



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

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

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CMP Affiliate Number 026160



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February 2024 VGCA Newsletter



President's Comments

Fellow members—

First, I would like to thank the membership for their warm reception and active participation in my January presentation on the Mauser Broomhandle pistol. It was a lot of fun, and I hope the information was useful. Member presentations are an important feature of our meetings and I encourage you to sign up for a presentation and tell us about your collecting

interests. Presentations can run the gamut from simple guided discussions to multimedia masterpieces. If the latter end of the spectrum intimidates you, we have many members available to assist you with the technical details. But please understand, there are no requirements on presentation methods – just do that with which you are comfortable.

Next, we are fast approaching the April 6-7 dates of our first Gun Show at the new location in Dale City. Andrew Woodard, our new Show Manager, reports that there are still tables available. I would encourage you to reserve a table or two for sales or display and/or consider volunteering for security – but at minimum, please invite family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to attend what we are trying to make the best pure gun show in Northern Virginia. We need your help to ensure a successful show.

I am sorry that I will miss our February Membership Meeting, but will see you in March!

Ed Costello, VGCA President

★ January Presentation



VGCA President Ed Costello (*at left*) presented on the unique Mauser C96 pistol. Nicknamed the “Broomhandle” for its round cylindrical grip, the C96 was the first commercially successful semi-automatic pistol.

With its distinctive magazine in front of the trigger guard design, the C96 entered production at the Mauser factory in 1896 and remained in production there until 1937. It was chambered in the 7.63mm Mauser cartridge – a hot little bottlenecked round that was the fastest commercial pistol

cartridge in the world until the introduction of the .357 Magnum in 1935! At this point, Ed offered a caution on ammunition. While the Russian caliber 7.62x25 “Tokarev” is dimensionally similar to the 7.63mm Mauser, the Russian round is loaded to significantly higher pressures and the two cartridges are most assuredly NOT interchangeable. While guns chambered for 7.62x25 can fire and safely operate with the lower pressure 7.63mm Mauser round, the reverse – attempting to shoot the high pressure 7.62x25 ammunition in guns, particularly the C96, chambered in 7.63mm Mauser is simply not safe. The old rule of using only the correct ammo in all guns certainly applies here.

Ed described his fascination with the C96 as beginning in the early 1950s as a kid exploring the local pawn shops in Tacoma, Washington. At the time, “Broomhandles” were priced around \$25 – and quite out of reach! Later, while working overseas for the state department, Ed was able to build a small collection. In Zimbabwe, he added 13 C96s to his collection from a single shop! Included were examples engraved with the Names of their original owners who fought in Boer Wars (*examples below*).

Ed noted that there are five basic versions of the C96. They are:

1. Fixed Stock Carbine
2. 6-Shot Magazine Pistol
3. 10-Shot Magazine Pistol
4. 20-Shot Magazine Pistol
5. 10-Shot “Bolo” Pistol

These five very general categories can be further divided into 112 different variants, according to John

W. Breathed, Jr. and Joseph J. Shroeder, Jr., authors of the definitive work “System Mauser – A Pictorial



History of the Model 1896 Self-Loading Pistol”. This book is considered a “must have” for those interested in collecting Broomhandles.

As mentioned earlier, the C96 is a unique design. It only has one screw (for the grip panels) and one pin (for the trigger). The fixed magazine is located forward of the trigger guard and must be reloaded via a 10-round stripper clip. It is complex and did not see large-scale adoption by any military, at least before WWI. During the Great War, the German Army contracted with Mauser to buy 150,000 C96s chambered in 9mm Parabellum. When this led to ammunition confusion in the field with privately owned C96s in 7.63 Mauser, the German Army directed unit armorers to burn a large “9” in the grips and paint that number red to readily identify the caliber. Because this was done at the unit level, the quality of the modification and its universal application were inconsistent.



While not overly popular with militaries around the world, the C96 did find a niche in the civilian market, especially among the warlords of China. It proved so popular there in fact, that unlicensed copies were made by Astra and Beistegui Hermanos in Spain as well as both Chinese arsenals and local blacksmiths in an effort to meet demand. The Chinese even manufactured a variant chambered in .45 ACP (*factory cutaway shown at left*). Ed noted that two batches of Broomhandles were eventually imported from China into the United States. As these pistols had served for several decades with minimum upkeep, the condition of a lot of the imports could best be described as “rode hard and put away wet.” Many were subsequently

rebarreled or refinished. The second batch imported in the 1980s were actually newly manufactured on old factory tooling.

In 1927, Beistegui Hermanos came out with a selective fire version. Astra followed suit with their Model 903 that used 20-round detachable magazines the next year, as did Mauser in 1932 with their “Schnellfeuer” (literally translated as “Rapid Fire”). With a cyclic rate of 900-1000 rounds per minutes, it was indeed a rapid fire sub-machine gun!

Ed noted that as a consequence of the National Firearms Act of 1934, the C96 with attached shoulder stock was designated a “Short Barreled Rifle” and subject to a \$200 transfer tax and special back ground check. To avoid this designation, C96s can be found with the shoulder stock slot in the grip filled in, or the stocks themselves found with the attachment hardware cut off and long ago discarded.

Ed provided far more detail than I can recount here and members brought in a multitude of examples (*right*) to round out a most informative evening. Thank you all!



CONTACT GOVERNOR YOUNGKIN TO PROTECT YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL 2ND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

You can help protect your Constitutional rights and property by contacting Governor Glenn Youngkin to express your concerns and urging him to veto anti-gun laws when they come to his desk for signature.

You can contact the Governor's office by telephone, send an e-mail or write a hard copy letter. Hard copy letters have been said to have the most impact, but any way you express your concerns will help.

The telephone number of the Governor's office is **(804) 786-2211**.

To send an e-mail go to the following website and complete the pre-formatted form:
<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/communicating-with-the-governors-office/>

Hard copy letters to the Governor should be addressed to:

***Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218***

Part of the VGCA's mission is to educate others about the 2nd Amendment, gun collecting and gun ownership. As such you, as individual citizens and constituents, can contact government officials to educate them and express your concerns.

Right now, a large number of anti-gun bills are working their way through the Virginia House and Senate. According to the Virginia Citizens Defense League, (VCDL), as many as 47 gun-control bills could all land on Governor Youngkin's desk!

Constitutionality or other serious issues with the gun-control bills are being ignored. Many of the proposed laws contain provisions that the Supreme Court has already ruled are unconstitutional, such as in the Bruen decision (*New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*).

Crime is the excuse that the gun control advocates use to attack your Constitutional rights. Yet, many of these bills have little to do with fighting or reducing crime. The intent is clearly civilian disarmament, not a reduction of crime. YOU are the "wrong hands" they talk about that aren't supposed to have access to firearms!

Some of the gun control bills are designed to kill gun shows, including your VGCA show. For example HB 270 **creates a five-day waiting period for gun purchases**. A five-day waiting period would kill the show, which is the main funding mechanism of the VGCA, and would, in effect, cripple the VGCA and make its continued existence questionable.

Given the gun control majorities in the Senate and House of Delegates, these anti-gun bills will almost certainly be passed and wind up on Governor Glenn Youngkin's desk for his signature. There is no guarantee that he will not sign some of them. It is imperative that gun owners and collectors, such as yourself, contact the Governor and urge him to veto these anti-gun bills.

