?

As we usher in 2023, the Liberal barrage against Canadians continues. It's an all-out assault on law-abiding firearms owners across Canada. From the May 2020 OIC banning 1,500-plus types of firearms to Bill C71, the path towards long gun registry 2.0, including restrictions on where you can travel with your restricted firearms, and then there's Bill C21 with all its multi-faceted, buried segments on capacity restrictions, including the early implementation of the handgun transfer freeze by OIC. What's next?

The anti-firearm groups have already put out a list of several dozen firearms which they believe should be banned in the interest of public safety. Of course, there's never any reference to illegally smuggled firearms, gangs or organized crime. In fact, the Liberal's answer to the criminals is to reduce mandatory minimum sentences, while imposing harsh regulations on law-abiding firearms owners, with stiff penalties if not adhered to. How that makes any sense, I have no idea.

As I travel around the province of Ontario and different parts of the country, visiting gun shops and gun ranges, feelings are mixed. I still hear from some of the seasoned veterans of the sport that none of this is going to affect them, others saying, "I'm angry that I can't bequeath my handguns, some of which are family heirlooms which have been passed through the generations, to my heirs." Others are disillusioned that they can no longer sell their handguns, which will be seized and destroyed by the government after their passing. At the other end of the spectrum, I am hear-

ing, "How am I ever going to be able to participate in any kind of shooting sport when I can't even buy the equipment to get involved."

Lately, I've also been hearing that participation has been going down in some segments of the shooting sports, namely trap, for a different reason entirely. So, I decided to go to a local gun club and ask why this is happening. I spoke to a group of trap shooters, some whom I've known and shot with for many years. The responses I received were shocking, with the biggest reason seeming to be the lack of young shooters joining the sport. Young people just aren't filling the gaps that the senior shooters are leaving when they retire from the sport. When I asked why this is happening, I received several answers. The biggest one being the price of ammunition, which has almost doubled in the last year-and-a-half. Availability was also mentioned as a problem, as was the price of firearms, which have gone through the roof, all mixed in with Justin Trudeau's ever-changing gun laws, carbon tax and skyrocketing fuel prices.

Which leads me into my next segment, handgun shooting, which has always been a more economical way to participate in shooting sports or just plinking at the range. With the implementation of the handgun transfer freeze by OIC, in which handguns can no longer be transferred beyond the registered owner, this implementation put an end to any new shooters entering handgun sports, except for a very few select Olympic athletes. Which brings up the same question, how are they going to enter the sport if they can't buy handguns?

IPSC shooting seems to be doing

well and is vying for special status to transfer, trade or purchase new handguns. The NFA is opposed to this, as we will not condone segregation in handgun shooting sports or any firearm-related activity. The NFA is of the opinion that all firearms owners and legal shooting activities should be treated as equal.

It's obvious the Liberals are getting rid of firearms by attrition. They did the same thing when they established a classification system that prohibited many firearms, where some firearms owners were grandfathered because of certain firearms they owned at the time, while others weren't.

And that leads me to the NFA's biggest challenge. Out of the estimated 2.2 million licensed gun owners in Canada, only approximately 10 per cent are involved in some sort of gun lobby that's fighting for their rights and freedoms. This leaves approximately 90 per cent of Canadian firearms owners not having any kind of public voice. It's time for a call to action, so reach out to your friends and neighbours, whether they own firearms or not. Tell them what's going on, tell them how the government plans to seize Canadians' personal property. First it's guns; what's next? Gas-powered cars?

I ask you to write your MPs and spread the word. Don't fall for the government's plan to segregate us into specific groups. We need to stand strong as one. Spread the word to join the NFA, donate, so we, with all Canadian firearms owners behind us, can continue to fight the good fight for your rights and freedoms. We need to stand our ground so future generations will enjoy the freedoms we did in the past. 🇨🇦

Message du Président

Rick Igercich

L'année A Venir

Une nouvelle année arrive, et où en sommes-nous?

Alors que l'année 2023 approche, le barrage des libéraux contre les Canadiens se poursuit. C'est une attaque totale envers les propriétaires d'armes à feu respectueux des lois de partout au Canada. Nous parlons du décret de mai 2020, interdisant plus de 1 500 types d'armes à feu, et du projet de loi C-71, qui ouvre la voie au registre des armes d'épaule version 2.0 et qui comprend notamment des restrictions sur les endroits où vous pouvez vous rendre avec vos armes à feu à autorisation restreinte. Vient ensuite le projet de loi C-21, avec tous ses éléments détournés sur les restrictions de capacité, ce qui comprend la mise en œuvre rapide du gel du transfert des armes de poing par l'intermédiaire d'un décret. Qu'est-ce qui nous attend encore?

Les groupes anti-armes à feu ont déjà dressé une liste de plusieurs dizaines d'armes qui, selon eux, devraient être interdites dans l'intérêt de la sécurité publique. Bien entendu, ils ne parlent jamais des armes à feu de contrebande, des gangs ou du crime organisé. En fait, la réponse des libéraux aux criminels consiste à réduire les peines minimales exécutives, tout en imposant des règlements sévères aux honnêtes propriétaires d'armes à feu, avec de graves pénalités s'ils ne les respectent pas. Ça n'a aucun sens.

Alors que je voyage en Ontario et dans différents endroits du pays, visitant des armureries et des champs de tir, je constate que les sentiments sont mitigés. Certains vétérans aguerris du sport disent que cela ne les touche pas, alors que d'autres disent: « Je suis furieux de ne pas pouvoir léguer mes armes de poing, dont certaines sont des objets de famille qui ont été transmis de génération en génération, à mes héritiers. » D'autres sont déçus de ne plus pouvoir vendre leurs

armes de poing, qui seront saisies et détruites par le gouvernement. À l'opposé, j'entends dire: « Comment vais-je pouvoir participer à un sport de tir si je ne peux même pas acheter l'équipement pour le faire? »


J'ai récemment entendu dire que la participation à certains segments des sports de tir diminue, notamment le tir aux pigeons d'argile, pour une raison tout à fait différente. J'ai donc décidé d'aller dans un club de tir local pour savoir ce qui se passe. J'ai parlé à un groupe de tireurs, dont certains que je connais et avec qui je tire depuis de nombreuses années. Les réponses que j'ai obtenues étaient choquantes, la principale raison semblant être le manque de jeunes tireurs. Les jeunes ne remplacent pas les tireurs plus vieux qui cessent de pratiquer ce sport. Quand j'ai demandé pourquoi c'était le cas, j'ai entendu différentes réponses. La principale est le prix des munitions, qui a pratiquement doublé cette dernière année et demie. La disponibilité est aussi un problème, tout comme le prix des armes à feu, qui atteint des sommets. Tout cela est combiné aux lois sur les armes toujours changeantes de Justin Trudeau, à la taxe sur le carbone et à l'augmentation massive du prix de l'essence.

Cela m'amène au point suivant, le tir à l'arme de poing, qui a toujours été un moyen plus économique de participer aux sports de tir ou simplement de faire du tir de précision. La mise en œuvre du décret sur le gel des armes de poing, qui ne peuvent plus être transférées au-delà du propriétaire enregistré, empêche tous les nouveaux tireurs de commencer à pratiquer des sports avec une arme de poing, à l'exception de quelques athlètes olympiques triés sur le volet. Cela soulève la même question. Comment peuvent-ils pratiquer ce sport s'ils ne peuvent pas acheter des armes de poing?

Le tir IPSC semble bien se porter, et se dispute un statut spécial pour le transfert, l'échange ou l'achat de nouvelles armes de poing. La NFA s'y oppose, car elle ne tolère pas la ségrégation dans les sports de tir à l'arme de poing ou dans toute autre activité liée aux armes à feu. La NFA estime que tous les propriétaires d'armes à feu et toutes les activités de tir légales doivent être sur un pied d'égalité.

Il est clair que les libéraux éliminent les armes à feu par attrition. Ils ont fait la même chose quand ils ont établi un système de classification qui interdisait de nombreuses armes à feu, où certains propriétaires d'armes à feu bénéficiaient de droits acquis en raison des armes qu'ils possédaient, alors que d'autres n'en bénéficiaient pas.

Cela m'amène au plus grand défi de la NFA. Sur les quelque 2,2 millions de propriétaires d'armes à feu détenant un permis au Canada, seulement environ 10 % font partie d'une forme de lobby qui défend leurs droits et leurs libertés. Ainsi, environ 90 % des propriétaires d'armes à feu ne sont pas défendus publiquement. Il est temps de passer à l'action, et je vous prie de parler à vos amis et vos voisins, qu'ils possèdent des armes à feu ou non. Dites-leur ce qui se passe, dites-leur comment le gouvernement prévoit saisir la propriété des Canadiens. Ce sont d'abord les armes à feu, et ensuite, ce seront les voitures à essence?

Je vous demande d'écrire à votre député pour passer le message. Ne tombez pas dans le piège du gouvernement, qui veut nous séparer en petits groupes. Nous devons rester unis et forts. Dites aux gens de se joindre à la NFA, de faire un don, pour que nous puissions, avec tous les autres propriétaires d'armes à feu, continuer à nous battre pour vos droits et vos libertés. Nous devons tenir bon pour que les futures générations puissent profiter des mêmes libertés que nous. 



Vice-president's Message

By Blair Hagen

Perseverance

This article is about perseverance. Perseverance is a trait essential in defeating the evil which seeks to subjugate the lives and futures of a free people. Perseverance in defense of our Canadian freedom and culture is something the Liberal Party has sought to breed out of our national identity for many decades now, sometimes advancing, sometimes receding, but always part of the puerile ideological makeup and legislative agenda of that most destructive political entity. The party of division, the party of the privileged few. The party that seeks to redefine hate as love and tolerance, in its own image.

As we enter 2023, it is time to take stock of and perhaps have a situation report or grounding in just where we are at in the present Liberal government's civil disarmament push and the national politics surrounding it.

Since 2016, Justin Trudeau's Liberals have perpetrated several major attacks on the firearms rights, freedoms, culture and property of Canadians. Bill C71, with its insidious back-door rifle and shotgun registry, the May 2020 OIC which overnight prohibited 300,000 firearms legally acquired and lawfully owned by Canadians, the handgun importation freeze by OIC designed to drive the final nail into the coffin of the Canadian firearms industry and which prevents firearms license holders from legally transferring their registered handguns and seeks to instead confiscate them by stealth, and Bill C21 which seeks to formalize all of this in legislation and law.

If all that isn't enough to convey to you the true intentions of the Liberal Party firearm agenda, there may be a rewarding career waiting for you at the CBC. Never again will the Liberal Party be able to claim that its firearms policies are aimed at public safety, such as they have historically attempted to claim, and especially back during the infamous long gun registry of the

1990s. They are an ideological attack on the rights, freedoms, culture and property of Canadians. Nothing more.

The mask is off. Forever.

There is more, though.

Two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, have appointed their own provincial chief firearms officers in opposition to the federal Liberal agenda. The governments in those provinces thought it important enough to take a stand in defense of the rights and property of their citizens to take the step of rejecting the Liberal firearms agenda in a very provocative and public way.

The provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon and New Brunswick have all stated they will oppose using provincial resources to help facilitate federal Liberal confiscations. And participation of the provinces is key to the Liberal gun grab.

Recent positive judgements in the individual May 2020 OIC legal challenges in Ontario Superior Court have also further undermined and questioned the Liberal's gun grab. Questions of operation of law and procedural fairness call into question the Liberals' ability to simply nullify firearms registrations and confiscate lawfully owned property with no opposition or appeal. This, in response to the troubling Liberal habit of inventing authority for their craven and immoral actions, in the hope of sympathetic courts and judges backing them.

I admire the respondents in the OIC cases. They are doing it the hard way. Legal action to redress horrible government regulation is always a long, expensive and uncertain process compared to political change, but it demonstrates the intestinal fortitude of Canadians willing to stand up for their rights and freedoms. They are to be congratulated.

Through 2023, there will continue to be mounting pressure from Justin's Liberals and the RCMP firearms


program to convince you that holding a firearms license and lawfully owning your property is an expensive and intrusive legal and bureaucratic burden you do not wish to continue to be involved in. They want you to turn in your firearms and forget your rights, freedoms, culture and property. Take the easy way out. Give up, get out, move on and succumb to the freedom-destroying legislative attacks designed solely to target, not criminals or lunatics, but regular, everyday Canadians.

So, my message is this: persevere.

Change is coming. Change that will give us the opportunity to stop the Liberal civil disarmament agenda right in its tracks. Change that sweeps Justin and his little band of cultural Marxists into the dustbin of Canadian history. Change that will give Canadians the impetus, through these utter, undeniably ideologically motivated Liberal attacks on Canadians, to make a clean sweep of their firearms laws and regulations, their lawyers and their fellow travellers in the federal bureaucracy.

For there is no longer a vacuum in Parliament. Justin rarely attends the house these days in avoidance of the hard questions and castigations delivered by the new Conservative leader and opposition. Dodging the hard questions for which he has run out of effective answers for and even rebukes to.

His MPs and ministers are running out of platitudes and excuses for seven years of Liberal outrages, excesses and failures. They squirm in their seats until they are excused. Even the NDP is now being embarrassed into asking difficult questions of their coalition partners. A contemptible coalition which has no legislative credibility and which Canadians did not vote for.

Perseverance. I look forward to the coming years when we can discuss in hindsight what happened under the horrible governance of Justin and the Liberals, and how we went about restoring our rights and freedoms with the new government we replaced them with. 



NO COMPROMISE.



Politics & Guns

Bruce Gold

Policy Success As A Press Release

Trudeau's Liberal Party and their NDP satellite are racking up an impressive set of misplaced policies. For example, the world is now in a desperate energy crisis caused by governments phasing out gas and oil decades before green energy systems are an actual, functioning alternative. This has empowered dictatorships at the same time it has crippled the west's response. Canada's contribution has been \$150 billion in rejected private investments in energy projects. Since we contribute less than one per cent to global warming, the total benefit from our sacrifice is zero.

Our gun policies are no better, and in both cases the Liberals actively engage in scapegoating to shift responsibility. On the energy front, they blame Putin for his exploitation of the west's energy folly. On the firearms front, they blame the law-abiding for the misdeeds of criminals who are already breaking existing gun laws. In both cases, they rely on the "magic press release" to justify all. On the energy front, the Germans were offered the prospect of hydrogen power (a currently non-existent technology) that "may be developed" – perhaps. On the firearms front, we are offered gun confiscations, freezing of commercial activity and expanding functional restrictions, all of which punish the law-abiding. All of this is solemnly delivered by the exponents of a higher moral conscience speaking down to us.

SOME RECENT HISTORY

The current cycle of anti-gun politics started with a press release (2016) by the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team, stating gun crime (up sharply on the Liberal's watch) was being fueled by domestically sourced crime guns. After a brief flurry of public alarm, it was discovered that Statistics Canada had no data on the source of crime guns because the police

did not collect this data in any systematic way. It was also found the RCMP had changed the definition of "crime gun" to include previously excluded "paperwork crimes." This dramatically increased the number of "crime guns" and allowed the police to put "paperwork crimes" in the same category as homicides. This move was a logical continuation of Bill C-68, which criminalized mere possession of a firearm.

"ASSAULT STYLE" RIFLE FIASCO

The massive gun confiscation of May 1, 2020, was a significant escalation of government by decree. The OIC was prepared in secret, with RCMP support, so the firearms community (here treated like criminals) could not "evade" the new law. This was supported by deliberate lies. The first was that these semi-automatic hunting and sporting rifles had no legitimate use for hunting or sports shooting. A claim that ignored almost a century of common and lawful use. The second lie was that they were the weapon of choice for criminals, when they were rarely used in crime. In part, this anti-gun rhetoric was designed to hide the fact gun crime increases were the result of increases in criminal gangs (gang-related homicides doubled under Trudeau).

