



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

Est. 1983 (A Not-for-Profit Organisation)

NRA Affiliate Number G8162



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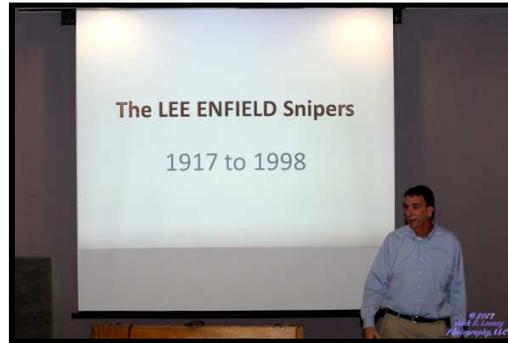
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February 2017 VGCA Newsletter

January Presentation: Based on attendance and membership interest, our first presentation of 2017 was a definite winner! Bernie Breighner gave an outstanding briefing on the Lee-Enfield Snipers.

Chambered in .303 British and introduced in 1888, the Magazine Lee-Metford (MLM), followed shortly by the Magazine Lee-Enfield (MLE), enjoyed some limited success during the Second Boer War. An improved version, the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE – commonly pronounced “smelly”) was adopted in 1904 as the Mark III. By the time British production ceased at the end of World War I, over 7,000,000 Mark III and the improved Mark III* had been produced.



Lee Enfield MK III Sniper



Combat during WWI demonstrated the need for a marksman/sniper version of the SMLE. A scope-equipped sniper variant was adopted in 1917 and quickly fielded. As a war-expedient modification, it worked – but not particularly well. In order to maintain the ability to reload the magazine with stripper clips, the low-power and somewhat fragile scope was offset well to the left of the rifle. Some snipers even reported using their left eye to sight through the scope! As a demonstration of their limited utility, almost all Mk III sniper rifles were dismantled post-WWI.

After much development and testing during the inter-war years, an improved variant of the Lee-Enfield designated the Number 4 Mark I (No 4 Mk I) was adopted in 1931. Over 6,000,000 No 4 Mk Is and No 4 Mk I*s (a slightly redesigned version better suited for mass production) were made.

In 1939, the No 4 Mk I(T) sniper variant was developed. The most accurate No 4 rifles coming off of the Enfield production line were sent to the gunsmiths at Holland & Holland for modification to sniper rifles. Modifications included mounting a No32 Mk I (later, No32 Mk 2 and No32 Mk 3 scopes were used) 4-power scope, adding a cheek-piece to the butt stock, and the stamping the scope’s serial number on the rifle. These rifles were issued in a transit case with all the tools and cleaning gear required to maintain them. The No 4 Mk I(T) was an effective sniping tool and served British and Commonwealth forces throughout WW2 and Korea.



In 1958, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) adopted the 7.62x51 as the official caliber for its member nations. As a result, the No 4 Mk I(T) was modified for the new round. Designated the L42A1, it even used the same Mk32 scopes – though the scopes were now calibrated to meters instead of feet. The L42A1 served from 1971 until 1985, to include service during the Falklands War with Argentina in 1982.

The final chapter in the Enfield sniper story involves the Enfield “Enforcer.” Built in small numbers for use by British police forces, the Enforcer was similar to the L42. One of the differences being that it utilized a larger, modern commercial optic – specifically, the German-made Pecar.

Total Enfield Sniper Rifle production is as follows:

Mark III Sniper	8,200 (most dismantled after WWI)
No 4 Mk I(T)	25,000
L42A1	10,000
Enfield Enforcer	725

Bernie’s presentation was enhanced by not only his personal examples of Enfield snipers, but also by three examples from the NRA Firearms Museum collection! Well done indeed!

✪ **January Business:** Ernie Lyles called the December meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. sharp and led us through the pledge of allegiance. There were 64 members and guests in attendance.

We started the meeting by having their hosts introduce the guests. Bill Chronister then identified the five new members.

Joe Roberts made an appeal for volunteers to help with show security.