Please identify yourself as a constituent and voter, and urge him to veto the bills in a polite, short, clear manner. Give your reasons in an as objective a manner as possible without using inflammatory language.



ASSAULT ON 2ND AMMENDMENT IN VA

By Al Reid, VGCA Legislative Affairs

According to current statistics VA is in the top 10 states in the USA for safety and security of its citizens. However, if we are to believe the current members of the majority state government, we are no different than places like NYC, Boston, Baltimore, or Chicago that have very high crime rates. Their answer is to heavily restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens while allegedly, reducing sentences for criminals who create these issues. These methods have worked so well in the aforementioned cities! If history repeats itself, as it so often does, VA will soon be on a down slide to equal the law and order issues so prevalent in those other areas.

The current majority government, in the name of Safety and Security for its subjects, have introduced approximately 47 new anti-gun bills, which have all been approved on party lines [except for a few to be held over until next year]. No pro-gun bills were approved.

To prevent issues which arose in a previous attempt to ban so called "assault weapons" where several members of the current majority voted against the ban due to potentially criminalizing many current residents, the current Bill only applies to these firearms manufactured after July 2024. This is a cunning move to not upset current owners or - more likely - to appease their own members who have a conscience. As no one seems to be able to define an "assault weapon" in all probability this ban will be far reaching and cover many different types of firearms.

One thing is fairly certain, if the AR-15, or any other similar type of weapon that may be termed as such, was an "assault weapon" and genuinely believed to be so by the Federal Government then it would be covered under the NFA and be subject to the ownership restrictions and taxes currently in Law. The mere fact that it is not, deems that it cannot be an assault weapon. If the AR-15 were a person, it would be suing all and sundry for libel.

Although the Governor has the power to veto these Bills, with the legislature in control of the other party his ability to govern effectively could be impinged if he does so. It has been suggested that the government majority may not support certain projects in the pipeline designed to benefit the State [like a new Stadium for one]. If this is true it shows the misguided views of the current majority. They would much rather spend potentially millions of tax payers money on law suits for Bills that have already, in many cases, been found unconstitutional in previous court cases than support projects for the greater good.

★ Next Membership Meeting: Feb 22nd

Presentation: “The FN49” by Carlos Davila

Location: NRA HQ Basement Auditorium

Our February VGCA Membership Meeting will be in the basement auditorium of the NRA Headquarters. The room will open at 6 p.m. with pizza arriving shortly thereafter and the meeting starting at 7 p.m. We hope you can make it!

★ VGCA Tee Shirts

New VGCA Tee Shirts are now available for purchase. Tan colored and featuring the VGCA patch on the left breast, the VGCA logo on the right sleeve, and the Virginia state flag on the left, they are available in sizes from medium up to XXL. The cost is \$20 and they can be purchased at our membership meetings – but don’t wait – half have already been sold!

Member Bryan Pelton (on left) was selling VGCA Tee Shirts at our November Gun Show while Bruce Buchner (on right) proudly wore his new shirt while manning the membership table.



★ Reminder – VGCA Spring Show

Our next gun show will be held at the **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) General Lewis B (Chesty) Puller Post 1503 at 14631 Minnieville Road, Dale City, Virginia 22193**. The dates are April 6th and 7th. Table rental is only \$55 for a 6 ft. table. If you would like to reserve a table, please contact Show Manager Andrew Woodard at ajw055570@aol.com for an application.

★ Upcoming Officer Elections in 2024



With our officer elections scheduled for May, it is not too early to consider running for president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer. If you would like to contribute more to the running of our organization, think about running for office. Contact one of current officers or directors if interested.

WE WANT YOU!



★ January Meeting Notes

VGCA President Ed Costello called the January meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. Former President Jim Burgess led those assembled through the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 48 members and guests in attendance and another 5 participated via webinar.

Vice President and Membership Chairman George Dungan (*near right*) announced the VGCA Member of the Year for 2023, Mr. Bruce Buchner (*far right*). Bruce was pivotal in organizing and manning our recruiting tables at local gun shows last year. George presented Bruce with a \$100 Gift Certificate redeemable at one of gun shows. Congratulations Bruce!



George went on to provide a membership update, noting that we currently have 427 life members and 102 annual members, for a total of 529. He then made a pitch for volunteers to man our recruiting tables at upcoming Chantilly and Fredericksburg Gun Shows.

George also reminded everyone that we will have officer elections in May. Up for election are the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Member Bryan Pelton announced that he would be selling VGCA Tee Shirts tonight and at future membership meetings. These 100% cotton shirts cost \$20 and 50% have already been sold. For more details, see description on Page 6.

Acting Show Director Andrew Woodard announced that there are still 56 tables available for our spring Gun Show on April 6 and 7. If interested in reserving a sales or display table, see details on page 6.

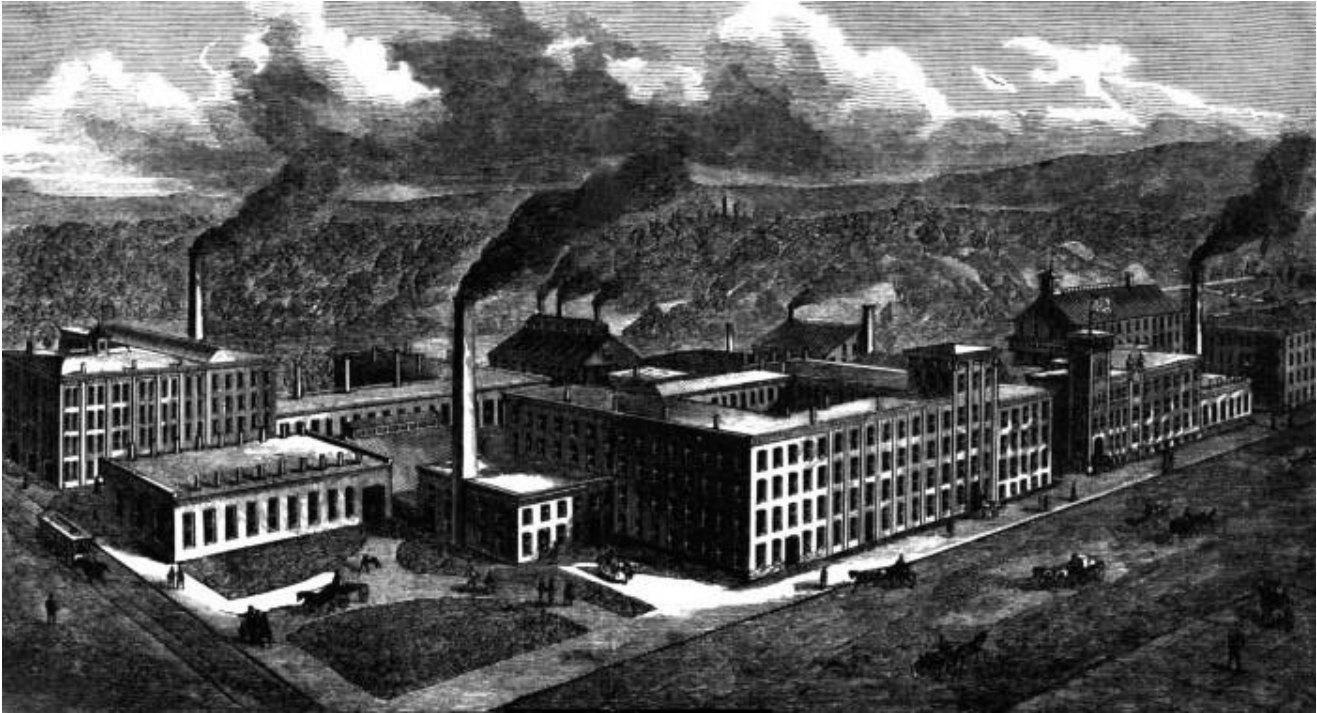
ATTENTION!