The purge of semi-automatic sporting rifles was made in the full awareness that bans of semi-automatic rifles in other countries have not produced any noticeable decrease in violent crime. The government further muddied the law by deliberately refusing to give a legal definition to either "assault style" or "variant." Besides the 1,500 firearms listed in the OIC as newly prohibited, the RCMP have reclassified some 9,500 additional firearms as "unnamed variants" in the secretive Firearms Reference Table. They have testified under oath they did this under the authority of the OIC, but claim their decisions are "technical assessments" which are

not reviewable by the courts.

We can note here that the Firearms Act (Section 74) explicitly establishes a legal right to just such a review by provincial courts. In essence, the Liberals are signaling it's perfectly OK to manipulate the law in ways which positively prevent people from knowing if their activities are legal. The Liberals promise to make this legal minefield permanent by making firearms classifications "evergreen," subject to continuous reassessment using secret and changeable criteria. The government also claimed the current stable classification system failed because manufacturers modified their product to comply with the law. The gun confiscation OIC is based on the opinion of the governor and council. The Liberals have declared in court that all documents, studies and data (if any) behind this opinion are a cabinet secret. This is the Liberal's interpretation of their election promise to be "the most transparent government ever."

NULLIFICATION

The Firearms Act gives people who had their firearms reclassified the legal right (Section 74) to appeal the reclassification in provincial court, where the judge "shall" make their decision based on the evidence. The Liberals did not want to debate amending the Firearms Act in parliament and did not want to be forced to provide evidence to justify reclassifications because this would open their actions to public review. To get around this, they simply declared the registrations nullified and therefore not open to review by the court.

The Provincial Court of Alberta (Canada (Attorney General) v Stark, 2020 ABPC 230, (date: Nov. 30, 2020) examined this claim. The government claimed the legal right to a review hearing didn't exist because the letter sent by the registrar of firearms stating the registrations were "automati-

Preserving Our Firearms Heritage

Gary K. Kangas

Canadian Women Use Guns

I quite often view the frontier-era images stored on the websites of Canadian museums in order to gather information about our past. One of the most memorable pictures I've seen was of a young First Nations mother leading her horse, accompanied by two small children. If my memory serves, it was early 1900s Alberta. The image was quite ordinary for the era; however, this young mother had a single-action Colt tucked in the waistband of her checked skirt. Oh, my gosh! A young woman in Canada carrying a gun!

In the early 1900s, this was not an unusual occurrence, both my grandmothers had handguns. My paternal grandmother carried an Ivor Johnson top break .38 calibre Safety Hammerless in her apron pocket. My maternal grandmother had a Luger and a 1908 Savage semi-auto pistol.

Let's now skip to the current times. Firearms ownership by women is growing rapidly. Competitive shooting has inspired many women to take up a diverse selection of disciplines. This new growth in practical pistol, cowboy action, PPC, mounted shooting, trap, skeet and blackpowder muzzleloader shooting is a phenomenon. Plus, the hunting fraternity is vibrant with women taking CORE courses and acquiring their hunting licenses. Instructors have shared with me up to half the attendees can be women. This also applies to PAL courses. Gun clubs are forming women's divisions for events and training.

As I recall the 1980s, women were introduced to shooting sports and hunting through male family members or acquaintances who were involved in these endeavours. This scenario has changed completely, as women are now getting involved with guns on their own. It's prompted me to interview several female gun owners, asking how they came to take a course and use firearms.



Angela and her percussion rifle.

Kathryn, 40-something, single, arrived at the Victoria Fish & Game approximately 10 years ago, by herself. She had some experience shooting when she was younger and became motivated later to seek instruction. The discipline she chose, after viewing other alternatives, was cowboy action shooting and now has become a provincial champion. Another lady, Laurie, divorced, 45 years old, attended a class at the Southern Vancouver Rangers with a female friend, she has become involved in cowboy action shooting, took a hunter training course and has become a proficient shotgunner. Another, Catherine, approximately age 50 at the time, inherited her aunt's 22 LR and with some instruction from her grandfather

at age eight with both blackpowder and modern cartridges. This led Bailey to begin trap shooting at age 19.

Some years ago, I interviewed one of BC's top trap shooters, Frank Planes, now deceased. Frank was a grand storyteller. Being of First Nations heritage, he shared stories about his mother who was a proficient hunter and outdoorsperson. Frank's mother instructed him in hunting, tracking, bushcraft and survival. His stories were enthralling. We rarely hear about women such as Frank's mother teaching sons how to use guns and hunt.

An opposite story, Angela, a mature English lady who immigrated to Canada, met and married her Canadian husband, Bruce. Angela's



Sue's harvested elk with her Parker Hale 270.

new spouse had been a competitor in shooting sports and has now become a blackpowder and cowboy action participant. Angela was introduced to these disciplines and was immediately engaged. A direct quote, "Growing up in England, it was a given that all gun owners were morally suspect, and guns had no practical benefit. In any case, guns were nothing that normal people, especially women, would want anything to do with. Having immigrated

here, my new Canadian husband introduced me to blackpowder shooting and I haven't stopped having fun since. I'm now shooting trap, pistol and am a happy participant in cowboy action. The adventure continues."

My second-to-last woman shooter is Sue. I have been acquainted with Sue and her husband for many years. Sue told me, "I did not grow up in a hunting or shooting family, although my husband had hunted as a young man

but did not actively hunt when we met.

"I was introduced to shooting blackpowder when I volunteered at the blackpowder venue for the BC Summer Games in 1988 at the Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association. When the competition was done for the day, I was offered the chance to fire one of these impressive 'smoke poles.' The boom, the smell of the blackpowder smoke and hitting what I was shooting at had me grinning and very interested. I went home and told my husband he had to come and see this. He was equally interested.

"Blackpowder shooting is not like shooting conventional, modern firearms. The loading procedure is very methodical, almost Zen-like once you get the hang of it. Target shooting in general is very satisfying, and you are always trying to better your grouping and score. Long weekend competitions called Rendezvous are a meeting of other like-minded folk who enjoy re-enacting a much earlier time. Gathering the gear and dressing in period clothing of the 1840s fur trade era is all



part of the fun.

"The BC Summer Games was my first formal competition the following year and I have participated every year until blackpowder shooting was removed from the BC Summer Games after 1997. I was a medalist at least once every year. The provincial competition was replaced by the BC Provincial Rendezvous and the BC Provincial Formal Shoot. Both of these events were sanctioned by the BC Black Powder Association and ran until approximately 2005. I was fortunate to be on the medal podium many times during these years, as well as winning the provincial championship twice. Shooting blackpowder has taken me all over the province and to the US for Rendezvous. The meeting of other like-minded enthusiasts is a big part of the fun.

"Hunting has become a yearly pursuit as well. My husband got me started, and I have been on my own while hunting for most of the animals I have taken. There have been moose, bear, deer and elk which are in the Boone & Crockett record book. Hunting also includes field dressing an animal, our motto being, 'You shoot it, you clean it.' Some of this has been accomplished with a flashlight in my teeth and truck headlights.

"I've also become an instructor for Becoming an Outdoors Woman, and have gone to guide school, subsequently working in the industry leading horse pack trips in the Chilcotin mountains. My love of shooting led me to take my instructor training for PAL and I'm now sanctioned by the RCMP to teach the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and the Canadian Restricted Firearms Course. As the only female instructor in Victoria, I think I present a unique style of teaching that many new shooting enthusiasts, both male and female, really enjoy."

Sue's hunting tools are a Parker Hale 270 mounted with a Bushnell 4-12X scope, and her deer gun is a .54 calibre Thompson/Center Hawken percussion, shooting a round patched ball.

My last interview was with a young lady who is a fine example of what young women are accomplishing by learning how to shoot, hunt, compete and become an activist. Jennifer Gadbois, 30 years old, told me, "I didn't grow up around hunting or firearms;



LEFT: Jenn and turkey with her Winchester SXP 12-gauge.

BELOW: Jenn and a doe, taken with her Traditions .50-calibre muzzleloader.



however, I have always enjoyed being outdoors and held an interest in self sufficiency. I completed my hunter training and PAL course after graduating from college. After getting licensed, I did some research, acquired hunting permission from a local farmer and went deer hunting with a muzzle-loader. There was a lot of trial and error, and there still is, as hunting is a constant learning experience. I now hunt deer, turkey and geese, I process all my own harvest into steaks, ground meat, sausage, turkey, etc.


"I became more interested in firearms through hunting, and three years after getting my PAL I qualified for my RPAL. I joined a local handgun club and members encouraged me to get my Black Badge certification. I now shoot IPSC and steel challenge competitively.

"Right after the May 1, 2020, OIC 'AR ban,' I realized I needed to get more involved. I started becoming more active socially, through my range, and through local media to help grow the community and educate members. I started volunteering with some consumer groups and following politics. I met a couple of CSAAA members through this work, and it turns out the managing director position was open; I applied and was interviewed for

the position. The CSAAA is Canada's firearms industry organization. The CSAAA represents Canadian firearms and hunting businesses, and addresses business-specific issues. We work closely with many of the major hunting and firearms groups in Canada. Learning the industry challenges, digging deeper into the politics, research, and legal aspects are a learning curve, but it's something I am passionate about."

Jenn tells me she hunts on her own for turkey and geese using a Winchester SXP 12-gauge shotgun. Her hunting rifle is a Traditions Pursuit .50-calibre muzzleloader equipped with a Traditions 3-9X40 scope.

If you want to have more information on Jenn Gadbois, managing director/registered lobbyist of the CSAAA, see their website at www.csaaa.org.

The shooting sports and hunting fraternity have come full circle from the frontier to now. These women, in my opinion, would be greeted as kindred spirits by the outdoorswomen, Indigenous or otherwise, of our truly Canadian past. They are genuine preservers of our firearms heritage. 



NFA

FREEDOM.
SAFETY.
RESPONSIBILITY.

cally nullified and are no longer valid” simply resulted from a reclassification by the OIC. The Court noted there was nothing in the Firearms Act, Criminal Code or the May 1 OIC establishing or supporting this new nullified process. The Court also noted the registration certificates could only cease to exist in law, absent new legislation eliminating them, if they were revoked or expired. Hence, nullification was merely a revocation under a made-up name. The Court also noted that firearm certificates could not have been nullified because they must continue to exist for the policy of either buyback or grandfathering to exist. The Court noted they were a legal requirement for grandfathering since the holder had to be in continuous possession of the certificate for grandfathering to occur. Further, there are thousands of Canadians who have a prohibited license and can legally own and use prohibited firearms. Accordingly, nullification has no basis in law. This unconstitutional attempt to subvert the law with invented labeling has reduced the whole category of prohibited licensing to conjecture and guesswork.

AFTER THE PRESS RELEASE

To the Liberals’ apparent astonishment, people expected realistic activity of some sort to follow the carefully planned vote-grabbing press release. However, events quickly demonstrated the press release was the policy and there was no actual plan. In August 2020, four months after the surprise gun confiscation, the department of public safety asked 15 companies to develop a plan for the gun confiscation. No company saw fit to bid on the contract. In December, seven months after the press release, IBM was awarded a \$1.2 million contract to design (but not do) the confiscation. By May 2021, the contract cost had risen to \$1.5 million and the cost of compensation was estimated at \$756 million (enough for 1,200 police officers for 5 years). The Fraser Institute noted the estimate ignored staffing and other costs. They estimated total costs would range between \$2 billion to \$5 billion. With the RCMP continuing its stealthy reclassifications, and no legal definitions to anchor the process, the government is currently unable to estimate the number of guns to be

confiscated to the nearest 100,000. By December 2021, only 142 guns had been surrendered and 18 deactivated. By March 2022, the amnesty had to be extended to October 2023 with no actual plan in sight, much less any actual confiscations.

Not content with this fiasco, the Liberals waded in deeper with a ban on handgun sales and transfers, because sports shooting was becoming more popular. Liberals are now claiming that smashing lawful sports shooting and confiscating billions of dollars of private property will increase public safety. Not mentioned is the fact these legal handguns have never been “on the street” and were not involved in crime. Alluding to the often-referenced fact the US has the world’s highest gun ownership rate, Trudeau told reporters, “The math is really quite simple. The fewer the guns in our communities, the safer everyone will be.” Unspoken was the fact that the US, with the highest gun ownership rate, has a homicide rate about half the world average (UN data) and lower than about 90 other nations all with lower gun ownership.



Nathaniel Milijour

FEDERAL AMMUNITION AT 100 YEARS

Looking back & moving forward with ammunition innovation

*BY LOWELL STRAUSS
PHOTOS BY FEDERAL AMMUNITION CO.*





First Hydra-Shok 1989



Inside every box of Federal ammunition lies a century of history and innovation. From its humble beginnings, the company grew to become an industry leader, producing ammunition for rifles, shotguns and pistols. If you shoot, you've undoubtedly used Federal Ammunition or components -- brass, bullets, primers and wads. Last year, Federal Ammunition celebrated 100 years of making quality ammunition. Any business that weathers a century of storms in this market must be doing something right. Here is a condensed version of their history.

ORIGINS

The story starts in the fall of 1916 when brothers Louis and Harry Sherman began constructing an ammunition plant in Anoka, Minn. The two were no strangers to the ammunition industry, having worked in production for Western Cartridge and other smaller ammunition makers in the early 1900s before investing in their own venture, The Federal Cartridge and Machine Company. By the following year, they produced their first Federal shotshell.

Those first years were tough for the Sherman brothers, as they failed to anticipate all of the hurdles involved with commercial ammunition manufacturing. By 1920, production in the new Anoka plant ground to a halt from a lack of sales and marketing, combined with low ammunition output.

Federal's history may have ended there had it not been for Charles Horn, owner of American Ball Com-

LEFT: Federal Cartridge Company in Anoka, Minn., fall 1918.

pany in Minneapolis. The 34-year-old businessman learned about the battered Federal Cartridge and Machine Company while trying to find a way to manufacture steel balls for air rifles. At first, Horn had no intention of buying the entire facility. Changing his mind, he changed the course of the company's history.

In consultation with T.W. Lewis, Federal's only remaining stockholder, Horn provided the necessary financing, bringing the troubled company back from receivership. On April 27, 1922, the Federal Cartridge Corporation was incorporated. The former plant manager, John Haller, was hired back to oversee manufacturing operations. This business trio then kickstarted the company we know today.

EARLY YEARS

Horn was a savvy, hard-working businessman, and under his guidance, Federal Cartridge blossomed. Shotshell manufacturing resumed in 1922 with seven full-time employees. That number swelled to more than 500 only eight years later.

The book, *Federal Ammunition – The First Hundred Years*, tells the story of one of the hurdles Horn needed to overcome early on. He needed new distribution channels through which hunters and shooters could purchase Federal ammunition. At the time, competition from large ammunition companies like Winchester and Remington made it difficult for Federal to get its ammunition onto store shelves. Horn was savvy and took a different tactic to get Federal's Hi-Power shotshells into the hands of shooters. Growing up on a farm in Iowa, he understood life in the small midwestern towns and that hunters often gathered at local businesses swapping hunting tales. So rather than traditional outlets, he began selling Federal ammunition in barber shops, medical offices, hardware stores and pool halls across the country. In dental offices, patients could come for an appointment and walk out with clean teeth and a case of shotshells.

The business boomed. Federal then added .22 rimfire ammunition production in 1924 and expanded its Federal Favorite shotshell line with more offerings. By 1926, boxes of 12, 16 and 20-gauge, as well as .410 Bore

RIGHT: Here's a look inside the Federal shotshell plant circa the 1920s.