Ernie announced that we are about 6 weeks away from the spring gun show and that in addition to needing security volunteers, we still have 30 tables available. He also mentioned a new program approved by the Executive Committee to assist members interested in putting together a display table for the first time. Several Board members have volunteered to serve as mentors to help any “first-time exhibitors” who are interested. Ernie also announced that the VGCA will pay each member putting together their first display \$100 to help defray the costs associated generating that display.

It was announced that R.L. “Larry” Wilson had recently passed away. Larry had given a couple of presentations to the VGCA and had written several firearms-related books.

Marc Gorelick reminded us that he will be putting together a “Plymouth Rifle” display for the annual NRA meeting this year (28-30 Apr 17 in Atlanta, GA). He asked for assistance, especially if anyone has period USN accessories or gear (see his notice on the last page of this Newsletter).

Rob Becker announced that the Executive Committee approved adding a “For Sale” section to the VGCA Newsletter. Members interested in selling firearms or firearms related accessories should send an email to Rob at rpebecker@verizon.net. The email title should be “Ad for Newsletter” and contain a description of the item, its condition, price, and the seller’s contact information. An appropriate disclaimer and legal statement will be part of this new section. Rob also asked for VGCA member assistance in providing gun show, museum, and book reviews for the Newsletter.

Rick Nahas mentioned the possibility of a tour of the Colt facility. This trip is tentatively planned for the spring/summer timeframe. 10-12 members expressed an interest in participating in this tour.

Emory Hackman noted that the Nominating Committee is looking for candidates to run for the three Director positions. In response to a member's question, Emory and Dave Litchfield described the Director duties.

Bernie Breighner mentioned that he is still compiling the list of speakers for 2017. If you are interested in making a presentation during one of our membership meetings, contact Bernie (BFBKAC@gmail.com).

☛ **Upcoming February 23rd Meeting:** John Schumacher will give a presentation on the Winchester 1911 shotgun. As always, get there early for social time (and pizza) at 6 p.m., with the meeting starting at 7p.m.

☛ **Upcoming March VGCA Show news:** Show Security Volunteers Needed

To date (9 Feb 17) a total of 10 members have volunteered to help with security at the March show. That is 1/2 of the total needed so that the show is secure and nobody gets overworked. Specifically we need four people (two per day) as safety checkers, four people (two per day) to collect tickets, and 12 people (six per day) as door guards and/or roving security officers. In the past we've had to double up and share the load to keep things operating. Let's see if we can work the spring show with a full crew. A sign-up roster will be available at the February meeting. If you cannot make meeting, please contact me at joseph-roberts@cox.net and let me know that you're available, for which day (Sat or Sun), and whether for a morning or afternoon. Your help is what has kept this show prosperous and safe. Thanks!

-- Joe Roberts - Security Officer

President's Comments

Hello Everyone,

Last month's meeting was outstanding. We had nearly 70 members and guests with a large array of British sniper rifles on the table. I hope we can keep this energy moving with this month's meeting on the Winchester 1911 shotguns.

With five weeks to go before our spring show, we need to get people signed up for our volunteer spots to run the show. This is how we make our income to support our organization for the year. A few tables are also available for those interested in creating a display or perhaps selling a few items.

--Ernie Lyles

Treasurer's Report

I will provide a verbal treasury update at the February meeting. In the meantime, I have one request – when making payments for membership or show tables, please use check or cash (with a check preferred). Please avoid using money orders as they difficult to cash electronically. I will gladly provide a receipt for any cash received. Thanks!

--Shannon Zeigler

Other News!

☛ **Membership Report:** Please welcome two new Annual Members:

- **Douglas Chapman** of Arlington, VA was sponsored by Members **Phil Hill** and **Wes Chappell**
- **Lee Richmond** of Herndon, VA was sponsored by **Hampton Williams**.

Welcome aboard Gentlemen. Hope to see you at the Monthly Membership Meeting on February 23rd.

New Member Applications: The VGCA has received Membership Application(s) from flowing individual(s) for your review. Their information and sponsors names are below.

- **Anderson Reid Albano** of McLean, VA is sponsored by **David McKenzie**
- **Roy Anderson** of Manassas, VA is sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Mark Wayne DiSilvestro** of Alexandria, VA is sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Kim Walton** of Fairfax, VA is sponsored by **Larry Hare** and **David Litchfield**

Show-n-Tell!