We still need a speaker/presenter for our June 2024 membership meeting. If you have any suggestions – or would like to make the presentation yourself – please contact any of the VGCA officers or directors.

REMINGTON ARMS LEAVES NEW YORK

By Marc Gorelick



Remington Factory in Ilion, NY in 1874

It is the end of an era, and the closing of a chapter in American history. For 200 years, Remington, America's oldest gunmaker, has produced rifles, pistols and shotguns at its factories in Ilion, a small blue-collar village in the heart of New York's Mohawk Valley.

The story that began when Eliphalet Remington forged his first rifle barrel nearby in 1816 and opened his first manufactory in Ilion next to the Erie Canal in 1828 is ending and a new chapter in the Remington story beginning. RemArms, the latest iteration of Remington ownership, will close its Ilion factory around March 4, citing the steep cost of running the historic Ilion plant. Remington is consolidating its production and operations in LaGrange, Georgia, a state the company says is friendlier to the firearms industry.

Remington has gone through several bankruptcies and changes in ownership in its long history. The company's recent history has been marked by a lawsuit after the Sandy Hook school shooting and bankruptcy filings that led to new ownership of the Ilion plant, where the workforce has dwindled from about 1,300 workers more than a decade ago to around 300.

The move will hurt Ilion since Remington has long defined and dominated this small town of 7,600 people. It will mean a dramatic revenue loss, lost jobs and have an economic ripple effect in this community where generations of families have worked for Remington. And the Remington Arms Museum is reportedly permanently closed and its collection and assets sold.

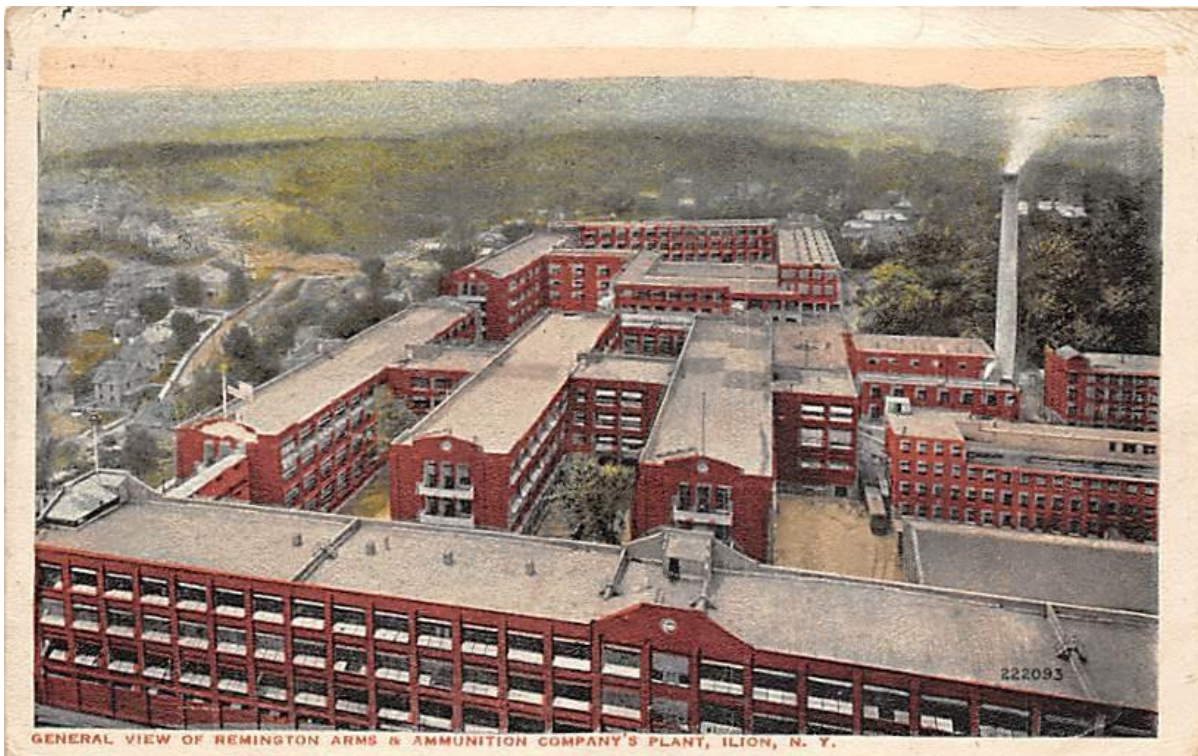
RemArms, the current owners of Remington Firearms since 2020, said in a Nov. 30, 2023 letter that "production inefficiencies" are to blame for the plant closure. They cited the high cost of maintaining and insuring about 1 million square feet of space in multiple buildings, many dating to before World War I. RemArms added that Georgia offered an environment that better "supports and welcomes the firearms

industry” and said in a news release that the industry was concerned about the “legislative environment” in New York.



Sign by Remington Factory, Ilion, NY. News 10

Remington is not the first major firearms maker to move to a more gun-friendly state. For instance, Smith & Wesson opened its new Tennessee headquarters in October 2023 after being based in Springfield, Massachusetts, since 1852. In announcing the move in 2021, S&W criticized proposed Massachusetts state legislation they said would prohibit them from manufacturing certain weapons.



Remington Factory, Ilion, NY, early 20th century

ANTI-2ND AMENDMENT STATE ATTORNEY GENERALS TRYING TO END LAKE CITY AMMUNITION PRODUCTION

By Marc Gorelick



In November 2023 liberal news media outlets, notably led by the New York Times and Bloomberg News, ran derogatory articles about Lake City Army Ammunition Plant being used in numerous mass shootings in the United States. The Times article, which has been called “highly questionable” and “misleading,” in effect, claimed that the shootings would not have happened if Lake City produced ammunition was not available on the civilian market.

Soon after the news articles appeared, California Attorney General Rob Bonta, as part of a coalition of 20 state attorneys general*, submitted a letter to the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention calling for a “federal investigation after recent reports that billions of rounds of military-grade ammunition manufactured at the federally-owned Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Missouri were sold on the civilian commercial market, and used in many of the most tragic mass shootings in recent history.” According to the California Attorney General, “Lake City rounds have been sold on the civilian market and have become the **ammunition of choice** for use in mass shootings.” (Authors emphasis.) New York Attorney General Letitia James, in a separate release dated January 10, 2024, claimed to be the leader of this coalition, and also claimed that Lake City ammunition is the “**ammunition of choice**” for use in mass shootings.

The anti-gun coalition called on the White House office “to investigate the contracting and manufacturing practices that led to military-grade rounds being sold to civilians, issue a public report with recommendations about how to keep military ammunition out of civilian hands, and take steps over the long term to ensure that future production contracts prohibit the sale of military weapons and ammunition to civilians.”