BOTTOM: Federal owner Charles Horn and plant manager John Haller posed for a photo inside in 1922.



shotshells, were rolling off the line.

This early success caught the attention of another prominent player in the ammunition industry. Franklin W. Olin, who founded the Western Cartridge Company in 1898, saw great potential in the Federal Cartridge company. Olin purchased Winchester in 1931, and the following year bought the Federal Cartridge Company, where Horn was named company president. To prevent accusations of collusion and price fixing, Olin transferred Federal to his Olin Foundation, with Horn remaining as president.

Fittingly, Horn secured an \$87 million (\$1.6 billion in 2021 money) federal contract from the United States government in 1941 to build and operate the Twin City Ordnance

Plant (TCOP) in New Brighton, Minn. -- a vital ammunition production hub during the Second World War. Federal understood shotshells and rimfire, but at the time had no experience producing centerfire rifle and handgun ammunition. To learn about manufacturing centerfire ammunition and to satisfy its government commitment, Federal sent 65 employees to the Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia for training. This training proved critical for the war effort and the company's future.

By 1943, the Twin City Ordnance Plant employed 25,000 workers, and by 1945, when the government contract was terminated, the plant had produced more than five billion rounds of ammunition -- 50 times

more rounds than requested in the initial contract.

The TCOP closed following the Second World War, reactivated again from 1950 to 1957 for the Korean War and again from 1965 to 1971 for the Vietnam War. Committing to support the war effort provided Federal with the tools and knowledge to manufacture handgun and rifle ammunition, adding those products to their commercial catalog in 1963. Federal introduced the first plastic shotgun shell hulls to market in 1965, and the following year the company began colour coding their shells to prevent accidents.

Horn served as company president for 52 years, from its inception in 1922 until 1974, when he stepped away from that post, becoming chairman of the board. The successor, his son, William Horn, became president of the corporation until the Olin Foundation sold it in 1985. Federal-Hoffman Inc. took control of Federal Cartridge in 1985 and, at the time of the sale, Federal posted over \$200 million in profits and employed 2,900 people. Federal-Hoffman Inc. ran it as a separate company from the Hoffman Engineering Company.

CONSERVATION CAUSE

In the 1980s, Federal became a leading voice for hunter-funded conservation. Over the next decade, the company supported more than 20 organizations like Ducks Unlimited, The National Wild Turkey Federation and Rocky

Mountain Elk Foundation. In the early 1990s, Federal's Another Hunter for Conservation campaign patches raised funds benefitting conservation efforts. Federal continues to fund the grassroots groups that conserve wild-life and habitat today.

MORE MILESTONES

The 1980s were a decade of big changes for the company, with Federal changing ownership once again in 1988, purchased by Pentair Inc. Then, in 1989, Federal, in conjunction with Mossberg, developed the first 3 1/2-inch 12-gauge shotgun shell, a milestone in shotgun ballistics. Federal's new Hydra-Shok bullet, announced that same year, set a new performance standard for defensive ammunition based on the FBI protocols.

While Federal had been loading steel shot since 1973, the impending 1992 ban on lead shot for hunting waterfowl drove the steel shotshell load expansion -- and Federal was ready for the change.

Additionally, Ron Mason, company president at the time, set his sights on the podium -- aiming for Olympic gold using an American-made cartridge. His dream came true at the 1992 games in Barcelona where the

US shooting team captured gold and silver medals in rifle using Federal's Gold Medal UltraMatch .22 rimfire ammunition, the first medal won by an American-made load since 1960.

On the heels of the Gold Medal UltraMatch win, a new era of product development began for Federal. Between 1990 and 1997, over 300 new products were released, including BallistiClean pistol ammunition and the first tungsten non-toxic waterfowl load.

The company was sold again in 1997, purchased by Blount Industries (who also owned companies like CCI and Speer) for \$112 million. Two years later, Blount sold to New York-based Lehman Brothers, who sold the company's sporting equipment group to Alliant Techsystems (ATK) in 2001.

A NEW ERA

By 2005, Federal released their first branded cartridge, the 338 Federal, and two years later that was followed by the 327 Federal Magnum handgun cartridge. Meanwhile, product development continued and top sellers like Black Cloud waterfowl ammunition, Fusion rifle ammunition and Heavy-weight turkey loads revolutionized modern hunting ammunition.

In 2015, ATK created a new corporation called Vista Outdoor, incorporating all its outdoor brands -- including Federal as a flagship -- under one banner. Since the beginning, innovation has been a hallmark of Federal ammunition products, and Syntech bullets were another industry first for Federal. These polymer-coated bullets prevented hazardous airborne lead.

PARTING SHOTS

Year after year, Federal creates products that satisfy the demanding needs of shooters and hunters everywhere. Cartridges like the 224 Valkyrie and 450 Bushmaster, Terminal Ascent bullets, Flightcontrol Flex shotgun wads and so many others deliver the down-range accuracy and performance shooters want. The company has weathered many changes over the last 100 years, and if history is an indicator of its future, Federal ammunition is still poised for change. With its commitment to quality and developing innovative new products, I'm betting Federal Ammunition will continue as an industry leader. 🏆

A peek inside the modern Federal Ammunition plant.



SADDLE UP FOR RODEO

Shooting with the National High School Rodeo Association

BY TIMOTHY FOWLER

PHOTOS BY NANCY ANDERSEN





That smile shows the pleasure of owning a proper bolt action .22.



Between daily chores and seasonal unpredictability, farm kids learn a combination of discipline and responsibility that leads to unmistakable self-confidence -- not the fluffy kind, the quiet bedrock kind. Cash Andersen is a young cowboy from Saskatchewan. A few years back, he won the Saskatchewan Provincial Rimfire Championships. This, after qualifying in rodeo events, and it's all part of the junior/senior high school rodeo program. Cash learned early how to rope, ride and wrestle steers. And man, can he shoot!

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL RODEO

The National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA) in Canada is part of an association that includes the US, Australia and Mexico. The provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and British Columbia all have their own provincial chapters. While events are focused on traditional

rodeo, there is also an annual shooting competition where junior high and high school members compete in small bore and shotgun events. The top four shooters are invited to the national competitions.

LEARNING SHOOTING FUNDAMENTALS

Cash's mom, Nancy, was a bit disappointed in his reaction when he opened his birthday present, a brand-new air rifle. He was five years old then and desperately wanted his own "real" gun. What Nancy didn't know was that Grandpa Wayne, her dad, had been teaching Cash shooting fundamentals with his father's (Great Grandpa's) Cooney single-shot bolt-action. You see, Nancy didn't know Cash was regularly killing "cattle-leg-breakers" (Richardson ground squirrels) out to 100 yards and beyond with open sights. While Grandpa Wayne was quite proud of his grandson's achievements, he kept that pride to himself. It was just something he and Cash did between seeding, spraying and harvesting.

About this time, Cash also began his roping training. Cash has been swinging a lariat since before he could put his cowboy boots on by himself. He started with a stationary horned dummy steer mounted on a hay bale. Soon after mastering that, he would chase a bucking mechanical steer contraption pulled behind the quad. And shortly after that, he was team roping from a fast horse and diving off that same horse to wrestle steers into submission.

Cash is a proper cowboy and shooting came naturally. As a calm and focused kid, he took Grandpa Wayne's coaching to heart. It was a natural progression to participate in high school rodeo-associated provincial competitions. He finished the Saskatchewan provincial competition as the top shooter, which earned him a place at the national competition. Cash has taken his shooting skill and expanded what he learned shooting small bore, applying those skills to his centrefire rifle and becoming an avid and successful big game hunter.

SHOOTING PROGRAM

The NHSRA hosts shooting as an event at various competitions. The rules require a rifle in 22 LR which weighs less than 8.5 pounds and has a trigger pull of more than two pounds. >

Events can be held with either metallic sights or telescopic sights. The course of fire requires shooting at 50 yards from standing, kneeling and prone. The target is the NRA's A-23/5, a paper target with five bullseyes, one of which is a sighter. Eye and ear protection is, of course, mandatory.

This shooting competition offers the top four qualifiers from the junior high and high school divisions spots on the national team. There are multiple opportunities to qualify for prizes and scholarships through participation in this event. At the NHSRA finals, there is also an added component of trap or skeet shooting.

RESPONSIBILITY

Denton Edge, national director with the High School Rodeo Association, said, "Any time a kid can step out and do an event they're interested in or want to learn more about it's a good thing. This (rodeo and shooting competition) is just another avenue, part of high school rodeo and high school sports which kids can do that's out of the ordinary -- especially the shooting -- well, and rodeo, for that matter. There are the typical high school sports, basketball, volleyball and that type of thing, and then there's rodeo. We had our 50th anniversary last year. As for the shooting, I see a lot of interest in it. So, I think this will be another event that's going to grow in the future."

Nancy said, "It's never been Cash's goal to be at the top. He likes competing in some things, but he likes to just do more by himself. He did learn a lot about gun safety. Cash just came to shooting naturally. He is very calm and takes his time, but Cash has always been like that, right from day one. He's very serious about it, sitting there for hours, waiting for the target, being quiet when deer hunting. But the competition part of it, he just went and shot. I don't think he was stressed at all by the competition as it was in a small town in Saskatchewan with about five to seven boys that shot. When you go down to nationals, there are hundreds of candidates shooting and there's a drill sergeant type of range officer barking orders. Following him was quite an experience."

Edge shared that the association wants to develop the shooting

program and is working on creating more training and shooting opportunities. He said, "The thing about country kids, farm kids and rodeo kids is the responsibility they have to develop. It isn't just for themselves but getting prepared for livestock and their horses and everything else. The need to wrangle their tack, trucks and trailers. There's a lot more to it than just showing up at the rodeo and competing. You've got your animals to look after, and you must be prepared if you want to succeed, so they have a pile of responsibility. It teaches them responsibility. And it's such a great thing to

learn at a young age, right?"

Nancy's advice: "Let them set up safe targets to shoot and to go hunting. As much interest as they have, give them the opportunity to do some of this stuff. If they can go to nationals to be a part of the association, it's great for them to learn the competition part of it as well, that and to fine-tune patience."

The NHSRA shooting program is just one more opportunity for kids to learn safe gun handling, shooting fundamentals and to develop the skills to compete successfully. The outcome is responsible gun owners and safe shooters. And this is a good thing. 🏆



LEFT: Cash finished the Saskatchewan provincials at the top of the competitors.

BELOW: National Junior High School Finals Rodeo 2019.



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MORE THAN A FACELIFT

Beretta's revamp of the A400 Xcel Sporting

BY JEFF HELSDON



The latest update to the Beretta A400 Xcel Sporting goes far enough beyond cosmetic that it's almost like a new model.

After Beretta introduced the A400 platform, it introduced the Xcel Sporting in 2010. With its bright blue receiver, this shotgun stood out from the crowd of sporting semi-autos on any gun rack. The big attraction, aside from the quality Beretta is known for, was the Kick-Off 3 system which used hydraulics to dampen the recoil for even the most recoil-sensitive shooter. The action was built to function with anything from light Olympic trap loads to magnums. A variety of blue-receiver A400s followed, including a trap-specific model called the Parallel Target.

CHANGES

Fast forward 22 years and the latest edition of the A400 Sporting brings many changes. Unpacking the gun, >I noticed the Xcel Sporting came in a cardboard box, not the plastic case >



like my A400 Xtrema hunting model. Shany Poulin of Stoeger Canada explained this is part of Beretta's new BePlanet environmental movement which aims to reduce packaging.

Other changes include a new pistol grip design with palm swell, a redesigned receiver shape with proprietary laser engravings, new top rib design, a competition lifter, Aquat-echshield coating on the receiver and re-engineered ergonomics on the forend. The Xcel Sporting also has interchangeable caps on the forend to change the balance of the gun (as an option). This was a feature of the Black, but not the earlier Xcel models.

The gun was simple to assemble. True, I own the hunting version and assembly is the same, but the one thing I noted is there are no real tricks to assembling the barrel to the receiver with this gun -- it's simplicity at its finest.

An obvious change is the traditional blue receiver has been switched out for a grey engraved receiver. Looking closer, I noted there was still a touch of blue, as the bolt sports a blue colour. Asking Beretta about this, Pietro Scovazzo from Beretta Italy said, "We

just wanted to retain a detail linking the gun to the famous Beretta competition blue."

Scovazzo said the new model won't be replacing the Black edition, but it is replacing the standard Xcel. Asking if the blue receiver would be a thing of the past, Scovazzo would only say, "Could be..."

Previously, I tested the A400 Black -- a higher-end sporting gun on the platform -- in 2018 and was impressed. The Xcel model I had came with a 30-inch barrel, which is one of three options for barrel length.

One of the changes from the Black is the Kick-Off system, which is moved to the middle of the stock from the butt plate area where it was on the Black. I wondered if this was designed to allow cutting the stock to alter the length of pull. Scovazzo said otherwise, "No, the Kick-Off move to the middle is thought to avoid the tedious movement of the stock on your face while shooting. The piston is now free to move while the actual stock is fixed." I did note when shooting the Black that the moving stock was somewhat of an annoyance. There are also spacers for shooters with longer arms.

I shot the Black well and was looking forward to shooting the new model. The competition rib is of a new design, but it's still a 10-millimetre carbon fibre part as used on the Black. I was told this gun shoots 60/40, or a little bit high.

Getting the gun to the range was a bit more of a challenge than I originally thought. I wanted to try it at the trap range initially with Federal High Over All loads. However, I found that both of the gun clubs I belong to shot earlier in the afternoon this time of the year and were done before I could get there. I did think this wasn't too good for shooters working day jobs and recruitment of new members.

Taking the gun to the skeet range, I found the Xcel was a natural fit. It seemed my finger barely reached the safety, which is a problem I didn't have before. Later, setting it beside my A400 Xtreme field gun, I saw the redesigned pistol grip was responsible. This wasn't a huge barrier though, as on a clays gun quickly removing the safety is not crucial.

I liked the oversized controls -- the bolt release, charging handle and lifter release. The larger bolt release espe-



The A400 Xcel Sporting makes a fine skeet gun. NFA member Bert Cronkwright found it fit him well and improved his skeet score.



Moving the Kick-Off feature to the middle of the stock, eliminates stock movement for the shooter.



FEDERAL HIGH OVER ALL

Federal High Over All is the company's latest line of shells for clays. These shells are engineered for trap, skeet and sporting clays and come in a variety of shot sizes, payloads and velocities. These shells utilize Federal's new Podium one-piece wad, along with hard high-antimony lead shot to minimize shot deformation and maximize patterns. High Over All hulls are also ideal for reloading. The one-piece hull, solid brass head and eight-segment crimp are ideal for those who will be reusing the shells.

I found the shells patterned well. When shooting sporting clays, I shot the entire course with an improved cylinder choke even though some of the shots were pushing the edge of the effective range for that choke constriction. This was ideal when the first shot was close and the second was at distances that would have been more appropriate for a modified choke. The shells quickly gave me the confidence to break targets on the further shots. Presently offered in 12 gauge and 410 Bore, I am sure more options will be available soon.

cially came in handy for clays shooting.

The Xcel has good balance, with the balance point being at the front end of the receiver where it joins the barrel. It pointed naturally and swung smoothly. I was impressed it cycled a box of Clever T1 Mirage, one-ounce loads flawlessly. In comparison, these light-recoil shells did not fare as well in several inertia-operated guns I tested. Instructions for both those models said shooting light loads might be an issue, but when a few boxes were put through the gun this problem would go away. The Beretta, on the other hand, lived up to the claim that it will function with any type of load. It also performed flawlessly with heavier loads, ejecting all shells, and even throwing the hulls more than six feet.