- ***My apologies to those who brought their items for the January Show-n-Tell – our photographer had to depart early (he was not feeling well) and we did not record the normal pictures of members proudly holding their treasures. But we do have descriptions of the items (please see below).***

The first item shared was a Remington M1903A4. This was the first purpose-built sniper rifle made for the U.S. military (and also the last variant of the venerable M1903 design). It was developed from the M1903A3 rifle and fielded during WW2. Chambered in .30/06, this particular rifle has a second generation 2.5x Lyman Alaskan scope (probable Korean War era). M1903A4s were made with both 2- and 4-groove barrels - this example has a 2-groove.

Member 2 shared two interesting U.S. Navy pistols. The first was the single shot M1842 Ames Navy Pistol. It was the first percussion pistol adopted and contracted for by the U.S. government. It has a round 6 inch barrel in .54 caliber and features a unique boxlock design with the hammer inside the lockplate. Produced from 1842-1847 (this example was made in 1845), approximately 3,200 were made by N.P. Ames and Henry Deringer.

The second pistol was a Whitney Navy/Navy (2nd model). This .36 caliber percussion revolver featured a solid frame design similar to the contemporary Remington. 33,000 were produced in the 1860s, with 4,300-5,726 being acquired by the U.S. Navy during the American Civil War. This particular example was inspected and retained by the post-war Navy.

Member 3 held up his Finnish Mosin-Nagant Model 1939. Captured from the Soviet Army, the Model 1939 were extensively rebuilt – so much so that all that remains of the original Mosin-Nagant M1891 is the receiver and bolt. This example features a Sako barrel, improved sights, and new artic birch stock. In answer to a question from the audience, the barrel is 27 inches long.

The next item displayed was a Winchester M1873 that, until acquired by its current owner, had been a ranch gun on west Texas ranch for approximately 130 years! Manufactured from 1873 until 1919, this particular rifle left the factory in 1886. Approximately 700,000 were made and this example is chambered for .32 Winchester Center Fire (.32 WCF, also known as .32/20). M1873s were also made in .38 WCF (.38/40) and .44WCF (.44/40).

In keeping with the Lee-Enfield theme of the evening's presentation, the next item presented was an Enfield No 4 Mk I* produced by Savage Arms (actually made by J. Stevens, a division of Savage). These rifles, chambered for .303 British round, were contracted for and initially paid for by the British Army during WW2, however, most were provided to England under the Lend-Lease Act and were actually U.S. Property (and so marked). The Savage Enfields were not noted for their accuracy as bore diameters could vary quite a bit (some were as large as .315!). If you have one of these rifles, you may need to shoot cast bullets to get the best results on paper.

Member 6 shared a U.S. Gunners Quadrant, which accurately measures the angle of elevation (or depression) to the degree and minute. It was used with many different weapons including machine guns (like the M1919 Browning), artillery, and coastal defense cannon. This example was made in 1943 and came in a fitted leather case.

Next was another WW2 Enfield, this one being made by Long Branch in Canada in 1944. Sometime after its military service, this rifle was equipped with after-market Parker Hale target sights.



Member 8 brought in a rare and interesting piece – an Iraqi Al Kadesih (pictured at left). This semi-

automatic sniper rifle chambered in 7.62x54r Russian is similar to and shares traits with several former-COMBLOC weapons, such as the Russian SVD, the Romanian PSL, and the Yugoslav M76. One of the distinctive features of the Al Kadesih is the palm tree stamped as part of the reinforcing ribs of the magazine. This scope is possibly Yugoslav, though not marked as such.

Member 8 also shared a book, published in both Arabic and English, of Iraqi military equipment published by the Iraqi Military Production Authority.

Member 9 brought in pictures of his show-n-tell item because it was just a little too big to fit in the NRA elevator. It is a 480-volt milling machine that weighs 5,000 pounds! Recently purchased, the interesting thing to note on this piece of industrial equipment is the brass plate – from the Springfield Armory!