In response, a coalition of Attorneys General from 27 states,** led by Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri, sent a letter to the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention calling on the Administration to keep the Lake City commercial ammunition manufacturing plant open following the request by Democrat attorneys general to investigate the plant, which would halt production. The 27 Attorneys General said that, “Shutting down the plant would decrease ammunition supply and undermine national security.” They called out the 20 other Attorneys General “for their misleading attempts to tie the plant to mass shootings. The allegations do not justify placing unreasonable limitations on the plant and undermine the Second Amendment right as one cannot exercise their right to keep and bear arms without access to ammunition.”

The pro-2nd Amendment coalition said that the Lake City plant is crucial to the nationwide ammunition supply chain, “but the plant has a longstanding contract with the United States Department of Defense to allow for commercial use of the facility for the purpose of supporting military readiness.”

According to their letter, (<https://dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/Lake-City-Final-1.24.2024.pdf>),

“DOD sought to avoid a situation when the military needs surge due to a real-world conflict, ammunition is not readily available. Ammunition availability requires facilities, production equipment, a skilled workforce, and supply chains to remain in constant operation. Machines and production cannot be turned on like the flip of a switch. It takes time to hire and train the highly skilled workers needed to operate production lines to manufacture the highest quality ammunition for U.S. warfighters. Commercial production has allowed Lake City, and its suppliers, to maintain steady labor, maximize equipment run time, ensure a stable supply base, and provide a level of readiness to the U.S. military that would not otherwise be available.”

“We live in volatile times. Our country needs to be prepared to face foreign adversaries rather than focusing on destroying the Second Amendment and crippling the firearm and ammunition market. We need to be primed at any moment to increase production and provide our military with much-needed ammunition to provide protection domestically and to our international allies. Lake City remains a vital part of the past, present, and future of the U.S. Military and military readiness. Rather than pushing Lake City out of business, we should be thanking them for the role they play in arming our military.”



Lake City Army Ammunition Plant (LCAAP) is a 3,935-acre (15.92 km²) U.S. government-owned, contractor-operated facility in northeastern Independence, Missouri. Lake City was established by Remington Arms in 1941 to manufacture and test small caliber ammunition for the U.S. Army. LCAAP is the single largest producer of small arms ammunition for the United States Armed Forces and also supplies our allies. The manufacturing capabilities of the plant include: small arms cartridges; components such as percussion and electric primer;

pyrotechnics; and small caliber ammunition, including 5.56mm; 7.62mm; .50 caliber; and 20mm. Lake City performs small caliber ammunition stockpile reliability testing and has ammunition and weapon testing responsibilities as the NATO National and Regional Test Center. Starting with Remington, various civilian companies have managed and operated the LCAAP. In October 2019, Olin Winchester Ammunition was selected by the US Army to operate and manage the Lake City Plant under a seven-year contract that can be extended by the Army for an additional three years.

Since the late 2000s, the plant has been required to maintain the capability to manufacture 1.6 billion rifle rounds per year. As provided in its US Army contract, Lake City, in order to keep its production lines operational, has sold ammunition commercially. Commercial sales have numbered in the hundreds of millions of rounds per year since 2011.

NOTES:

* The 20 state Attorney Generals who called on the White House to investigate Lake City Army Ammunition Plant and stop civilian sales - Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and the District of Columbia

** The 27 state Attorneys General opposed to the investigation and plant closure - from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming and the North Carolina legislature joined the letter which was co-led by Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri.

★ Membership Chairman's Report

Membership Chairman's Report February 2024

New Applications for Membership: Since the last Newsletter, there have been three new applications for membership.

- **Todd Harrington** of Winchester sponsored by **Jim Burgess**
- **Jon Myrah** of Vienna sponsored by **Bruce Buchner**
- **Antonio Davila** of Bethesda sponsored by **Carlos Davila**

Please welcome the following new member to our group:

- **William Dehglar** of Lorton sponsored by **Matthew G.**

If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining our organization, please invite them to a meeting or to our upcoming VGCA Gun Show.

Notice to New Member Sponsors: VGCA will be discontinuing hard copy versions of the VGCA Newsletters in July. *Please make sure your prospective applicants **include a legible email address** and **telephone contact number** if at all possible and **make sure that your name is on the sponsorship form.*** Without an email address new members will NOT receive the newsletter or VGCA announcements.

Membership Numbers: There are currently 428 Life members and 103 Annual Members for a total of 529 members in the Virginia Gun Collectors Association, Inc.

Recruiting: Membership in the VGCA is a great way for people with an interest in the history, development, and use of firearms to broaden their knowledge and pass what they know on to others. It also offers the opportunity to network with individuals who have similar interests. To help facilitate new membership we have a Membership Table at every Chantilly and Fredericksburg gun show and also at our VGCA gun shows. If you would like to volunteer to work a shift at an upcoming show please contact George Dungan at george@eccominv.com or Bruce Buchner at buchnerb@cox.net.

The next Fredericksburg show is March 16th and 17th and the next Chantilly show is April 19th, 20th, and 21st. Having good people manning our membership tables at these shows is very important as we will also be promoting our VGCA gun show at them.

Membership Renewal: All annual dues were due by the end of December and you need to be current to get in our VGCA shows for free. You can renew annually for \$30 or \$150 for life. Please use the form below to renew and either mail it in or bring it to a meeting and give it to either George Dungan or Bruce Buchner. If you are unsure of your membership status email george@eccominv.com and I will let you know.

George Dungan, Vice President and Membership Chair

Annual Membership Renewals: Annual Membership renewals of \$30.00 are due by January 1, 2024. You may upgrade to Life Membership for \$150 (only \$120 over the cost of renewing your annual membership, plus no more annual dues requests). Failure to renew by the January Membership meeting may result in your being dropped as a *member in good standing*. **Members dropped for non-payment of dues will have to go through the new member process to re-join the Association.**

Dues may be paid by mail by sending a Check for \$30 (please, NO USPS or other Money Orders) and the completed membership renewal form above to the address on the form. VGCA will also accept payments in person (CHECK or EXACT CHANGE preferred – I have NO CASH for change) with a completed renewal form. If members have questions, please email **George Dungan, Interim Membership Chair** at george@eccominv.com or call me at **571-243-6387**.

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Please detach and return with your payment
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Membership Renewal Request (AMR-2023_Oct)

VGCA, Inc., P.O. Box 2318, Merrifield, VA 22116-2318

Please complete and return this renewal form with your payment. Indicate Annual, Life or that you do not wish to renew your membership by checking the appropriate box below.

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

- Enclosed is a check for \$30.00 for CY 2024 VGCA Annual Membership dues.
- I wish to upgrade to Life Membership in VGCA. Enclosed is a check for \$150.00.
- Remove my name from the VGCA membership roster.

Make all checks payable to VGCA (Please - NO CASH or Money Orders). If members have questions, please email **George Dungan, Interim Membership Chair** at george@eccominv.com or call me at **571-243-6387**.