At the sporting clays range, the gun really shone. I noticed no recoil at all with one-ounce target loads and only minimal recoil with the 1 1/8 High Over All shells. One of the shooters at the sporting clay range had an older Xcel. When placed side by side, I could see the more pronounced pistol grip on the newer model and decided it was an improvement.

The chokes are Beretta's Optima HP

Extended Black. I found the extended chokes made changes simple on the sporting clays range. Supplied chokes were improved cylinder, modified and improved modified. My only issue with the gun is I wish that Beretta would provide a full set of five chokes as some of its competitors do.

At the pattern board, the patterns were evenly spread, with pellets distributed evenly through the circle.

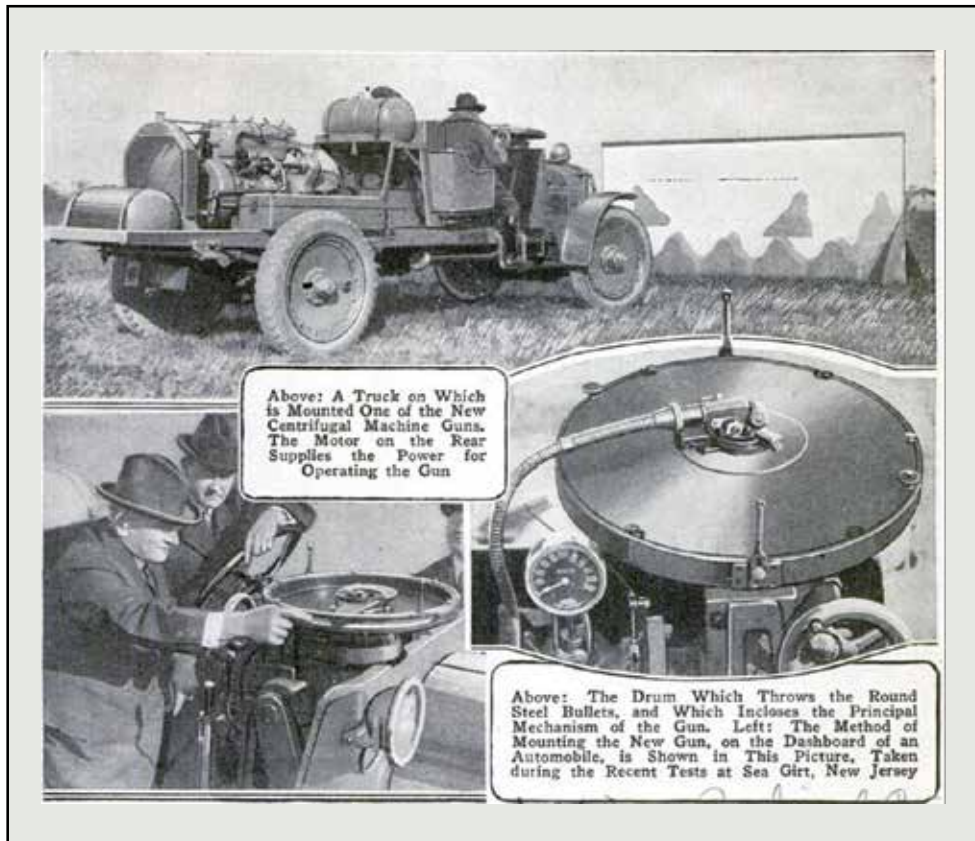
The A400 Xcel Sporting has the option of 28-, 30- and 32-inch barrels, both with and without Kick-Off, and a Vittoria model with a shorter length of pull for smaller-stature shooters. The model I was testing with Kick-Off has an MRSP of \$2,675.

One of the pluses with this gun for shooters who have the A400 Xtreme as a field gun is it gives the shooter the same feel with their practice gun as their hunting gun. It's not the same as having one gun for everything, but actually takes it one step further by providing the perks of a competition gun.

The tweaks to this model are enough that the Beretta Xcel Sporting may be the top semi-automatic sporting gun on the market. 🍀

SPINNING OUT BULLETS

The centrifugal machine gun
BY G. SCOTT JAMIESON



While the history of firearms is strewn with numerous what ifs and strange anomalies, none is stranger than that of the centrifugal machine gun. It is the unicorn of the arms world, in that everyone knows the legends, but no one has ever seen one. It uses no gunpowder to hurl its lethal loads, hence its almost magical appeal to military minds and inventors alike. Instead, it uses centrifugal force to discharge pellets, ball bearings and even discs at infantry targets.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Its genesis started in the late 1850s with the Ross Winans steam gun (a failure) and a few hand-cranked designs by Robert McCarty and W. Joslin. However, it is unlikely that any hand-cranked device could develop the velocity necessary to elevate the arm from a curious toy to a serious weapon.

The heyday for this concept pervaded the years from 1908 to 1927, with a plethora of patents issued during those years. The US military especially took an interest in these types of guns, even testing what looks like an E.T. Moore design, but for many reasons they saw the concept as an evolutionary misstep and abandoned it. The Moore patent was assigned to the Aero Tank Machine Gun Company, an establishment the author cannot locate any information about. Other companies that took an interest in the concept were diverse, ranging from outfits like those mentioned above to the Centrifugal Gun Corporation formed specifically to make and market the gun to the Westinghouse Corporation in 1971. Nothing concrete came of any of these ventures.

It's possible that upwards of 96 patents were taken out for centrifugal machine guns if the late J. S. Hatcher is to be believed (a noted author and firearms expert). The group of inventors encompassing the years 1908 to 1927 envisioned their machine guns being used in armoured cars and aircraft, as well as truck-based conveyances. Forty such patents have been uncovered thus far.

While the bulk of the patents issued used ball bearing type projectiles, one US patent, 1,311,492 of July 20, 1919, by Herbert A. Bullard, described the use of discs with increased thickness at the outer flanges to render more velocity to the piece. His gun utilized

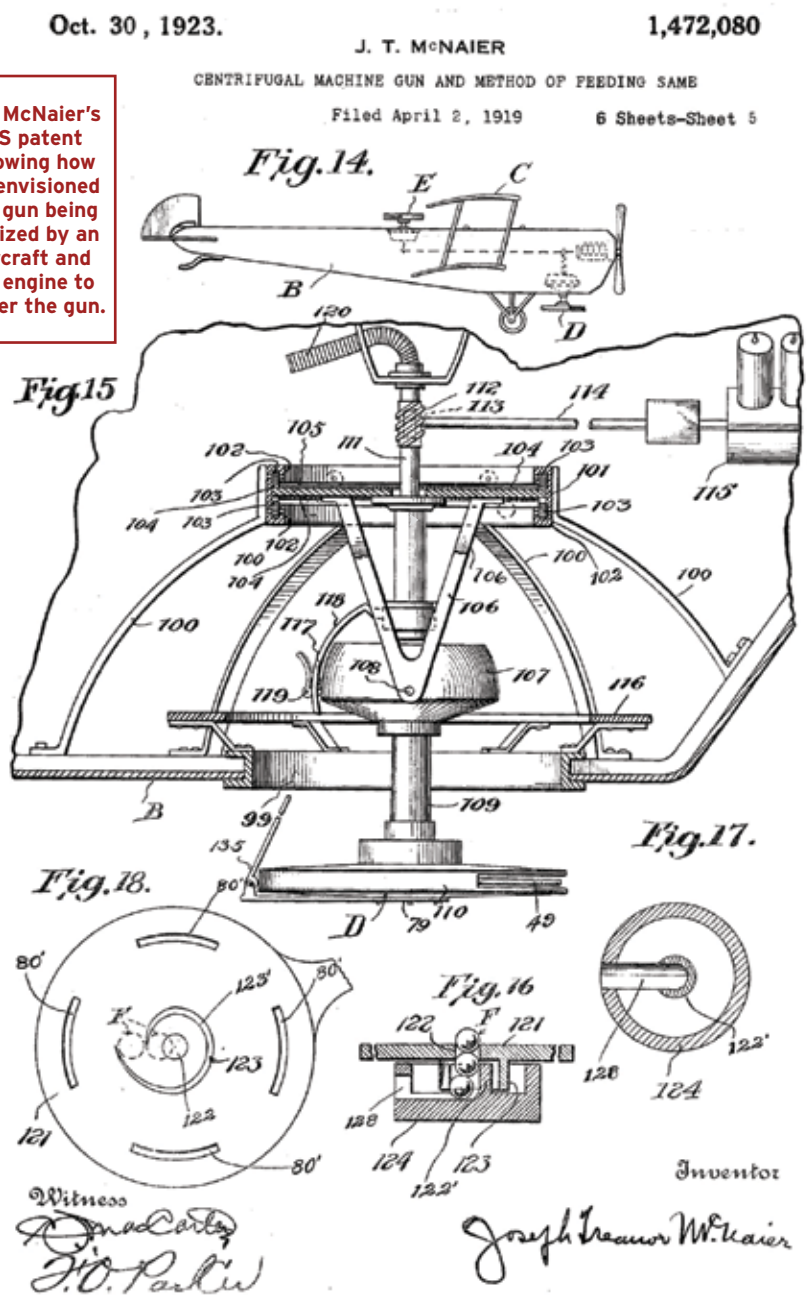
two barrels. Bullard claimed, "The gun is designed to take a projectile in the form of a disc and to project it at a high velocity, at the same time spinning it rapidly about its axis, which is arranged in a generally vertical position. The spinning produces a gyroscopic effect which maintains the disc in its plane throughout a long flight..." The patent was assigned to the Intercontinental Company, a corporation of California. The author has been unable to locate any such concern. His spinning disc concept

may have made the projectile's flight more accurate than its ball bearing competitors, but as the weapon was probably never built or tested, this must remain conjecture.

ADVANTAGES

The centrifugal concept as originally envisioned had many advantages over propellant-based machine guns; mainly, it was cheap to utilize, something the military always likes. No expensive powder, accurately machined cartridges or rifled barrels were

J.T. McNaier's US patent showing how he envisioned his gun being utilized by an aircraft and its engine to power the gun.



necessary, just cheaply made ball bearings were all that was needed. Its rate of fire varied depending upon which inventor was extolling the virtues of his invention, but without doubt the rate of fire compared to conventional machine guns of the day was astounding. Figures from 6,000 to 30,000 rounds per minute were quoted at the time. Certainly, as a defensive weapon against troops in the open, it would have been formidable. If the need for heavy ancillary equipment to drive the gun could be eliminated or reduced substantially, the centrifugal gun offers many significant advantages for 21st century warfare. The gun is silent, utilizes few parts, offers no heat signature or muzzle flash for infrared spotting by the enemy and no storage of explosive material is needed. Also, from the soldier's point of view (health and safety), the device offered no noise, toxic fumes, tiresome recoil or danger from exploding propellant.

DISADVANTAGES

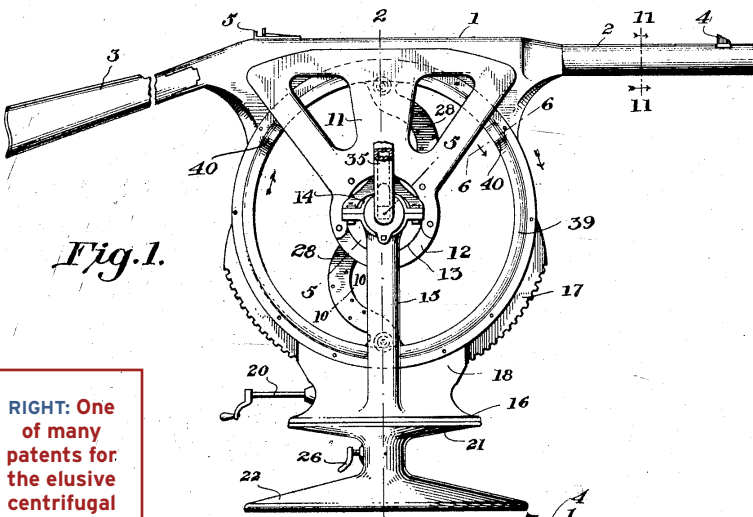
The concept of a centrifugal machine gun never had an easy ride in the press, as an article from the Scientific American of Nov. 10, 1920, indicates. In a piece entitled That Centrifugal Gun Again, it outlines a disaster that could occur as "...these would-be artillerists evidently overlooked the fact that if there should be a delay of an infinitesimal fraction of a second on the part of the releasing gear, the shell would be thrown rearwardly into the fort, the casemate or the between decks battery, as the case might be, and the gunner hoist with his own petard."

The drawbacks of the weapon in the 1920s was its need to have the gun powered either by electric or internal combustion cumbersome components. This would entail the unit being mounted on a truck or trailer combination, somewhat negating its tactical use, as it would have been cumbersome to move quickly, as well as making it a large, easy target. The centrifuge needed lots of power to rotate the platen, meaning large motors were needed to drive it sufficiently to hurl the balls with the needed energy. To achieve 16,000 rounds per minute, 100 horsepower would be needed. While the concept may have been sound, the ancillary equipment needed to make it function properly at that time made the whole unit too bulky for likely combat conditions. The guns tested by the US Bureau of Standards were not overly accurate, nor was the

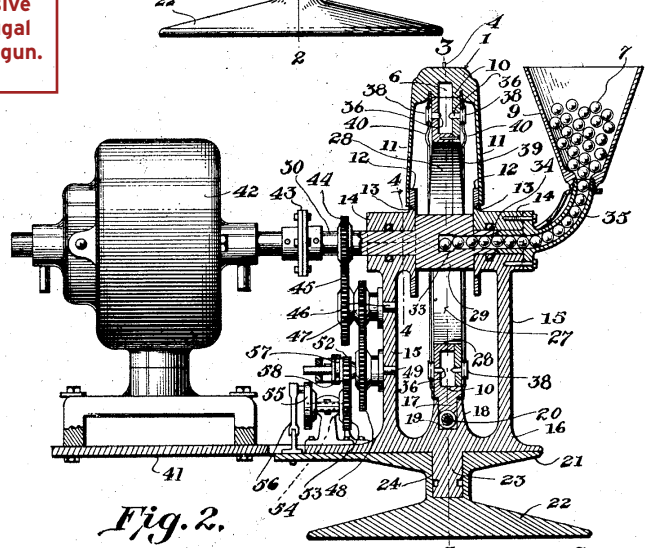


The Moore centrifugal machine gun, set up for test at the U. S. Bureau of Standards at the time of World War I. The grooved rotor was driven at high speed by a powerful electric motor. Steel ball bearings were fed into the center of rotor through the flexible pipe, and were delivered at a speed of about 1200 f.s. through the slot at left. The accuracy was extremely poor, but the inventor insisted that the gun would be useful in the trench warfare on the Western Front of 1918. The gun was not used.

J. H. PARSONS.
CENTRIFUGAL GUN.
APPLICATION FILED OCT. 16, 1918.
1,408,137. Patented Feb. 28, 1922.
9 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



RIGHT: One of many patents for the elusive centrifugal machine gun.



Witnesses
[Signature]
[Signature]
384
John H. Parsons
[Signature]
Attorney

projectile range satisfactory, according to reports at the time. However, as will be explained, modernization of the weapon could bring it into the 21st century if it could be made to work.

THE FUTURE

What does the future hold for the centrifugal machine gun? Well, one company utilizing the invention of Charles W. St. George and his US patent 6,520,169 granted in 2003 was working to perfect the weapon. He assigned his patent to Trinamic Technologies LLC and called it the DREAD MKV, or Multiple Projectile Delivery System. The company reported, "It will utilize .308 or .50 calibre round metal balls of either steel, tungsten, tungsten carbide or ceramic-coated tungsten. These will be spun out the barrel at upwards of 8,000 feet per second. The only sound that should be noted will be the crack of the metal balls breaking the sound barrier when launched." The DREAD was powered electrically, but no details were disclosed about the propulsion motor itself.