Member 10 brought in another military sniper rifle, this one being a U.S. M-1D. It was purchased from the Department of Civilian Marksmanship (predecessor to the Civilian Marksmanship Program of today). After its first use by the current owner, the operating rod spring broke into 15 pieces!

Ever seen, or even heard of, a Gas Billy Club? Member 11 brought one in for us. Made by Federal Labs in the 1920s, this example (a Model 29) was not only a leather wrapped billy club, but also a tear gas launcher!

Another Lee-Enfield was shared by Member 12 - this one was a nice Mark III* SMLE made at Enfield in 1916.

Member 13 brought in a French military MAS 49/56 semi-automatic battle rifle. Chambered in 7.5x54 and with a 10-round detachable magazine, the French started design work before WW2. Obviously, no work occurred during the German occupation of France during the war, but development resumed shortly after liberation. The basic design was adopted in 1949 and modified in 1956 with the addition of a grenade launching attachment. The example presented had a 3.8x scope, a slip-on rubber butt pad (to better absorb the recoil of launching grenades), and even had attachable night sights.

Unfortunately, the member that brought in the final show-n-tell piece had to leave before describing his rifle, but I did manage to get a picture of it during our break (at right). It was a beautiful No 4 Mk I(T) with transit case. It would have great to hear the story behind this one!



In Review

“In Review” is a relatively new section to the newsletter (started in August 2016) and includes VGCA member reviews of guns shows, books, and museums. If you would like to submit a review, please send it to the newsletter editor at rpebecker@verizon.net.

✦ Museum

The Museum at the Bastogne Memorial

Review by Bill and Carol Troy

The Bastogne memorial is massively impressive. The view of the surrounding countryside is superb. The memorial is laid out in a star with the names of the states on the top and the unit names on the columns.



The Memorial at Bastogne, Luxembourg

Just down the path from the memorial is the museum. Well worth the price of admission it contains a large number of well displayed artifacts. The audio tour and the movie are well worth the price and your time.



Armor outside the museum entrance



One of the museum's three Tommy Guns in a case with other weapons used during the battle



Both U.S. and German equipment, uniforms, weapons and memorabilia are displayed

Just a short drive from the Bastogne Memorial is the American Cemetery in Luxembourg. Gen George Patton is buried here with his troops. This is one of 25 permanent US Military Cemeteries located on foreign soil. At Gen Patton's direction, his engineers selected sites for both U.S. and German dead because he knew that losses would be very high on both sides. The US Army Burial Service recovered and buried, in these two sites, the remains of over 10,000 U.S. and German soldiers killed in the Ardennes area during that winter. Both sites were supposed to be temporary but the people of Luxembourg asked to make the American Cemetery permanent and about 50% of the next of kin agreed. The Grand Ducal Government of Luxembourg gave the U.S. free use of the 50.5 acre cemetery in perpetuity. In the cemetery there are 5,075 American Military Dead including 22 sets of brothers (buried side-by-side). 101 headstones mark the graves of those whose remains could not be identified. The names of 371 of our Missing in Action are inscribed on two large granite pylons. The American Cemetery is an awe-inspiring and a fitting tribute to the bravery of these heroes.



The American Cemetery in Luxembourg



The grave of General George S. Patton Jr.



The Memorial and the Chapel. The Memorial is inscribed:

“HERE IS ENSHRINED THE MEMORY OF VALOR AND SACRIFICE”