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Armi Jager: Excellent .22 Caliber Replica Firearms

By Troy Blackwood

Edited by Marc Gorelick

When someone brings up the words .22LR replica rifle many firearms collectors begin to turn their nose up at them. This reaction is generally warranted as many of these rifles and pistols are made by less than reputable sources and are of questionable quality. A few that come to mind are the STG 44 22LR clones, the .22LR Mosin Nagant rifles, and the various .22LR clones of the M1911. Many of these are made by fly by night companies in regions with a bad reputation for making guns. These guns often follow a motto of good enough. These rifles often appeal to entry level collectors as a cheaper alternative to the real thing. For the author of this article this came in the form of a GSG-552 rifle that was an MP5 clone as he could not convince his dad to get a real MP5 as a child. In some cases, this may be the only way to have even a facsimile of a weapon from a country with tight gun control laws. So, one might reasonably ask why should the collector care about these rifles?

Oddly enough there is a small selection of these rifles that have become quite collectable. Due to European gun laws firearms enthusiasts often have trouble obtaining semiautomatic civilian legal versions of military arms. However, many of these countries often tend to not care about .22LR versions of these same arms. This is where Armi Jager stepped in, to fill a gap in quality .22LR replicas. The European market created a demand for these quality replica arms. This increased quality was partly due to many countries not only restricting the caliber of arms that could be owned but the number as well. So, this led many European collectors to be willing to pay higher prices for higher quality replica firearms.

Armi-Jager started as a joint venture in the 1950's with German Italian ownership. Armi Jager is an anomaly in the Italian firearms world. While most manufactures are situated in the Gardonne valley in Northern Italy. Armi Jager is found in the quiet coastal town of Loana, Italy. Loana is located on Mediterranean Sea in the northwestern part of the peninsula southeast of Turin. This quiet town of 11,000 people became home to one of the premier replica arms manufactures in Italy. Italy in itself is known for



quality replica firearms from the likes of Pieta, Pedersoli, and Uberti. All of these manufacturers, however, focus primarily on black powder firearms of the old west. Armi Jager also got their start with old west era guns. They started with single action army replicas in various calibers. This would be known as the Dakota line of revolvers. They also would make black powder copies of Enfield muskets and other guns as well. Their most successful guns, however, would be the Dakota line of single action army clones. These guns could be purchased in a variety of calibers, configurations, and styles and could be ordered with adjustable sights, various barrel lengths, and with different levels of engraving. They also offered

some of the more unique configurations such as the Buntline revolvers and stocked revolver carbine versions. The company quickly began to focus on .22LR firearms as these saw the most sales.

This allowed them to create guns with more readily available ammunition while still keeping them in the less regulated area of the European firearms market. This focus would mainly be in .22LR versions of the Colt single action army revolvers. I have also seen some references to .22LR lever action rifles by them as well but can validate nor deny these claims. While .22LR would become the primary caliber their arms were sold in they would also sell guns in .22 magnum and .32 ACP. By the mid 1970's Armi Jager began to branch out from the old west and began to move into the world of .22LR military replicas.



Image Courtesy of CT Firearms Auctions

This would start in 1974 with the introduction of the AP-74, a copy of early pattern colt M16A1 rifles. While today one might think it's an odd choice to start with a .22 caliber M16 clone. In the 1970's this was still a novel concept. This was long before the S&W MP15-22 or the drop in .22LR conversions for your AR15 pattern rifle. The AP-74 was made of stamped sheet metal and plastic for the handguard, pistol grip, and stock. It even featured the signature 20 inch barrel of a real M16A1. These guns were direct blowback as a locking mechanism is not needed for a .22LR gun. While the gun tried to be a faithful replica it does have some differences for ease of manufacture beyond being direct blowback. The most obvious being the magazine, a faux fixed magazine is used to give the rifle the look of a real m16 however, a single stack pistol like magazine is inserted into the faux M16 magazine.



Image Courtesy of TFBTV

Additional changes include the safety, which has a 180 degree throw rather than the 90-degree throw of a genuine M16. The bolt release is a simple stud and takedown pins are not captive. Early guns would have A1 features such as the triangle handguard, the three prong muzzle break, A1 pistol grip, and lack of a forward assist. Guns could be purchased in black but there was also a model with brown plastic with a rounded front handguard that gave it more of the AR-10 look. The AP-74 design would evolve with the M16 and

throw rather than the 90-degree throw of a genuine M16. The bolt release is a simple stud and takedown pins are not captive. Early guns would have A1 features such as the triangle handguard, the three prong muzzle break, A1 pistol grip, and lack of a forward assist. Guns could be purchased in black but there was also a model with brown plastic with a rounded front handguard that gave it more of the AR-10 look. The AP-74 design would evolve with the M16 and



Image Courtesy of TFBTV

features of the A2 would slowly be incorporated into the design. This would be by far the most successful of the Armi Jager replicas. These are readily available in the United States for under 500 dollars as of writing this. This model would also be chambered in .22 magnum and .32 ACP. The .32 ACP being the rarest version and often commands a premium of close to 3 times that of the .22LR version.

The AP74's success would create additional variants of the model. These were far less successful in the United States at least and quite a bit rarer. Often times listing will call these models the AP74 as well so that can lead them being harder to find as well. One of the early variants being the AP74FS, this model features all A1 style parts but has a wire folding stock and retains the 20-inch barrel of the AP74. Then we get to the AP74A1, despite the name the AP-74A1 it is actually a copy of the M16A2 and features almost all the changes of the M16A2 save for the forward assist and the A2 style pistol grip. There are likely more changes as well but those are two of the most notable. At this point the AP-74A1C was introduced. This is a carbine version of the AP74 styled after the CAR-15 rifle. It even goes as far as to feature the CAR-15 style of collapsing stock with the sling mount on top of the stock. While this gun features many carbine length elements it still retains a 20-inch barrel. In terms of rarity the AP-74A1 appear to be about as common as the AP74. The AP-74A1C though appears to be less common in the United States compared to the AP-74 and AP-74A1. Again, for all three of these rifles .22 mag and .32 ACP rifles are quite rare and bring a premium.



Image Courtesy of Army Discount Shop

Oddly enough Armi Jager's next choice for a replica rifle is the AR-18. The AP-75 rifle was introduced in 1975. The author has seen literature that lists the AP-75 as being called the AP-74 commando. This is secondhand literature and most likely a mistake as the AP-75 is based off the mold for the AP-74. The AP-75 is interesting in that it starts out with an AP-74 receiver and bolts on some different parts to make it look like an AR-18. The stock was wood and now attached below the buffer tube. The pistol grip was also wood as well. The rear sight was a flattened hybrid looking version of an AR-18 and AR-15 with the carry handle removed. This replica is less faithful as it still retains the AR-15 style of charging handle. The handguard is also wood and triangle like an AR-18/M16A1. There are finger grooves that run perpendicular 2/3rds of the length of the handguard. The front sight post is essentially a simplified version of the AP-74 front sight post. The muzzle was bare and the 20-inch barrel was retained. There was also a version of this rifle with the folding wire stock. A factory SBR version of this rifle was made with a shortened barrel and the wire folding stock, however the author does not believe that this version was sold in the U.S. as the only examples seen by



Image courtesy of Traxarms

the author are in Italy. Again, these rifles were offered in their normal run of .22LR, .22Magnum, and .32 ACP. At least in Italy the .32 ACP model seemed quite popular but they are rare in the United States. The AP-75 in general is harder to find than an AP-74 and is definitely a piece to give a second look if you see one.