Further details of this weapon supplied by the manufacturer (circa 2004) are as follows: 40 inches long, 32 inches wide, and three inches high or 20 inches high with the pintle swivel mount. A weight of 28 pounds and having only 30 parts. They claimed the weapon could be rotated 360 degrees and had the same elevation and declination abilities of any conventional vehicle mounted weapon, with a magazine capacity of at least 50,000 rounds.

According to the manufacturers, their system would deliver ordnance only .030 inches apart (1/32nd-of-an-inch) to affect more mass to the target and in less time than previously possible. One of the types of ammunition the gun was capable of projecting was the Collision Cluster Round that could be used to penetrate hard targets. As the DREAD was claimed to be both heatless and frictionless and not generate any high pressures, it would seem to indicate that wear in the system should be virtually nil, and that jams and stoppages should never occur. They also state that the lethality of the system can be dialed

RIGHT:
Possibly Moore himself loading ball bearings into the gun under test, circa 1922.



The revolutionary DREAD™ technology is a major breakthrough in small arms development. It eliminates the use of exploding powder propellants and cartridge cases.

The DREAD™ propulsion system is totally derived from electrical energy resulting in the following benefits:

- No recoil
- Totally jam proof
- Variable velocities
- Silent firing (stealth)
- Variable rates of fire
- Self-cleaning operation
- Increased magazine capacity
- Lethal and non-lethal capabilities

The DREAD™

Recon Vehicles

LEFT:
DREAD promotional material circa 2004.

back to a non-lethal mode, making the weapon ideal for peacekeeping, embassy and military base protection roles. A recoilless weapon would also have the potential to be used in space as its operation would not affect the orbital path of the satellite platform it was fitted to.

In 2022, it seems that the world is still awaiting a viable working centrifugal machine gun, for nothing more has been heard about the DREAD. In fact, the patent was allowed to expire April 7, 2015, for failure to pay the maintenance fee, and the silence from its inventor is deafening. St. George himself, when questioned, would not specify the range or accuracy of the most recent prototype or explain precisely how the system works, citing the information could be commercially sensitive.

If someone could actually make this 170-year-old concept work, they would be well on their way to untold fame and fortune, and tactical warfare as we know it would be changed irrevocably. However, for now it still remains just a dream. 🚩

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SUB-ZERO SOLUTIONS

Successful shooting in a Canadian winter

BY LOWELL STRAUSS



The author's cold weather field care kit includes a bore pull-through, CLP, collapsible cleaning rod and soft cloth.

I grabbed my rifle and left the warmth of the cabin. The dashboard thermometer read -37 degrees Celsius! No wonder my truck groaned as I turned the key. However, with a coveted elk tag in my pocket, I wasn't about to let a little cold weather put the freeze on my late-season hunt; after all, I had prepped my rifle and gear to withstand these extreme conditions.

Canadians are a hardy bunch, and cold shooting is a way of life for six months of the year. October to March offers outstanding shooting with fewer people in the field. Savvy shooters prepare guns and gear while selecting the kit designed for winter performance.

STORAGE

Store guns in a cool, dry place. Sage advice. In the dead of winter, there's no place cooler or drier than the outside. However, when bringing a firearm inside a warm building in winter, water vapour freezes instantly to the cold gun metal. As the steel warms, the frost melts, fostering corrosion. Even worse, a firearm with moisture inside can fail to fire if taken back into the sub-zero environment. Surface rust is easy to remove, but let it sit and rust pits barrels and seizes steel parts.

After a day in the field, it's a good idea to remove a gun from its case; otherwise, trapped moisture quickly rusts metal, sometimes even through bluing. I've learned to warm, dry,

clean and lightly lubricate my gun when moving between cold and warm. In camp, I store firearms below zero (where secure). Without fluctuating temperatures, firearms left in the cold don't collect moisture. If your gun gets wet, dry it out; yes, falling through the ice and into a beaver pond at -30 degrees Celsius is possible. I carry a dry rag and a compact field-cleaning kit equipped with a bore pull-through and oil-impregnated gun wipe for the outside and bore. Extra tools like a punch facilitate trigger assembly removal and bolt disassembly. Most gunsmiths warn against using WD-40 as a lubricant, and I wholeheartedly agree. However, the water-displacing solvent works >

well for firearm first-aid after dunking. Back home, clean and remove the WD-40 and relubricate the firearm with a favourite gun lube.

OPTICS

Modern optics are nitrogen purged and sealed from the elements, preventing internal fogging. The outside lenses are a different story. Moisture in the air, especially from warm breath, fogs lenses. Special lens coatings help but don't eliminate the problem. I wear glasses, and my breath freezes on my glasses and rifle-scope -- often because of wearing a neck gaiter. I've recently started using ballistic eyewear with a foam insert like ski goggles and a vent at the top. These glasses minimize fogging.

I find de-icing optics difficult in the field because the glass fogs or freezes over again. Prevention is the easiest cure. For a clear view, momentarily hold your breath before bringing the scope to your eye.

Falling snow can be a blessing and a curse. One snowy day, I tracked a buck for more than a mile, following him down into a large wetland, where he stopped broadside at 80 yards. I shouldered the rifle only to find my riflescope full of snow. I couldn't see a thing. The lens was too foggy to see through, even after sweeping the snow out. Moments later, the buck trotted away unscathed. The next day, with a clean and fog-free lens, I found that same buck and notched my tag.



Clear, flip-up scope covers are an excellent way to ensure snow doesn't interfere with your optics.

A few tricks can minimize fogging and other optics problems in the field. Lens caps work wonders for protecting scope lenses from snow and ice. I prefer the clear pop-up variety. I leave them snapped down for quick shots at close targets or flip them up and out of the way for a crystal-clear view of farther targets. Conversely, you can also use supplied scope covers or an inexpensive cloth cover.

ELECTRONICS

Some optics include battery-powered circuitry for illuminated reticles and red dot sights. Cold notoriously kills batteries. Lithium and NiCad batteries are better suited to cold tempera-

tures and keep working when the mercury dips; alkaline and NiMH batteries, on the other hand, quickly die in sub-zero temperatures. An electronic optic that relies entirely on batteries, like red dots, may leave you out in the cold. Backup iron sights are good when batteries die and electronics fail (usually at the most critical time).

A rangefinder is critical equipment for accurate hits on long-range targets. Rangefinder batteries, like all electronics, lose power over time, especially in the cold. But tucking them inside a jacket pocket allows them to stay warm and ready when needed.

Nevertheless, packing extra batteries



A frigid gun brought into a warm room will result in condensation forming on the metal parts. Either keep it cold or warm the gun very gradually.

for electronic gadgets and flashlights is smart. I find name-brand batteries are a good investment and provide more runtime than discount batteries. And given the option, lithium batteries are the way to go.

LUBRICATION

We use lubrication because it reduces friction between moving parts and thereby reduces wear. And there are a couple of ways to approach firearm lubrication in the winter: none at all or cold-weather-specific lube used sparingly. Wear and tear on hunting guns in the winter is minimal, as winter hunters are typically low-volume shooters. Sport shooters (biathlon and PRS, for example) choose low-viscosity oils engineered for the cold. Semi-autos often function better with some lube; most other firearms run fine with minimal or no lubrication. Remember, the oil protects metal parts from corrosion, especially when ice becomes water.

Moderation is key. Either use a light oil-based lubricant rated for cold, a dry-film lubricant or operate without lube in the field. If you choose the latter, once back in the warm house, you should dry, clean and oil (protect) before storage.

If you head to the field with too much or the wrong lube on your gun, you'll need to troubleshoot failure-to-fire malfunctions. Most lube issues occur within the trigger mechanism or bolt and often with the firing pin. A light wintertime primer strike in a firearm that worked fine in the summer is likely a lube problem. Cleaning the bolt and the firing pin should fix the problem.

FIREARM DESIGN

Rifle stocks are made of wood, synthetic material or metal. These materials' physical properties dictate how they react in the cold. Expansion and contraction, flex and temperature differences between stock and action/barrel affect how firearms shoot in the cold.

Even the characteristics of the barrel may vary as the temperature drops. A rifle sighted in during summertime may demonstrate a sizeable point-of-impact shift in the winter. A shot from a cold bore will also vary considerably from subse-

quent shots as the barrel warms.

Not all synthetic stocks are created equal. Budget guns use lower-quality injection-molded plastic stocks to keep prices down, while higher-end guns use high-tech composite materials, including fiberglass, Kevlar and carbon fibre. High-quality stocks are less prone to cold-weather problems. And while I've not had it happen to me, plastic stocks can and do break in extreme cold. Remember my -37-degree-Celsius elk hunt? My plastic-framed glasses snapped in two!

Some firearm designs are more weather resistant than others. A friend liked his Browning BLR rifle for deer hunting. Like other lever actions, the BLR's bolt is open at the rear. It turns out it's a design weakness in cold Canadian winters. One -30-degree-Celsius morning, snow got inside the bolt. It melted and then quickly froze after getting out of the truck. At the next spot, a big buck leaped from the brush in front of him. He shouldered the rifle, squeezed the trigger and heard only a click as the hammer fell. Inspecting the cartridge, he found a light impression on the primer -- not nearly hard enough to fire. A frozen firing pin cost him a nice buck. In hindsight, a squirt of lock de-icer in the back of the bolt may have prevented the malfunction.

AMMUNITION

Ammunition ballistics change in the wintertime. Some gunpowder is temperature sensitive, meaning velocity decreases as the mercury drops. At the same time, air density

increases with decreasing temperature; the colder it gets, the more drag there is on a bullet. Both factors affect cartridge and shotshell ballistics. Is it enough to miss a deer-sized target at reasonable distances? Not likely. But understanding ballistics changes is critical to long-range shooters and first-round hits.

Handloaders can customize hunting loads for cold conditions. However, buying factory-loaded ammunition limits you to what's available. Some rounds, however, use powders for cold-weather performance. Confirming your rifle's zero for specific temperatures is a good idea for all ammunition.

Another way to mitigate temperature effects is to keep ammunition warm until needed. Keeping a loaded magazine in your jacket pocket keeps ammunition toasty, anywhere from 30 degrees Celsius to 50 degrees Celsius warmer than the outside air!

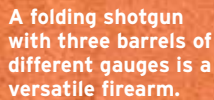
Shotgunners should consider the effects of cold too. Experiment with different types of ammunition to find the best performance. As a rule, heavier shot loads create more resistance and help burn all the propellant. A complete burn helps maintain shotgun performance. One way to check burn efficiency is to look for unburned powder in the barrel or on the snow in front of the shotgun.

Cold weather pushes firearms and shooters to their limits, but when you know how to overcome these cold-weather challenges, it's really not that bad. And on the bright side, there are no mosquitoes. 🦟



Shotshell performance may drop in the cold because cold weather affects ammunition ballistics.





A folding shotgun with three barrels of different gauges is a versatile firearm.

FOLD 'EM

Folding guns in Canada *BY AL VOTH*

Kenny Rogers' famous song about the gambler who said, "You got to know when to fold 'em," was talking about cards not guns, but the song still comes to mind every time I encounter a folding gun. And as luck would have it, I've encountered a sudden glut of folding rifles and shotguns.

Let's be clear; in my opinion, folding guns are not the same as take-down guns. A take-down rifle or shotgun is one which separates into two individual pieces, and there are lots of examples in the marketplace. Ruger's take-down 10/22 and their PCC in 9mm are commonly seen rifles with this feature. Take-down shotguns are

a little rarer, at least if you don't count most break-action guns, as these typically disassemble into two or three primary pieces without the use of any tools and can legitimately be called a take-down design.

Folding guns, on the other hand, don't separate into individual pieces. Instead, they incorporate a hinge mechanism to fold and thereby reduce their overall length. Some would argue this is a small difference, and although that may be so, I think it's significant. This is because folding guns have two important features take-down guns don't. First, there's no chance of the pieces getting separated and the owner ending up with only half a gun. >

Second, folding guns are almost always quicker to get into action.

However, the primary reason for the existence of both types is the same: compact storage and transportation. Their shorter length makes it easier to store and move folding or take-down guns in a case or container which doesn't scream "gun." In today's Canada, where we have significant numbers of people who harbour an irrational fear of guns and are more than willing to call 9-1-1 if they see someone who might have a gun -- any gun, for any reason -- it's prudent to sometimes keep a low profile. Combine this with the fact we often need to save space in our travels, and rifles and shotguns which can be significantly reduced in length are extremely handy.

LEGALITIES

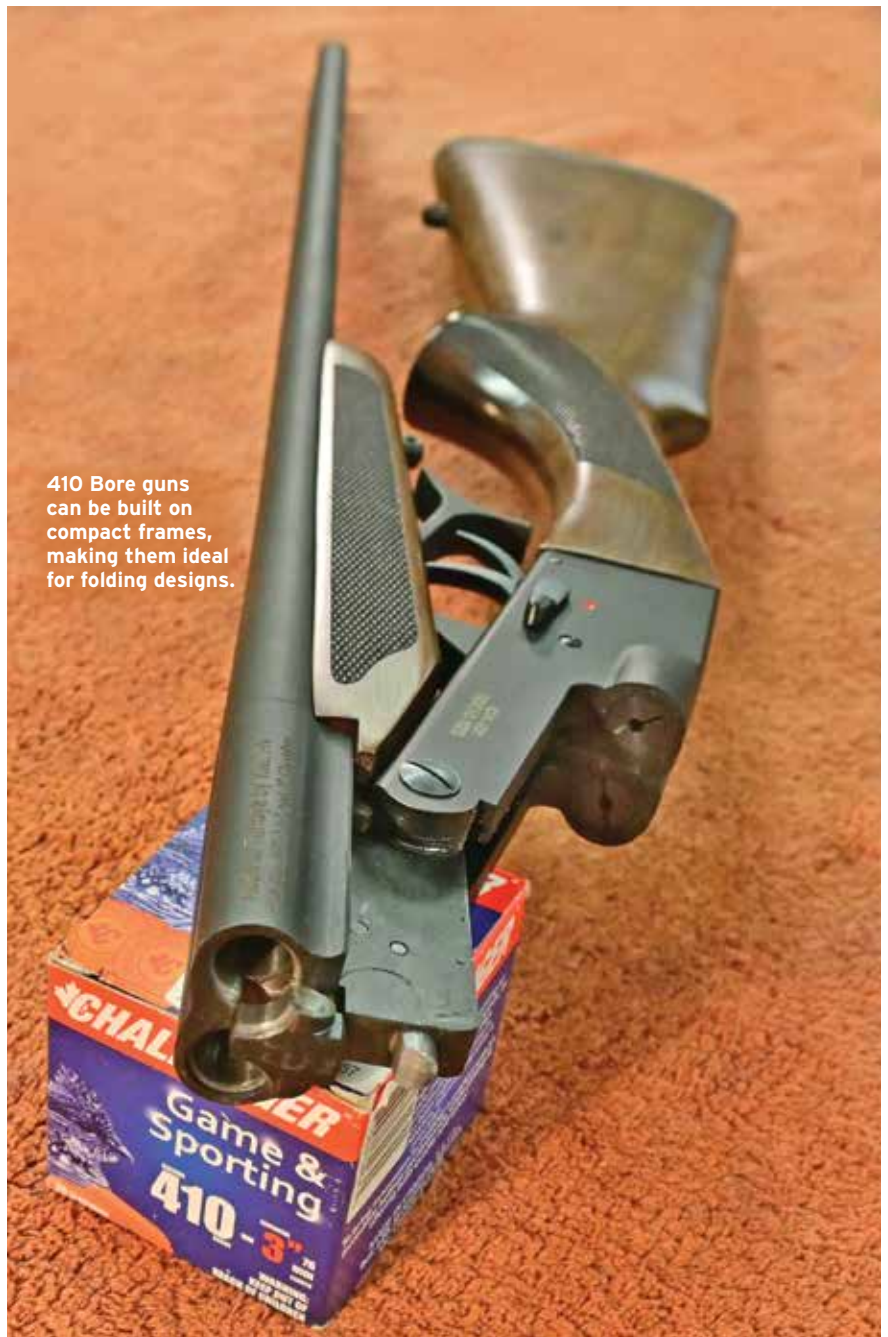
Of course, there are some legal considerations to keep in mind. This is Canada after all, and guns, at least the legally owned ones, are micro-managed to the nth degree. When it comes to folding guns, Section 84(1) of the Criminal Code defines a restricted firearm and subsection (c) tells us it includes "a firearm that is designed or adapted to be fired when reduced to a length of less than 660 millimetres (26 inches) by folding, telescoping or otherwise." Therefore, if the gun can still be fired when it's folded and has an overall length less than 660 millimetres in that condition, it qualifies as a restricted firearm.