📖 Book

The Lee-Enfield A Century of Lee-Enfield Rifles and Carbines By Ian Skennerton

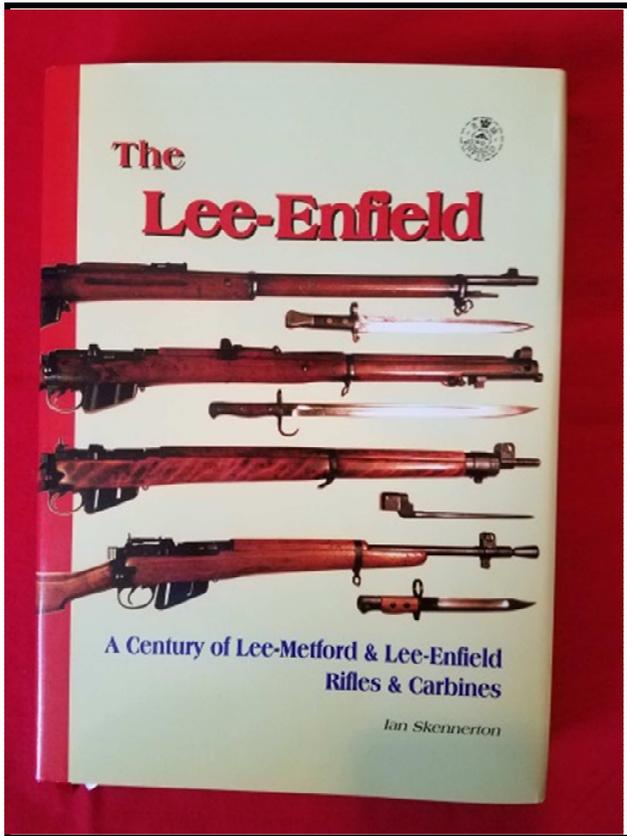
North American Distributor – Arms & Militaria Press, 608 pages

Review by Rob Becker

This is THE book about Lee-Enfields written by THE authority. Ian Skennerton has specialized in studying British small arms for almost five decades and has published over 60 titles. This book is probably his finest achievement and represents over 40 years of research on the Lee-Enfield and Lee-Enfield rifles and carbines. It covers the Lee-Enfield's history and production in no less than seven countries. With over 600 pages and more than 1,200 illustrations, it contains enough detail to make even the most meticulous collector happy. Are you interested in development and experimental rifles? They are in here! Bayonets? In here. Parts and tools? In here. Accessories? Here. Ammunition? Here. If it has to do with the military production or use of the Lee-Enfield, you will find it in this book!

Now, a book this comprehensive and well-researched will cost you a little extra, but

the expense is worth it IMHO. *A Century of Lee-Enfield & Lee-Enfield Rifles and Carbines* can be found at several sources on-line for approximately \$80.00.



Upcoming Events and Shows

PLEASE NOTE: There are sometimes changes in schedules by gun show promoters or errors on websites. Members are strongly encouraged to verify before driving to a show. These dates have been published as of this writing, but are not guaranteed. If you have a favorite show you would like to tell other members about, please email the Editor with a short review, including the show content, i.e., modern, new, collectible or antique, and I will include it as room permits. **Yellow** = Collector organizations.

VIRGINIA 2016-2017

- February 25-26, 2017 – Doswell, VA – Farm Bureau Center at Meadow Event Park - *SGK*
- March 11-12, 2017 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Convention Center – *SGK*
- March 11-12, 2017 – Dale City, VA – Dale City VFW – *Showmasters*
- **March 25-26, 2017 – Manassas, VA – PWC Fairgrounds – *VGCA (our show!)***
- March 18-19, 2017 – Hampton, VA – Hampton Roads Convention Center - *SGK*
- March 18-19, 2017 – Roanoke, VA – Roanoke Civic Center - *Showmasters*
- April 1-2, 2017 – Norfolk, VA – Norfolk Scope – *Showmasters*
- April 1-2, 2017 – Virginia Beach, VA – Virginia Beach Convention Center – *SGK*
- April 8-9, 2017 – Fishersville, VA – Augusta Expo Center – *Showmasters and C&E*
- April 8-9, 2017 – Winchester, VA – Body Renew Fitness and Family Sports Center - *SGK*
- April 21-23, 2017 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters and C&E*

MARYLAND 2016-2017

- **March 18-19, 2017 – Timonium, MD – Maryland State Fairgrounds - *Baltimore Antique Arms***