Image Courtesy of Gus International

The next model was introduced in 1980, this being the AP-80. The AP-80 is a copy of the AK47/AKM rifles. These are faithful replicas of an AKM with one of the only major differences other than caliber being that they are direct blowback. The magazine is also not rock in which changes some internal functions as well. During the 1980's the Cold War was still raging and the Iron Curtain made it hard to get a real AKM. At this time the two major sources of AKM pattern rifles was the Finnish Valmet which are not really AKM rifles and Maadi rifles out of Egypt. So for the budget conscious shooter an AP-80 looks like a good alternative. Much like an AK the AP-80 is made of stamped sheet metal and has all wood furniture. This model featured a shortened 17.5-inch barrel. The magazines are more faithful to the original on the AP-80 as they are the so called "banana mag" like an AKM and not some pistol mag that inserts into a faux AK magazine well. There are two styles of magazine. One style is magazine built around a shell to make the magazine look more like a real AK magazine and the other is simply a real .22 magazine with a slight curve. While the AP-74 has largely been surpassed by modern .22LR AR-15's the AP-80 in the authors opinion remains one of the best AKM .22 replica's around. As of the time of writing this article an AP-80 is still relatively cheap on the secondhand market, generally being found for under 600 dollars.



Source Unknown

We now come to the rarest and most highly sought-after model of Armi Jager replicas, the AP-82, which is based on the British SA-80 bullpup family of rifles. These rifles were Armi Jager's entry into the bullpup market and are true bullpup .22LR rifles. Again, they are direct blowback and made of stamped sheet metal and plastic. Like the AP-80 these has an entirely unique receiver, unlike the AP-75's that shared a receiver with the AP-74. Little is known about these rifles but they did not sell very well. This was likely due to limited interest at the time in the SA-80 rifle. Of the two images the author can find both have scopes that are likely faux scopes that serve as a rear sight. The rear end of the rifle appeared to be pretty close to an original SA80 but the forend was quite different and at best a loose facsimile of the real thing. To the modern collector however, this is as close to a SA-80 as a British collector may ever get due to strict British laws on selling even firearms parts kits. Back in the 1980's however, these did not sell well in Europe or the United States. To the modern collector of Armi Jager products this rifle represents the crown jewel of a collection as fewer AP-82's was manufactured and sold than any other Armi Jager replica rifle. Again, these are believed to be in .22LR, .22 magnum, and .32 ACP. However, the author is unaware if any of the latter two chamberings were ever produced. A .22LR AP-82 today would likely bring close to 2,000 dollars in today's market.



Image courtesy of GunsAmerica

In 1984 Armi Jager introduced the AP-84, a copy of the Israeli Galil rifle. These were largely based off the AP-80 receiver as the real Galil was based on the AK47. Receiver, fire controls, safety, pistol grip, trigger guard, and mags are basically the same as those on the AP-80. The top cover is modified to fit the profile of a Galil losing the reinforcing ribs and adding a rear sight on the top cover. Unlike a real Galil, the top cover was bolted to the receiver making it theoretically hold zero better. The bolt was the same as on the AP-80 with a modified charging handle to resemble that of a Galil. The rest of the furniture is unique to this rifle in order to create an appearance close to the Galil's appearance. The AP-80 length barrel was used which also helps to allow for fewer unique parts and lower production costs. The muzzle brake was likely borrowed from the later AP-74's with the birdcage muzzle brake. The AP-84 generally runs in the 600-to-800-dollar range. These guns would be produced in .22LR and .32 ACP. It is likely that they made this in .22magnum as well, but the author has never seen one. Again, the price for an AP-84 in .32 ACP or .22 magnum would be higher than the price for the .22LR variant.



Image courtesy of Guns.com

Armi Jager released one final replica rifle in 1985. This was the AP-85, a replica of the French F1 FAMAS rifle. While attempting to be a faithful recreation of the FAMAS rifle the exterior design takes some major departures from the original in order to use some of the same parts that were used on earlier Armi Jager rifles and reduce production time and costs. These rifles pale in comparison to the Unique F11 .22LR replica rifle made for the French market. The AP-85s largely resemble the F1 FAMAS save for the signature FAMAS hook style charging handle. These rifles are true bullpups like the real FAMAS, with the trigger being in front of the bolt face. However, in a departure from the real FAMAS, the AP-85 uses largely metal and wood as opposed to the FAMAS' plastic clamshell. The AP-85 is largely based on the AP-80 using the same receiver, bolt, trunnion, and magazines. The top cover was modified from the AP-80 with a brass deflector for left hand use. Unlike the real FAMAS the AP-85 cannot have the ejection port switched for left hand ejection. The front handguard was taken directly from the AP-84. The gun, despite being a bullpup, used the same 17.5 inch AP-80 barrel. Unique parts for this rifle included the charging handle, trigger housing area, trigger assembly, and buttstock if you can call it that. The trigger was unique in that it was attached to an assembly mounted directly to the barrel. These rifles are quite rare in the US and still command a premium despite the aforementioned differences in look from the real gun. These are also quite a bit cheaper than a Unique F11 and considerably cheaper than a real semi auto F1 FAMAS. AP-85 rifles can currently be had for around 1,100 to 1,600 dollars. There was at least a few known examples of full auto conversions of these rifles with rate reduction mechanisms. These are very rare and like all



Image courtesy of Small Arms review

VGCA GUNS OF DISTINCTION: GASTINNE RENETTE SHOTGUN

By Marc Gorelick

Photos courtesy of Joh. Springer's Erben, Vienna, Austria

Gastinne Renette was one of France's most respected, and Europe's most famous, gunmakers. During the 19th century the firm was known for producing opulent firearms for the nobility and royalty of Europe. Although the firm reached the height of its fame in the mid 1800's it's roots go back to the end of the 1700's.



In 1793 Henri Renette established himself as a gunmaker in Paris, France, and by 1809 he was considered to be among the top tier of French gunmakers. By 1812 he moved his establishment to the upper class Champs-Élysées part of Paris and soon entered into a business arrangement with Louis Gastinne, a highly decorated former Imperial soldier. Louis's son, Louis-Julien apprenticed with Renette and in 1834 Louis-Julien Renette married Joséphine-Adele Renette, the daughter of Henri. In 1840 Louis-Julien Gastinne Renette (as he is now known) became head of the firm, now known as Gastinne Renette. In 1857 Gastinne Renette moved its store to the upscale 39 Allée d'Antin (currently Avenue Franklin Roosevelt) near the Champs-Élysées roundabout, where it remained until the firm's recent demise. The fame of Gastinne Renette grew when Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, President of the 2nd Republic, became a customer. After the proclamation of the Empire in 1852, the House of Gastinne Renette became the regular gunmaker and purveyor to the Imperial court of Emperor Napoleon III and soon after the Spanish court became customers. Gastinne Renette could now call himself "*Canonnier arquebusier*" of the Emperor and Prince Impérial of France and the King of Spain, a distinction that did not hurt sales.