This isn't typically an issue for take-down guns as once the pieces are separated, they can't be fired, but it can be for folding guns, especially guns where just the buttstock folds. Combine a folding buttstock with a very short barrel and legal troubles could result. For folding guns which separate at the breech, this isn't an issue because, again, they can't be fired when folded.

So, with the above in mind, let's look at some of the current offerings available to Canadian shooters.

SHOTGUNS

The first folding gun I personally encountered was a folding shotgun. I was in my late teens when I started seeing Spanish-made side-by-side guns in 410 Bore called the El Faisan showing up in the marketplace. They



410 Bore guns can be built on compact frames, making them ideal for folding designs.

looked cool, but I never had the opportunity to use one, and they eventually seemed to fade away. Since then, I've seen many single-shot folding guns, as well as more double-barrels, most of which originate from Türkiye. The folks at Revolution Armory (www.revolutionarmory.com) were good enough to loan me a few of the models they import to illustrate what's available.

The most basic folding shotgun is a break-action single-shot, and it's also the cheapest. They're available in

12 and 20 gauge, as well as 410 Bore. Revolution Armory's SB2S is a good example of the breed. It's an external hammer gun with no separate safety mechanism. The trigger guard serves as the action release and pulling it to the rear causes it to slide in a track, allowing the action to be opened. Open it partway to reload or fold it all the way around for storage. In its shortest form, it measures 540 millimetres (21.25 inches) long. Its 20-inch barrel has choke tubes, ventilated rib and extracts, but doesn't eject, empty

hulls. My sample is in 12 gauge and has a 3-inch chamber. The light weight would be appreciated for packing, but the recoil is definitely stout.

Moving on to something a little more interesting, we find single-shot folding guns with interchangeable barrels. These are available as package deals, with all three bore sizes in one kit. The unit I've been working with has 20-inch barrels in 12 and 20 gauge,

as well as 410 Bore. Chokes are fixed at a modified constriction. The hammer is concealed, so there's a sliding safety button on the upper tang. Opening the gun is accomplished by pulling back on a lever located just ahead of the trigger guard. Changing barrels requires removing the hinge pin with a screwdriver, but that's supplied, and I found it takes about one minute to do. When folded, its

length comes in at 560 millimetres (22 inches). It's an interesting way to get three guns in one.

Next come multi-barrel guns, and here it's shades of the old El Faisan shotgun, with a side-by-side folding 410 Bore. The SS410 has 660-millimetre (26 inch) barrels with choke tubes and is fired via double triggers. Hammers are concealed, with a rotating safety on the right side of the action that isn't nearly as handy as a tang-mounted version. Opening the action requires pulling down on a trigger guard extension. It works well but it's not as intuitive and natural an action as squeezing it would be. The gun folds down to a length only one-quarter-inch longer than the barrels.

Lastly, we find the most unusual folding shotgun I've ever seen, the Wolverine XP. It deserves that title because it's a pump-action gun which folds down to a length of 650 millimetres (25.5 inches). The barrel measures 478 millimetres (18 5/8 inches) and has a red fibre optic front sight near the muzzle. A fixed V-notch rear sight is located at the very back of the action. That rear sight is mounted on a sliding plunger which serves to lock the two hinged halves together for firing. Folding the gun into its compact form just requires pulling back on the rear sight and, in response, the action and barrel tilt down and fold up against the buttstock. A typical tube magazine is mounted under the barrel, and yes, the magazine can remain loaded while the gun is folded. Getting it into action then requires just unfolding, snapping it closed and cycling the action. With the loaded and folded gun in my hands, I found with practice I could fire an aimed shot in less than three seconds.

Magazine capacity is four shells of the 3-inch or 2.75-inch variety. Cycling them through the action is aided by a forend which is spring powered for the closing stroke. This, of course, means it requires more effort to eject an empty, but the spring is strong enough to slam the action shut on its own. Some will like this feature, but I suspect others will not. If you're in the latter camp, I found it's easy to remove the spring during a basic field strip and it functions just fine without it. This is the route I'd be inclined to take because with the spring installed there's no built-in method of keep- >

Revolution Armory's Wolverine XP is a pump-action shotgun which folds.



LEFT: It's possible to leave the magazine of the Wolverine XP loaded while the gun is folded.



A long barrel (26 inches) on a folding gun makes for a longer overall package.





An MDT folding buttstock on this bolt-action rifle allows for easier transport, bolt removal and bore cleaning.

ing the action open. A chamber flag is therefore a necessity on ranges where a gun not in use must have the action open. Spring or not, it's the owner's choice and it's nice to have options.

With a set of choke tubes and a chrome-lined barrel for \$600, this is a great option for anyone needing a shotgun which stores compactly.

RIFLES

Folding rifles are much less common than folding shotguns, but there are a few options. Starting at the small end of the scale, we have the 22 Long Rifle and, as you'd expect, the abundant Ruger 10/22 can be modified to fit into the folding category. However, only the buttstock folds. The folding 10/22 in the lead image wears a Butler Creek stock which is no longer in production, but ATI and ProMag are two firms offering folding stocks to fill the gap. Rimfires which fold more compactly are also available, but they're all in the survival rifle category, and include minimalistic guns like Chiappa's Little Badger.

Stepping up to pistol-calibre car-

bines, Kel-Tec is one company with a reputation for making folding rifles, and their SUB 2000 pistol-calibre carbine has been popular in Canada. It's not simply a folding buttstock design, as the gun separates at the junction of the barrel and the action. Available in 9mm Luger and 40 S&W, it uses common pistol magazines and folds into a 20 by seven-inch package.

The next level up is for legitimate rifle cartridges, and here the selection starts to thin out. Kel-Tec offers a 223 REM in this category in the form of their SU-16 family of guns, which has included a Canadian version with a longer barrel. However, if the search is for a precision-capable folding rifle, as far as I can tell the only options use a folding stock. These are chassis systems and therefore you can count on MDT to offer some options. These options include an adapter which can turn many of their chassis systems into folders. Their lightweight HNT-26 chassis doesn't need an adapter as a folding buttstock is available as an option.

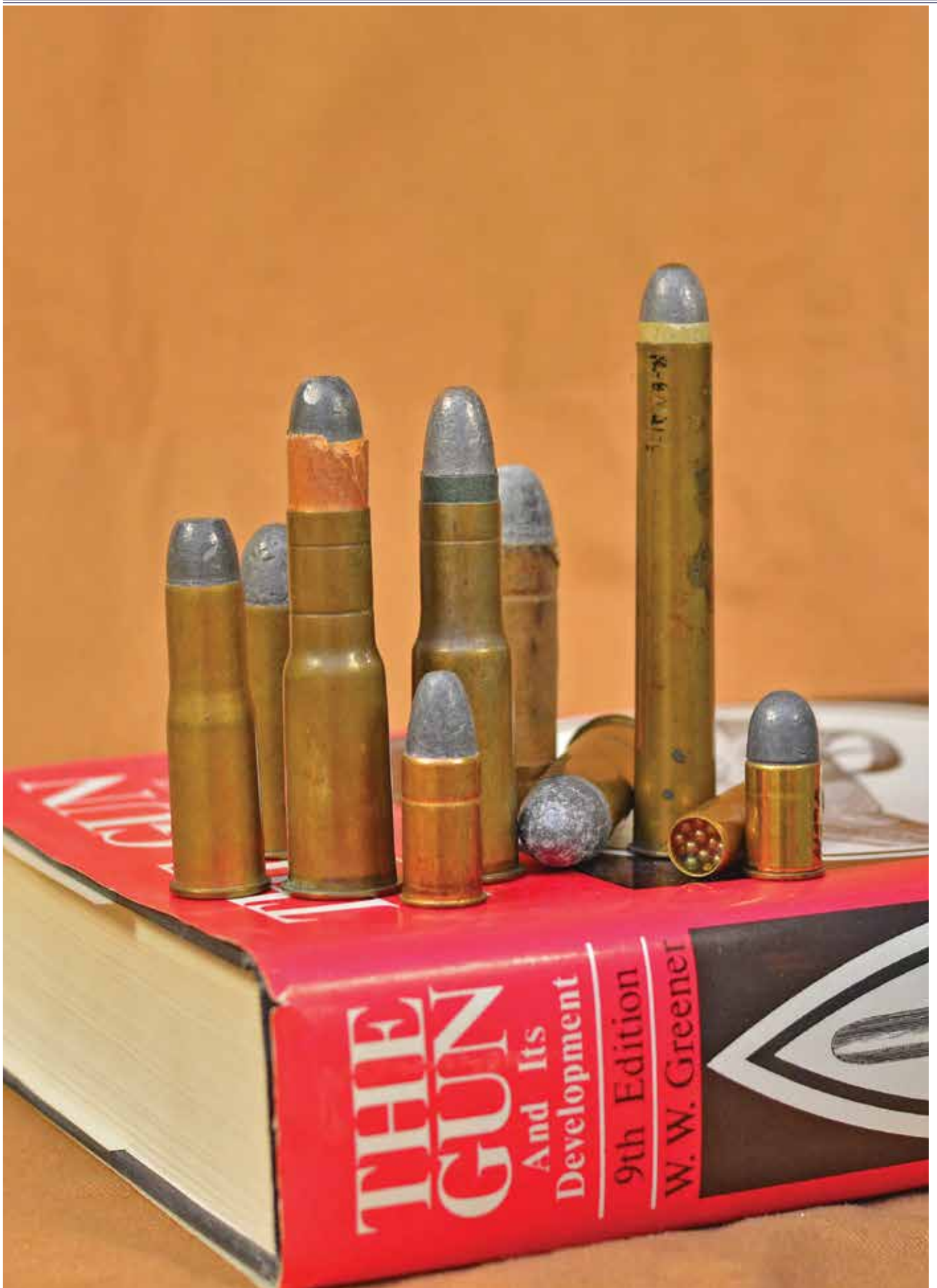
Folding buttstocks on precision rifles are common, and for good reason. Not only do they allow for more compact transport and storage of big guns, but they also allow for easier cleaning from the breech. Folding that carefully adjusted buttstock with a high cheek-piece to the side permits easier bolt removal and unobstructed access to cleaning the rifle from the breech end. It's a significant frustration saver.

That's a summary of the state of folding guns in Canada today. We're fortunate to have some incredibly useful options, so don't neglect the possibilities they can bring to your firearm collection. If you "know when to fold 'em," they can provide some new and interesting shooting experiences. 🍀



NFA

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RESPONSIBILITY.



RESPECT THE OLD ONES

It doesn't have to be new & flashy
BY NICK ORMAY

As a young shooter with lots of time and shop opportunities but limited budget, I found the oldies at gun shows irresistible. Antiques were beyond my reach, and the modern pieces were too expensive to buy and feed. So, I gravitated towards odd pieces that owners were willing to part with because factory ammunition was difficult to find.

My first foray off the beaten path was a much 'smithed Syrian Mauser '98 in 8x57 from Corlane's in Dawson Creek. With the bolt handle replaced, Leupold scope base mounted, recoil pad installed and with a Bushnell 4x scope mounted, it became my plinking rifle. Commercial loads were underpowered, inaccurate and expensive. Imperial 30-06 brass scrounged at my local shooting range, and a conversion process using an RCBS trim die, was relatively straightforward.

Projectiles in 8mm were a dog on the market and therefore came home cheaply for reloading. The gun had a full length forend, which I cut short because I despaired of its accuracy potential. It was one of my first glass

bedding jobs. Lever Arms of Vancouver furnished a case of military surplus FMJ, but then I ran into headspace issues. Lots of the Berdan primed ammunition refused to fire, unlike the carefully dimensioned American brass. So, I wrapped the shoulder of the military cases in Teflon tape to bulk up the headspace and proceeded to shoot up most of the case contents. I also made Mexican match ammunition by pulling the 196-grain FMJ BT bullets and replacing them with 200-grain Speer soft points. I took it hunting often but luck evaded me. An offshoot of its headspace problem was that it had not seen much use in its previous guise. So, the throat and rifling were in very good shape, and with a Timney trigger installed, gave good accuracy. With another scope and stock, it became my wife's rifle. Eventually I tired of the brass trimming and had Corlane's rechamber it to 8mm-06. Shoots better than ever.

The next trip into the exotic involved a Marlin 444. By this time, I had absorbed a lot more gun lore from

periodicals and was impressed by a Handloaders Digest article touting its survival potential with heavy reloads, multi-ball and shot loads. Hornady had just started to produce its 265-grain FP bullet for this cartridge, and the gun and I took a shine to it. By now, I was into bullet casting and the go-to slug was the Lyman 429421 cast of wheel weights. The microgroove rifling and leisurely 1:38 twist defied my attempts at cast bullet accuracy, but shot loads were another game.

The base diameter of 303 British brass (range finds again) was compatible so I opened the case mouth using needle-nosed pliers and reloaded with large rifle primers and 410 Bore shotgun data. A 410 wad was jammed into the funneled case, tamped down and filled with shot. A hot glue gun with a gob of melted polyethylene became the over shot wad. The first firing blew the casing into a cylinder shape and subsequent reloads took the full half-ounce of shot of a typical 410 Bore load. The microgroove rifling was kind to the plastic wadded shot column, and I had a useful grouse >



**TOP, BELOW
AND BOTTOM:
A Mauser 71/84
with one of the
author's 43 Mauser
handloads and a
cast lead bullet.**



load to go along with the hard-hitting 265-grain Hornady. With time, the jacketed bullets became too expensive and the gun wore out its welcome.

Many years later, a 444 Marlin guide gun with short barrel and ported muzzle stepped into its place. The Ballard-style 1:20 rifling was a boon to my cast bullet plinking, but it threw doughnut-shaped patterns with the shot. Not a huge problem. Aim a few inches off the grouse's head and enough pellets find their way there to make for good camp fare.

More oldies came my way when a colleague brought some family heirlooms into my shop. One was an 1893 Marlin in 38-55 WCF. The other was a long and heavy Winchester 1886 in 40-82. Researching these loads in pre-Internet days meant a lot of searching through old manuals and back issues of gun magazines. Cruising the gun shows and looking for components made life interesting.

I found shootable quantities of 38-55 brass and new Lee dies for the 375 Winchester. It took some time, but I chanced on a box of CIL 255-grain jacketed soft points. Previous experience with this calibre had yielded

anemic factory loads at an advertised 1,300 feet per second -- magnum pistol kind of oomph. My research showed that a long time ago, CIL had a hot load for this calibre that moved out at 1,600 feet per second. That was more like it. My friend used it one time while sleeping in a line cabin when he had an unexpected visitor at dawn. Ken stepped out the door and found a black bear pawing through his stuff. So, he shot it in the head. Instead of keeling over, the bear took off, leaving my friend in his PJs with another load halfway to the chamber of the rifle. My guess is that the shot was a bit high and bounced off the thick bone on top. His 30-06 would have had a different outcome.