PENNSYLVANIA 2016-2017

- February 25-26, 2017 – Ridgway, PA – Ridgway Rifle Club – *Ridgway Rifle Club*
- February 25-26, 2017 – York, PA – Memorial Hall, Fairgrounds - *Appalachian Promotions*
- March 4-5, 2017 – Leesport, PA - Farmers Market - *The Gun Shows*
- March 11-12, 2017 – Quarryville, PA – Solanco Fairgrounds – *J.H. Ordnance*
- March 17-19, 2017 – Harrisburg, PA – Farm Complex Expo Hall - *Showmasters and C&E*
- March 18-19, 2017 – Allentown, PA – Econolodge Conference Center – *Eagle Arms Prod*
- March 24-26 2017 - Oaks, PA – Oaks Expo Center - *Eagle Arms Productions*
- **March 24-26, 2017 – Antique Arms Show in conjunction w/Oaks Gun Show – PAGCA**
- April 1-2, 2017 – Lebanon, PA – Lebanon Valley Expo Center - *Eagle Arms Productions*
- April 8, 2017 (1 day only) – Shippensburg, PA – Shippensburg Auction Center – *The Hunters Gun Show*
- April 8-9, 2017 – Split Rock, PA – 100 Mossywood Road - *Eagle Arms Productions*
- April 28-29, 2017 – Dover, PA – Dover Union Fire and Hose Company - *The Hunters Gun Show*
- April 28-29, 2017 - Philadelphia, PA – National Guard Armory - *The Gun Shows*
- April 28-29, 2017 - Monroeville, PA - Monroeville Convention Center - *Showmasters and C&E*

SPECIAL NOTE – OHIO - 2017

- **March 11-12, 2017 – Wilmington, OH – The Roberts Centre – OGCA (Members and invited guests only)**

☛ In Remembrance

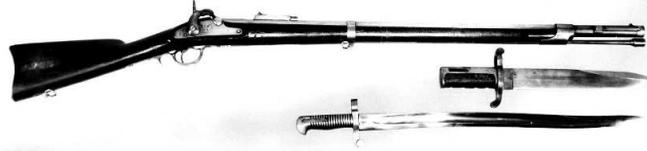
R.L. Wilson, Noted Firearms Author, Passes Away

By Marc Gorelick

Noted firearms authority and author Robert L. “Larry” Wilson passed away in his San Francisco home on December 10, 2016. Wilson, aged 77 when he died, was a prolific author, writing over 50 books and 325 articles for a variety of magazines and periodicals. Wilson also made two presentations to the VGCA at our monthly meetings. Wilson’s many books about guns include: *Winchester, An American Legend; The Book of Colt Firearms; Ruger and his Guns; Colt, An American Legend; Steel Canvas, The Art of American Arms; and The World of Beretta, An International Legend.* His last book, *The History and Art of the American Gun*, was published in 2016. He was also the “go-to” expert for numerous TV documentaries about firearms history. His reputation was tarnished when he received a 12-month-and-one-day sentence after pleading guilty in 2005 to cheating a California seller out of a \$500,000 1840 Colt Paterson revolver that once belonged to the son of French King Louis-Philippe. Wilson had many supporters, and many detractors who distrusted him. Perhaps a better scholar and author than a business man, for more than five decades he wrote more extensively about historical firearms than anyone else, and was considered one of the world’s foremost experts on antique guns who did much to popularize gun collecting in the United States.

HELP NEEDED FOR VGCA DISPLAY AT 2017 NRA MEETING IN ATLANTA

The next NRA Annual Meeting is scheduled for 28-30 April 2017 in Atlanta, Georgia. The VGCA has had winning displays at previous NRA Meetings and would like to continue the tradition. Marc Gorelick has agreed to represent the club with a display about *John Dahlgren and the Plymouth Rifle*. However, he needs assistance. Putting on an NRA display is not a single person act – it should be a club effort and we need to start work soon (there are benefits for participating members if you go to the NRA meeting).



Marc needs additional items related to *Model 1861 Navy "Plymouth" Rifle*. These may include samples of Plymouth rifles, bayonets, accessories, accoutrements, documentation, or other naval items from that period. Especially desirable would be a Model 1846 (or Model 1859) French *Carabine a Tige*, on which the Plymouth rifle was based. Please contact Marc if you want to help.

The e-mail address for any Newsletter related matters or a submission is Newsletter@vgca.net or you can read the editor directly at rpebecker@verizon.net. Feel free to e-mail items for inclusion in the newsletter. For changes of address or non-receipt of the newsletter, either via e-mail or the mailed hard-copy, please contact Larry Hare.