Louise Julien died in 1885 and was succeeded by his son Jules. The House of Gastinne Renette remained in the family until 1973. During the 1800's it produced a large number of luxurious hunting, target and dueling weapons for royalty and elites. Gastinne Renette produced guns of his own design, including falling block rifles and pistols, a breechloading percussion model of the "pistolet a capsule" in 1847 for indoor target shooting that had an internal hammer and nipple, a tilting –barrel percussion shotgun with an improved method of locking the barrels to the frame. Although this percussion shotgun used a conventional percussion hammer, nipple and cap, it also used a cartridge with a cardboard case and metal head with a flame hole of 3/16 inch diameter in the center, somewhat like the back end of a Maynard cartridge. This was a forebearer of the modern shotshell. The Gastinne Renette shotgun cartridge's metal

head was covered by thin paper that prevented powder from leaking out through the flame hole. When the loaded gun is closed by means of a lever under the triggerguard a projection on the inside face of the standing breech tore the paper allowing the flame from the percussion cap to enter the cartridge and fire it. Gastinne Renette also became known as a custom “finisher” or decorator of revolvers such as the British Trantor. Gastinne Renette’s highly decorated guns won a number of awards and medals at several international expositions between the 1840s and the 1870s. The firm also ran a hunting school and a dueling school, which no doubt helped its sales of decorated dueling pistols. Indeed, the firm was probably the leading maker of dueling pistols in France at that time. Cased sets of Gastinne Renette percussion pistols are prized possessions of museums and bring high prices at auctions. For example, a documented cased set of sculpted, relief chiseled, gold accented, and relief carved Gastinne-Renette exhibition percussion pistols that won awards at the French Industrial Exposition of 1844 was sold at a December, 5, 2020 Rock Island Auction for \$345,000.



Gastinne Renette top quality model shotguns have long been considered to be on par with the finest Best Gun shotguns from London. The Gastinne Renette 16 gauge shotgun described here was manufactured around 1900 and combines the Gastinne Renette ornate decorative style with exceptional excellence of craftsmanship.



This shotgun’s 29.5 inch (75 cm) long barrels are made of browned twist Damascus steel and they are surmounted by a concave rib with the maker’s name inlaid in gold. The barrels have choked cylinders and extractors, and the breeches are engraved in opulent leaf and blossom designs. The Anson and Deeley boxlock action has color hardened sideplates that are elaborately chiseled and engraved with

foliate scroll and blossoms in the art nouveau style of the Fin de Siecle. The background is punch-textured and gold washed, and the whole decorative structure covers the action sides and bottom. This decorative style is carried through to the top of the action, including the barrel latch. The sliding tang safety has gold inlay and the double triggers are gold washed. The triggerguard and metal furniture are also elaborately engraved and parts are gold washed.



The dark colored and varnished walnut stock has a semi-pistol grip and a hand-checked horn buttplate. The stock is elaborated carved with bold ornamental floral scroll designs. The fore-end is also decorated with foliate scroll carving and has an Anson push-rod. The gun came with a leather case with the maker's label. It was sold at a recent Joh. Springer's Erben auction in Vienna, Austria for over \$12,000 (11,000 euros).



★ In Review ★

The "In Review" section of the newsletter includes VGCA member reviews of gun shows, books, and museums. If you would like to submit a review, please send it to the newsletter editor at rpebecker@verizon.net.

A TRIP TO THE MUSEUM: THE KALMAR COUNTY MUSEUM AND THE GUNS OF THE KRONAN

By Marc Gorelick

Photographs by the author (unless otherwise credited)



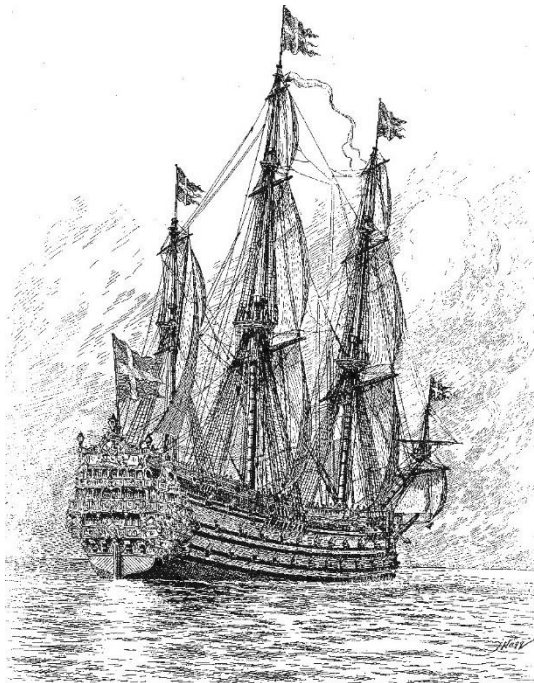
Oil Painting of the Battle of Oland on June 1, 1676 showing the Swedish warship Kronan capsized and exploding. Painting by Claus Moinichen, 1686, Frederiksborg Castle, Denmark

The Kalmar County Museum (Kalmar Lans Museum), in the city of Kalmar, Sweden is not a firearms museum. However, anyone visiting this delightful seaport city who is interested in history, naval warfare or ordnance and who passes up an opportunity to go to this gem of a museum is, to put it mildly, being foolish.

The museum is built around the remains of the Swedish ship-of-the-line *Kronan*, which capsized, blew up and sank during a battle on June 1, 1676 against a combined Danish and Dutch fleet off the nearby island of Oland. The battle occurred during the Scanian War (1675-1679) which was fought between Sweden and Denmark (and its ally, The Netherlands) for control of the Baltic. The pride of the Swedish Navy, the *Kronan* was the flagship and the largest ship in the Swedish fleet, and one of the largest and most powerful in the world. She was almost 174 feet (53 meters) from bow to stern, with a 42.7 foot (13 meter) beam and displaced 2,300 tons. The top of her mainmast towered almost 197 feet (60 meters) above the water, taller than the span of the modern bridge that connects Oland to the Swedish mainland.

She mounted 126 bronze cannon on three gun decks, as well as on her forecastle, quarterdeck and poop deck. She carried about 850 men, over 500 sailors and 300 soldiers.

To provide some background, the circumstances of the loss of the *Kronan* are eerily reminiscent of the loss of the Swedish warships *Mars* (also known as *Makalös* or *Matchless*) in 1564 during the Northern Seven Years War and *Vasa* in 1628 during Gustavus Adolphus's wars. At that time Sweden was a "Great Power," one of the premiere military powers in Europe and looked on the Baltic as a Swedish lake. During the Scanian War, the Swedish fleet had more ships than the Danish fleet, however the Swedish ships were older, with poorer material, and the crews largely untrained. The Danish fleet had newer ships with experienced crews, many having served in Dutch ships. The *Kronan* was the flagship of Baron Lorentz Creutz, who King Karl XI made admiral of the Swedish fleet. Unfortunately, although he may have been a good administrator, Creutz was not a sailor and had no sea-going experience. To make matters worse, before his appointment Creutz was one of the sharpest critics of the admiralty and was on especially bad terms with his senior lieutenants, Admirals Klas Uggla and Johan Bar. On May 26, 1676 the Swedish fleet under Creutz fought against the Danish fleet in the inconclusive Battle of Bornholm and Rugen. *Kronan* smashed its way through the Danish/Dutch fleet but many of the Swedish ships did not



obey Creutz's orders. Resistance to his authority by his senior commanders could be described as almost mutinous and confidence in his ability to lead was lacking. On the morning of June 1, the Swedish fleet was off the southern tip of the island of Oland when it sighted the Danish/Dutch fleet. The Danes seized the weather gage in a strong southwest wind and pursued the Swedish ships. The strong wind damaged some of the Swedish rigging, slowing some ships and causing the Swedish formation to lose cohesion and become ragged. By midday the wind had veered but was now gusty and blowing harder than ever. Without orders Admiral Bar altered course and led his squadron towards the enemy. Admiral Uggla fired a signal cannon and ordered his squadron to alter course to support Bar. According to a survivor's testimony, Creutz swore an oath, saying "*Where the Devil does Uggla think he's going?*" Probably thinking that he had no choice but to support his subordinates, Creutz ordered the *Kronan* to alter course towards the Danes. .