The 40-82 was more problematic. Research showed that .41-calibre pistol bullets would do. Anything else was pricey and pointed, those pointy tips making them unsuitable for the gun's tubular magazine. The gun came with some original blackpowder loads. Half of them had cracked necks and the powder was like brick dust. The other half were disturbingly undersized. So, we found some dies and I proceeded to convert 45-70 brass

into short but usable 40-82 casings. My first reloads refused to chamber in the newly cleaned gun. More reading came up with the bumping-up phenomenon of black powder rifles. There was a caked and baked ring of bullet lube and black powder fouling at the chamber mouth, preventing the seating of .41-calibre jacketed projectiles. A total takedown gave me enough room to get in there with a



pistol brush and electric drill. A few spins dislodged the sulfur-smelling stuff and load development continued. I took the Winchester afield once, but quickly tired of its weight and bulk. That and the knowledge that this was the most expensive piece that I had ever handled gave me pause, and I returned it to its owner.

Following that adventure, a trip to the gun show in Prince George yielded another addition to my modest collection of TC Contender carbines. I was followed home by a stainless-steel model in 375 Winchester, with an ugly T-shaped muzzle

brake, and it came with an auxiliary barrel in 22 LR. With the help of 'O' rings it would slide in snugly, and with the switchable firing pin on the Contender would do for small game. Just my kind of set-up. It came with almost two boxes of Barnes 220-grain hollow point handloads. They looked weird but performed well enough with a Bushnell 1.5x4.5 to take hunting. The 22 LR barrel, with a variety of loads including shorts, has never performed to my satisfaction (just angle of grouse's head at 15 yards), but the Barnes handloads did well on a 150-plus-yard shot on a mule

deer doe. This piece is sighted three inches high at 100 yards and drops off rapidly. So, I aimed at the back line and touched one off. Thump! Wobbled a few steps, then she went down. She was dead by the time I waded through the knee-deep snow. The lungs were toast, but bloodshot meat was minimal. That 375 was a good, light and handy meat provider.

An unusual straight wall can be found in the form of the 43 Mauser. Very old Dominion catalogues used to show this round in cast, paper patched form. Always wondered about that one. My rifle is a much bubba-ed Mauser 71/84 with an 1887 stamp on the receiver. The price was right. The tube magazine is under the barrel and the lifter still works perfectly. Brass was not an easy find and then I had to get a .43-calibre bullet mold. This is the longest gun in my inventory, and the only one with open sights I can still see. I persuaded my fellow shooters to allow me to enter a 45-70 match and it did me proud. One good casting session left me with enough stuff to keep me going for a long time.

Nope, it doesn't have to be new and flashy. The old guns and the old cartridges, especially straight wall designs and those that work well with cast bullets, can be tons of fun. 🍀



LEFT AND ABOVE: This TC Contender carbine in 375 Winchester was a gun show find. The ammunition used includes handloads with a Barnes hollow point (top), Bullet Barn cast bullet and 200-grain Winchester factory load.

LOCKED OUT

Buy a better safe
BY TYSON SOMMERVILLE



The safe that
wouldn't open.



If your safe's keypad relies on batteries, remember to change them.

When I was first getting into firearms as an adult, I was an impoverished student. I tended to buy the cheapest thing that would work. I still have the first shotgun I purchased, a very used Remington 1148 for about \$150 at a gun show. I had to carry it out in a garbage bag, which was fitting. The stock was rough, so I sanded it and a friend of mine was kind enough to air brush it for me. I shot a lot of grouse with that gun. Now here I am, eyeing a Browning A5 with a camo Cerakote job to the tune of \$2,500. Now before anyone gets excited, that's still a lot of money to me, and this article isn't about shotguns.

The point is that I've gotten older and somewhat got my life together... debatably. As a result, I have circled back on some of my cheaper purchases and have begun to upgrade, repair or replace. One replacement that recently found itself shoved in my face is a new personal safe. About 15 years ago, I bought a \$40 personal safe at a liquidation store. I used it for years and didn't think much of it. Up until recently, it sat in my bedroom closet with a handgun, my passport and some cash. Late one night, I was lying in bed, around midnight, reading a book when I heard what sounded, to me, like my patio door sliding open. I decided now was a good time to check the expiry date on my passport. I quietly walked up to my safe and entered the code, only to be met with flashing lights and a strange rattling sound. That safe was not about to open. I checked my apartment quick and found all doors and

windows closed and locked, must have been street noise.

Now the problem -- I couldn't get into my safe. Also, the safe was still making an annoying noise in my closet so I couldn't just go to sleep and deal with it in the morning. It had a key to override the electrical lock but somewhere in the last 15 years it went missing. I tried picking the cylindrical lock, to no avail. I started looking online and found the appropriate lock picking tool for that style of key for about \$60. Then it occurred to me to search the model of safe.

I found a YouTube video in which a gentleman with a charming southern accent explained that he was going to show me how to "open any one of them cheap Chinese safes, no code, no keys and no damage." He then promptly smacked the top corner with his closed fist and spun the dial and it popped open. I tried this on my safe and it worked, the door swung open. I nearly puked from the mixed emotions of relief and terror. I was glad to have my stuff free, but at the same time, how is that sold as a safe? He then took the door apart to explain why that worked. It turns out the tolerances inside were so loose that the cylinders could be bounced over the solenoid. I took mine apart to find the batteries were badly corroded, which started this whole mess.

The next morning, I began the hunt for a new safe. Unfortunately, they all looked suspiciously similar to the one I already had, and I didn't have the patience to go hit-test them all for the

flaw. As luck would have it, I was talking to my dad about my rather comedic, in hindsight, evening. He informed me he had a heavy-duty business safe I could take. He found he didn't use it much and was in the process of moving his business anyway. In our classic tradition, I traded him a few days labour for it (this is also how I got his old duck decoys, but the joke was on me that time because they all needed repainting). A quick Google search of the model produced no easy break-in hacks, which was comforting. I retrieved the safe and lugged its nearly 100 pounds up to my third-floor apartment and transferred my goods over.

So, what was the point of this? What's the lesson? Well, first I would say, do your best not to cheap out on safety equipment in general, but especially a safe for your handguns. If you don't have the funds for a good one, that's okay. Don't buy a fancy safe that was made cheap, buy something that was designed to be inexpensive. You are far better off buying something like a Stack-On pistol/ammunition cabinet than you are buying a no name safe and usually they're close in price. The lock on a cabinet can be picked but that takes longer than a hit in the corner, and my Stack-On has never refused to open.

The next lesson we can all learn from this is take care of your safe like you would your guns, because they can rust and corrode too, and it will cause failures. And as Murphy will tell you, it'll be when you hear a bump in the night. 🍀

GEAR BOXES

Pelican's Personal Utility Ruck Case

BY JEFF SMITH



Canadian hunters, shooters and outdoorsmen and women have, for a long time, used and valued the tough cases built by Pelican Cases to protect their expensive firearms and ancillary gear. Items such as scopes, rangefinders, cameras and lights can all be safely protected by Pelican's storage and transport containers. Additionally, these cases are designed to ensure the equipment in them remains protected from the impact of accidental drops, as well as exposure to moisture and debris. Outfitters, police, the military and search and rescue organizations all rely on this tough gear to assist in complet-

ing their respective missions.

Just prior to the pandemic in 2020, Pelican introduced a new box designed to protect smaller gear, which should be of interest to the Canadian shooting community. Called the Personal Utility Ruck Case, it is available in three sizes suitable for both daily and expedition usage. Intrigued by these new cases and with plenty of time to get outdoors during the lockdowns, I purchased one of each size.

Up front, I will note that these cases are not designed for lightweight backpacking as they are beefy in size and weight. But, for those of us who base camp or require a solid way to transport and protect gear to the range, they are an excellent choice. I use the R20 Ruck to store/transport my Garmin Inreach GPS unit, including the USB charge cables, which it fits perfectly. The other two sizes (R40 and R60) are great for protecting tools such as rangefinders, smaller handheld thermal units designed to help locate downed game, high-intensity flashlights, spare batteries and tools/spare parts for in camp repairs; the list of uses goes on. The larger Ruck works well to protect ammunition from becoming dirty or wet on a canoe-based trip, and it's also suitable as a first aid kit for a small group.

Made of ABS plastic with rubberized edges, the cases are IP68 rated to protect gear against water, snow and dust/dirt, with a submersion rating of up to 30 minutes at two metres. While I have not abused the boxes, I have put them through some rough handling, having dropped them onto rocks, bounced them around in the box of my truck and even dropped one into a stream for 45 minutes, well over the rated time-frame, all with no ill effects to my gear. While rated to be functional between 93 degrees Celsius to -23 degrees Celsius, I can happily report that they work well from 39 degrees Celsius down to my personal low of -20 degrees Celsius.

The boxes have MOLLE-compatible organizers mounted inside the lid, as well as in the body of the box. Both are removable if they don't meet your needs. A valve keeps internal pressures even in case of extreme elevation changes and there are multiple attachment points on the exterior of each box. Of course, they come with Pelican's lifetime guarantee, making them a solid investment. You can find more information at the company's website: www.pelican.com. 🇨🇦

A MAN FROM NIGERIA – WEEPING

Canada is repeating the mistakes of others

ANONYMOUS

Back in June of this year, I visited with a man who had moved here from Nigeria a few years earlier. Many of the people in his hometown church had been massacred by a near-by criminal militia, and my purpose was to console him. Practically the whole church, including members of his own family, were either killed or wounded. He wept as we sat in the restaurant.

Our visit eventually took a turn which I did not expect. It concerned the Canadian federal government's efforts to take firearms away from honest citizens. He said that Canada was going in the same direction Nigeria had gone years ago. Obviously, I asked him to explain.

He said Nigeria is a nation with vast petroleum reserves, as well as other natural resources. Multi-national oil companies had offered to extract it and told the people they would set up a profit-sharing system which would see each citizen receive a basic supplementary income. This utopian situation, they said, would require a stable national environment.

The government and oil companies assured the citizens of Nigeria that the best way to achieve this was to strictly regulate gun ownership. Only the government's peace officers and the guards at the oil facilities would be armed (I thought to myself, the media likely helped to sell this to them).

Once this was accomplished, he said, the petroleum started to leave the country, but the profit sharing was de-

layed. This meant that Nigerians soon ran out of money and virtually everyone was poor. Instability is the fruit of widespread poverty. So is crime. And with Islamic nations to their north, they were soon raided for girls and any wealth which was left. They shoot first.

When groups of men try to set up camps to process oil privately, the government peace officers come with guns to stop it. That is now illegal. They dump the oil in the rivers. Owning a gun is practically illegal, even if it is to defend your family against marauders from the north. The peace officers are overwhelmed with crime.

Then he turned to Canada and what they are attempting to do here. He said it is just the same. A relatively peaceful country, where for the average citizen the need for a firearm to defend yourself is generally not essential. Much of it can be done by the police. Our prime minister just said, "Canadians don't need firearms for self protection."

The Nigerian shook his head. That was the excuse in Nigeria, he said. "What we did not realize is that the reason crime was not rampant was due to there being enough armed law-abiding citizens able to protect themselves that it served as a general deterrent to crime, murder and even foreign militias. We were unaware that the police were able to be the last resort because of armed citizens." They had not made the connection.

"And try to turn the clock back now."

He opened his arms. "The government is in league with the multi-nationals. We are helpless, against our own government. We are slaughtered, and all we get is token condemnations from our government and others around the world." (It reminded me of what the Philistines did to the Israelites in 2 Samuel 13:19-22).

I mentioned to him that I'd heard piracy has developed along Nigeria's shores. Mainly, they go after oil tankers. "We are desperate," he said. A once beautiful, peaceful nation is now polluted, poor, despairing, dying. And at least as far as this man is concerned, this is largely due to the disarming of honest people.

This man's comparison between where Nigeria is and where Canada is going was ominous. Illegal guns, the Liberals and their international backers do very little about it. But if you are a legitimate gun owner, watch your step. You are labeled the problem and a threat to peace. But in the end, it's about the right to protect yourself and your property from known or potential threats, from wherever they may come. There are a lot of crooks out there. Does Canada need a Second Amendment? Pierre Poilievre, are you listening? 🗡️

(Editor's note: We don't normally publish anonymous pieces, but the NFA member who contributed this works for the federal government and is concerned about his job for holding these opinions.)



Legal corner

Guy Lavergne, Attorney at Law

The Legal Saga Of The Springfield Sports Club



The Springfield Sports Club operates a shooting range in New Brunswick. Like all gun clubs in Canada, every few years its shooting range approval is up for renewal. In 2019, upon renewing the shooting range approval, the province's chief firearms officer attached 26 separate conditions to the shooting range approval. Some of these conditions were related to the permitted hours of operation (from dawn to dusk), while others pertained to permitted target locations on the range. The club was unhappy with the conditions and elected to challenge seven out of the 26 conditions.

SECTION 74 REFERENCE IN PROVINCIAL COURT

To challenge the seven offending conditions, the club filed a Section 74 reference, pursuant to the *Firearms Act*. References under the *Firearms Act*

are most commonly used to challenge a refusal to issue a licence or the revocation of an existing licence, but they can also be used to challenge the refusal to renew a shooting approval. The reference was filed with the court in December 2019. The matter was heard by the New Brunswick Provincial Court over the course of three days, starting in August 2020 and ending in January 2021. A decision was rendered on April 27, 2021.

At the hearing, the New Brunswick chief firearms officer challenged the jurisdiction of the Provincial Court to hear the matter. The chief firearms officer's position was that the court's jurisdiction was limited to hearing challenges of refusals and revocations of shooting range approvals. It did not encompass attaching conditions to an approval. Conversely, the

Conditions attached to a shooting range approval are nothing new.

L'ajout de conditions à un agrément de champ de tir n'est rien de nouveau.

Springfield Sports Club argued that attaching those conditions amounted to the denial of a straightforward approval. The Provincial Court sided with the Springfield Sports Club on that issue and determined that it had jurisdiction to hear the matter.

Also at issue was the applicable standard of review. In a nutshell, judicial review is a process through which a court of law reviews the decision of an administrative body, but without usurping the role of that body. In recent years, Canadian law has been in a state of flux as to the applicable standard of judicial review. The default standard of review is that

of reasonableness. It means that the administrative body is allowed some latitude and may even be wrong, but not unreasonably wrong. In very specific instances, the standard of review is that of correctness, meaning that the administrative body (such as a chief firearms officer) has to make the right decision, as opposed to a decision that is merely reasonable. Further, due to a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Canada v. Vavilov* matter, which was meant to clarify the rules of judicial review, there has been some ensuing debate as to the standard of review applicable to references under the *Firearms Act*. The question is whether a reference under Section 74 is a statutory appeal, a true judicial review or something else.

To further complicate the matter, Provincial Courts, which are charged with overseeing certain decisions of chief firearms officers, do not have inherent jurisdiction to perform judicial review. That power belongs to superior courts, such as the New Brunswick Court of Queen's Bench. Provincial courts have limited jurisdiction that is restricted to powers derived from legislation; in the instant case, that legislation is the *Firearms Act*.

THE PROVINCIAL COURT RULING

The New Brunswick Provincial Court ruled¹ that in general the standard of review applicable to a reference is "reasonableness," although when it comes to questions of law, a more stringent standard of review, i.e., correctness, is applicable. That part of the decision would be overturned on appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench. On the merits of the case, applying the aforementioned hybrid standard of review, the Provincial Court overruled several of the conditions attached to the shooting range approval.

The chief firearms officer appealed the Provincial Court's decision to the New Brunswick Court of Queen's Bench. Although the New Brunswick Court of Queen's Bench is normally a court of general jurisdiction in first instance, it also acts as an appellate court in respect of certain statutory matters such as decisions made in connection with references under the *Firearms Act*.

THE COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH RULING

The Court of Queen's Bench issued its decision² on March 2, 2022. The entire decision revolves around the applicable standard of review. Contrary to the Provincial Court, the Court of Queen's Bench ruled that the applicable standard of review is that of "reasonableness." The Court determined that a reference is not a statutory appeal, but a regular judicial review, where the court must not interfere with the decision of the administrative body, unless it views it as unreasonable. The Court of Queen's Bench ordered that the matter be returned to the Provincial Court, for reconsideration, in accordance with the reasonableness standard.

The Springfield Sports Club appealed the decision to the New Brunswick Court of Appeal.

THE COURT OF APPEAL DECISION

The appeal proceeded very quickly, with a decision³ rendered Sept. 1, 2022. At the hearing, the Court of Appeal, of its own initiative, raised two issues for counsel to address⁴: a) whether the chief firearms officer has the authority to impose conditions to an approval under Section 29; and b) whether the reference process set out in Sections 74 to 76 could be engaged to seek to have the conditions struck.


After hearing arguments, the Court of Appeal concluded that "...nothing in Section 29 of the (Firearms) Act or the Regulations gave the CFO any authority to attach conditions to her approval of the club's application. The (Firearms) Act instead limits the CFO's authority on approval to ensuring an application meets certain operational requirements.: Moreover, the Court of Appeal also concluded that "the reference process set out in Sections 74 to 76 should not have been engaged to challenge the imposition of the conditions⁵."

Thus, in the view of the court, a conditional approval was not equivalent to a refusal. The Court of Appeal was of the view that the matter should have proceeded by way of application for judicial review, introduced directly before the Court of Queen's Bench.

Having so ruled, it should have ended the matter. If the matter

had been introduced in the wrong court, a higher court could not be properly seized of the matter by way of an appeal. However, the Court of Appeal went on to say that the chief firearms officer had no power to attach conditions to a shooting range approval, because the *Firearms Act* is silent on that matter. Thus, all conditions imposed by the chief firearms officer are invalidly imposed.

Although it is favourable to the Springfield Sports Club, this is a puzzling ruling. Having determined that the matter was introduced in the wrong court, the Court of Appeal had exhausted its jurisdiction. Normally, it should not have ruled upon the extent of the chief firearms officer powers. It should have been up to the club to commence a proper application for judicial review, arguably before the Court of Queen's Bench, sitting not as an appellate court, but as a court of general jurisdiction at first instance.

In other words, in my view, the Court of Appeal took a short cut, albeit a questionable one. This may have repercussions as to the value of that decision as precedent in other provinces. Conditions attached to a shooting range approval are nothing new. Almost every shooting range approval I have come across had conditions attached. The New Brunswick Court of Appeal may have just opened a huge can of worms, allowing every club whose shooting range approval is subject to conditions to challenge the same. It may also have inadvertently prompted the federal legislator to further amend the *Firearms Act* to retroactively grant chief firearms officers the power to impose such conditions. 

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Springfield Sports Club Inc. vs New Brunswick (Chief Firearms Officer) 2021 NBPC 4 (CanLII)

² New Brunswick (Chief Firearms Officer) vs. Springfield Sports Club Inc. 2022 NBQB 56 (CanLII)

³ Springfield Sports Club vs. New Brunswick (Chief Firearms Officer) 2022 NBQA

⁴ Idem, at paragraph 14.

⁵ Idem, at paragraph 16



Rubrique Juridique

Guy Lavergne, avocat

La Saga Judiciaire Du Springfield Sports Club

Le Springfield Sports Club exploite un champ de tir au Nouveau-Brunswick. Comme tous les clubs de tir au Canada, l'agrément de son champ de tir doit être renouvelé à certains intervalles. En 2019, lors du renouvellement de l'agrément du champ de tir, le contrôleur des armes à feu de la province a assorti l'agrément de vingt-six conditions distinctes. Certaines de ces conditions étaient liées aux heures d'exploitation permises (de l'aube au crépuscule), tandis que d'autres concernaient les emplacements autorisés des cibles sur le champ de tir. Le Club n'était pas satisfait des conditions et a choisi de contester sept des vingt-six conditions.

RENOI EN VERTU DE L'ARTICLE 74 DE LA LOI SUR LES ARMES À FEU EN COUR PROVINCIALE

Pour contester les sept conditions incriminées, le Club a déposé un renvoi en vertu de l'article 74 en vertu de la Loi sur les armes à feu. Les renvois en vertu de la Loi sur les armes à feu sont le plus souvent utilisés pour contester le refus de délivrer un permis ou la révocation d'un permis existant, mais ils peuvent également être utilisés pour contester le refus de renouveler un agrément de champ de tir. Le renvoi a été déposé auprès de la Cour en décembre 2019. L'affaire a été entendue par la Cour provinciale du Nouveau-Brunswick. L'audition s'est déroulée sur trois jours, s'étalant d'août 2020 à janvier 2021. Une décision a été rendue le 27 avril 2021.

À l'audience, le contrôleur des armes à feu du Nouveau-Brunswick a contesté la compétence de la Cour provinciale pour entendre l'affaire. La position du contrôleur des armes à feu était que la compétence de la Cour se limitait à entendre les contestations des refus et des révocations d'approbations des champs de tir. Elle n'englobait pas l'assortissement de conditions à une approbation. À l'inverse, le Springfield Sports Club a fait valoir que l'assortissement de ces conditions équivalait au refus d'une approbation



pure et simple. La Cour provinciale s'est rangée du côté du Springfield Sports Club sur cette question et a déterminé qu'elle avait compétence pour entendre l'affaire.

La norme de contrôle applicable était également en cause. En résumé, le contrôle judiciaire est un processus par lequel un tribunal examine la décision d'un organisme administratif, mais sans usurper le rôle de cet organisme. Au cours des dernières années, le droit canadien a évolué quant à la norme de contrôle judiciaire applicable. La norme de contrôle par défaut est celle de la décision raisonnable. Cela signifie que l'organe administratif dispose d'une certaine latitude et peut même se tromper, mais cette erreur ne peut être déraisonnable. Dans des cas très précis, la norme de contrôle est celle de la décision correcte, ce qui signifie que l'organisme administratif (comme un Contrôleur des armes à

Every few years, all Canadian shooting ranges must be inspected and re-approved.

Les champs de tir sont assujettis à une inspection et un processus d'approbation à intervalles réguliers.

feu) doit prendre la bonne décision, par opposition à une décision qui est simplement raisonnable. De plus, en raison d'une décision récente de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'affaire *Canada c. Vavilov*, qui visait à clarifier les règles du contrôle judiciaire, il s'en est suivi un débat quant à la norme de contrôle applicable aux renvois en vertu de la Loi sur les armes à feu. La question est de savoir si un renvoi en vertu de l'article 74 est un appel statutaire, un véritable contrôle judiciaire ou autre chose.

Pour compliquer davantage les

choses, les tribunaux provinciaux, qui sont chargés de surveiller certaines décisions des contrôleurs des armes à feu, n'ont pas la compétence inhérente d'effectuer un contrôle judiciaire. Ce pouvoir appartient aux cours supérieures, comme la Cour du Banc de la Reine du Nouveau-Brunswick. Les tribunaux provinciaux ont une compétence limitée qui se limite aux pouvoirs découlant de la loi; en l'espèce, il s'agit de la Loi sur les armes à feu.

LA DÉCISION DE LA COUR PROVINCIALE

La Cour provinciale du Nouveau-Brunswick a statué qu'en général¹, la norme de contrôle applicable à un renvoi est celle de la « décision raisonnable », bien que lorsqu'il s'agit de questions de droit, une norme de contrôle plus stricte, c'est-à-dire la norme de la « décision correcte », s'applique. Cette partie de la décision sera annulée en appel devant la Cour du Banc de la Reine.

Sur le fond de l'affaire, en appliquant la norme de contrôle hybride susmentionnée, la Cour provinciale a annulé plusieurs des conditions rattachées à l'agrément du champ de tir.

Le Contrôleur des armes à feu a interjeté appel de la décision de la Cour provinciale devant la Cour du Banc de la Reine du Nouveau-Brunswick. Bien que la Cour du Banc de la Reine du Nouveau-Brunswick soit normalement une cour de compétence générale en première instance, elle agit également à titre de cour d'appel à l'égard de certaines questions législatives, telles que les décisions prises relativement aux renvois en vertu de la *Loi sur les armes à feu*.

LA DÉCISION DE LA COUR DU BANC DE LA REINE

La Cour du Banc de la Reine a rendu sa décision² le 2 mars 2022. Toute la décision tourne autour de la norme de contrôle applicable. Contrairement à la Cour provinciale, la Cour du Banc de la Reine a statué que la norme de contrôle applicable est celle de la « décision raisonnable ». La Cour a déterminé qu'un renvoi n'est pas un appel statutaire, mais un contrôle judiciaire régulier, dans le cadre duquel la Cour ne doit pas interférer avec la décision de

l'organisme administratif, à moins qu'elle ne la considère comme étant déraisonnable. La Cour du Banc de la Reine a ordonné que l'affaire soit renvoyée à la Cour provinciale pour réexamen, conformément à la norme de la décision raisonnable.

Le Springfield Sports Club a interjeté appel de la décision devant la Cour d'appel du Nouveau-Brunswick.

LA DÉCISION DE LA COUR D'APPEL

L'appel s'est déroulé très rapidement, une décision³ étant rendue le 1er septembre 2022. La Cour d'appel, de sa propre initiative, a soulevé deux questions que les avocats avocat devait aborder⁴:

a) si le CAF a le pouvoir d'imposer des conditions à un agrément en vertu de l'article 29 de la *Loi sur les armes à feu*; et

b) si le processus de renvoi prévu aux articles 74 à 76 de la *Loi sur les armes à feu* pouvait être engagé pour obtenir l'annulation des conditions.

Après avoir entendu les arguments des parties, la Cour d'appel a conclu que « rien dans l'article 29 de la *Loi sur les armes à feu* ou du *Règlement* ne donnait au CAF le pouvoir d'assortir de conditions son approbation de la demande du Club. La *Loi sur les armes à feu* limite plutôt le pouvoir du CAF en matière d'approbation à s'assurer qu'une demande répond à certaines exigences opérationnelles. De plus, la Cour d'appel a également conclu que « le processus de renvoi prévu aux articles 74 à 76 n'aurait pas dû être engagé pour contester l'imposition des conditions ».⁵

Ainsi, de l'avis de la Cour, une approbation conditionnelle n'équivalait pas à un refus. La Cour d'appel était d'avis que l'affaire aurait dû être traitée au moyen d'une demande de contrôle judiciaire, présentée directement devant la Cour du Banc de la Reine.

Ayant statué ainsi, elle aurait dû mettre fin à l'affaire. Si l'affaire avait été portée devant le mauvais tribunal, une juridiction supérieure ne peut pas être dûment saisie de l'affaire par voie d'appel. Toutefois, la Cour d'appel a ajouté que le contrôleur des armes à feu n'avait pas le pouvoir d'assortir de conditions l'approbation d'un champ de tir, parce que la *Loi sur les armes à feu* est muette à ce sujet.

Ainsi, toutes les conditions imposées par le contrôleur des armes à feu sont imposées sans pouvoir sous-jacent.

Bien qu'elle soit favorable au Springfield Sports Club, c'est une décision déroutante. Ayant déterminé que l'affaire avait été introduite devant le mauvais tribunal, la Cour d'appel avait épuisé sa compétence. Normalement, elle n'aurait pas dû se prononcer sur l'étendue des pouvoirs du contrôleur des armes à feu. Il aurait dû incomber au club d'introduire une demande de contrôle judiciaire en bonne et due forme, vraisemblablement devant la Cour du Banc de la Reine, siégeant non pas en tant que cour d'appel, mais en tant que cour de compétence générale en première instance.

Autrement dit, à mon avis, la Cour d'appel a pris un raccourci fort discutable. Cela pourrait entraîner des répercussions sur la valeur de cette décision en tant que précédent dans d'autres provinces.

Les conditions attachées à l'approbation d'une règle de tir ne sont pas une nouveauté. Presque toutes les approbations de champ de tir que j'ai vues étaient assorties de telles conditions. La Cour d'appel du Nouveau-Brunswick vient peut-être d'ouvrir une énorme boîte de Pandore, permettant à tous les clubs dont l'approbation du champ de tir est assujettie à certaines conditions de les contester. Il se peut aussi que cela incite le législateur fédéral à modifier à nouveau la *Loi sur les armes à feu* afin d'accorder rétroactivement aux différents contrôleurs des armes à feu le pouvoir d'imposer de telles conditions. 

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Springfield Sports Club Inc. c. Nouveau-Brunswick (Directeur des armes à feu) NBPC 4 2021 (CanLII)

² Nouveau-Brunswick (contrôleur des armes à feu) c. Springfield Sports Club Inc. 2022 NBQB 56 (CanLII)

³ Springfield Sports Club c. Nouveau-Brunswick (contrôleur des armes à feu) 2022 NBQA

⁴ Idem, au paragraphe 14.

⁵ Idem, au paragraphe 16



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Spectre Ballistics Receivers



Spectre Ballistics is an Alberta-based company which manufactures a broad array of firearm accessories. Based in Sherwood Park (on the southeast edge of Edmonton), the company's primary focus is on the SKS, 10/22 and 180B pattern rifles. All of these are popular guns among Canadian shooters, making them a natural fit for anyone looking to produce rifle accessories.

However, besides making accessories, they also manufacture receivers for both the 10/22 and the 180B rifles. I recently had the opportunity to assemble complete guns based on these receivers and both resulted in accurate, reliable rifles.

Their 10/22 receiver is CNC machined from billet aluminum and features a mil-spec picatinny rail that is integral to the receiver. It's advertised as being capable of accepting all standard Ruger 10/22 components, and this is exactly what I found. Everything assembled into the receiver just like it was supposed to, with no hassle and no fitting required. The action compo-

nents I used were all standard Ruger parts, but the barrel was a product of Tactical Solutions. Spectre makes a chassis for the 10/22 as well, but I happened to have a spare chassis made by Grey Birch, so it got the nod. Again, no issues with fit or function arose.

These receivers are available in five colours, including some rather flashy options. I went with the blue version, because it matches the blue accents on the Grey Birch chassis. As I write this, I've tested extensively for reliability and accuracy, with nothing but success to report. I haven't finished tweaking some of the parts, nor decided which optic will eventually come to live on this gun, but that'll all happen over the winter months when it's too cold to do much shooting.

The other receiver I've been working with is their Lynx 180B Match lower receiver. This is a direct replacement for the polymer Armalite AR-180B receiver, but it's machined from solid aluminum. Spectre claims this receiver is fully compatible with all SBI, WK-180C, WS-MCR and Armalite 180B

upper receivers. While I can't speak for the first three of those brands listed, I can confirm that it's a perfect replacement for my original Armalite AR-180B lower. And as a bonus, it has features like a flared magazine well, a much better front takedown pin system, and will accept all non-beavertail AR pattern grips. There are three options for attaching a buttstock, and I went with the standard AR buffer tube system, with a sliding carbine-style stock.

Assembly was painless, as the receiver accepts the standard AR magazine release, trigger parts (including pins) and safety. The lockup between the upper and lower is now much tighter than it was before, and I do believe I'm seeing slightly better accuracy than in the past.

These receivers are just two of the many products they produce, making it worthwhile to visit their website at spectreballistics.com to see everything. Ordering can be done directly from that site, or you can buy from one of the many Canadian dealers who stock their products. 🇨🇦

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