Stora Kronan by Jacob Hagg, 1909

The order immediately caused confusion as the more experienced naval officers argued against a radical course change in rough seas and high winds without first reefing and trimming the sails and closing the lower gun ports. According to after action testimony by survivors, the professional sea officers strongly warned that the ship would be overset in the strong wind and that the cannon should be run in and the gun ports closed but Creutz and other senior officers, many landsmen, met this with indifference. One gunnery officer, Anders Gyllenspak, ran below and ordered the officer on the lower gun deck to run in the cannon and close the gun ports on the port side. But it was too late. The sails were not reefed and the ship had already started turning to tack. Suddenly, a hard gust threw the *Kronan* onto her port side so that her yards and sails were in the water and putting her gun ports under water. Water poured in through the open ports and like the *Vasa* 48 years earlier, the *Kronan* had capsized. With only her starboard side visible above water, the *Kronan* exploded, like the *Mars*, 112 years before. Most likely a lamp below decks was overset, igniting gunpowder in the ship's magazine and blowing off much of her bow and her

starboard side. Eight hundred men from the *Kronan's* crew, including Admiral Creutz, were killed. There were only about 40 survivors. Sweden lost the battle, including several other large ships of the line.



All of the *Kronan's* 126 cannon were of bronze. She was the only ship in the Swedish fleet to be entirely armed with bronze cannon. Bronze cannon were more expensive than iron ones and the *Kronan's* guns were worth a considerable amount – more than half of the ship's total value. The precious bronze alloy used in guns could vary slightly but was usually a mixture of about 90% copper and 10% tin. Despite its greater expense, bronze cannon offered several advantages over iron guns. Cast-iron cannon of that time were significantly heavier and bulkier than bronze guns firing the same weight of ball, a critical consideration when arming a ship. Bronze cannon were not prone to internal corrosion like iron cannon were, nor external corrosion in a salt water environment. When they failed, bronze cannon would often tear and rupture while iron guns would usually explode into fragments like a bomb, an important consideration in the tight spaces of the crowded lower decks of warships. However, a major mitigating benefit of iron cannon was that they could cost one third the price of a comparable bronze cannon.

Kronan sank in 85 feet (26 meters) of water and within 10 years of her sinking the Swedes had recovered 60 guns. After that she fell into obscurity and her location was lost. In August 1980 Anders Franzen, who had discovered the *Vasa* in the 1950's, discovered the remains of the *Kronan*. The seabed where she sank is a thin layer of sand over a thick layer of glacial and moraine clay that protects organic material that sinks into it. An intense program of underwater archeology then ensued and more than 25,000 artifacts were recovered. These can be seen in the Kalmar County Museum.

Since 1980 more than 40 more cannon have been recovered and many are on display in the museum. About 40% are trophy guns, won from an enemy in battle and adopted into Swedish service. The rest

were cast in Sweden. The oldest recovered gun was cast in 1514, the newest in 1661. They range from three pounders to 36 pounders. The guns were designated by the weight of the ball they fired. The lightest cannon weighed about 300 kg, the heaviest almost five tons. The fact that the *Kronan's* guns were bronze and not iron helped preserve them in relatively good condition, despite being in salt water for hundreds of years. Thus, many of the details of the cannons' decoration can be seen, and the crests and inscriptions read.



A 36 pounder bronze cannon from the Kronan's lower gun deck. Note the excellent signage on the wall. The sign on the left explains how bronze cannon were cast.

As expected, when so many of the cannons on display are trophy guns, a fair proportion of those are from Sweden's enemies in the Baltic, such as Denmark. However, among the trophy cannon are those from further afield – from the Hapsburg Holy Roman Empire. One 30 pounder's crest showed that it was cast in Vienna, Austria in 1627 and was probably captured by Gustavus Adolphus's army during the Thirty Years War.



Most of the 40 odd bronze cannon that were salvaged from the *Kronan*'s wreck are dramatically displayed on the ground floor of the museum, both singly and in rows. They are obviously too heavy for the upper floors. The guns are in excellent condition, and provide a fascinating window into naval armament of the 17th century. The cannon are out in the open, not behind glass and you can get close and walk around them. The lighting and the signage are excellent. The signage is in English, Swedish and German, and while aimed at non-experts, it is extremely informative and can be quite detailed without being pedantic. In fact the cannon signage has enough details about each of the guns to satisfy most enthusiasts or experts.



Left – 30 pounder cannon. The crest indicates that it was Danish, cast in 1587. The “FS” stands for Fredricus Secundus (Fredrik II) King of Denmark who fought against Sweden in the Northern Seven Years War.

Right – 30 pounder cannon. The crest indicates that it was cast in Vienna, Austria by Jacob Schultz in 1627 for Ferdinand II, the Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor and was probably captured during the Thirty Years War.

The rest of the *Kronan*'s display is on the 3rd floor. It consists of numerous artifacts salvaged from the ship as well as videos describing the ship being built, showing it in action, capsizing and blowing up. There is also a section about the ship's discovery and the underwater archeology that recovered so much material. The display also includes fascinating dioramas about life aboard and what it was like on board during battle. The exhibit draws you in and actually brings the *Kronan*, its final battle, and the underwater archeology that salvaged the artifacts to life. Many of the artifacts that were recovered are dramatically displayed with outstanding lighting and signage. These items include many day to day items, as well as luxury items. And there were quite a few luxury items, and treasure, including chests full of gold and silver coins. The *Kronan* was the flagship of the fleet, with numerous high ranking officers aboard. Some of the items are identified to specific officers, which adds to the human touch. The displays are so good that they make you want to linger over them (especially the piles of shiny gold and silver coins) as well as making you want to see much more than there is time for.

Part of the exhibit shows some of the remnants of small arms that were recovered. Remember that *Kronan* carried 300 soldiers of the northern Swedish Vasterbotten Regiment. While the clay in the seabed preserved the wooden stocks to a remarkable degree, the same cannot be said for the iron barrels or actions of the guns. Another fascinating part of the exhibit is the numerous wooden carvings that decorated the interior and exterior of the ship and that were preserved in the clay seabed. Large, important 16th, 17th and 18th century warships were highly decorated with numerous sculptures in order to reinforce the ship's importance, and the authority and majesty of the monarch. And the *Kronan* was no exception. In addition to being a deadly warship, with its gilded sculptures it looked like a floating palace.



Left – Display of remnants of small arms.

Right Stock of a musket with a soldier's initials and the year 1676 carved in the butt stock.



*Left – Wooden sculpture probably representing King Karl X Gustav of Sweden in Roman armor that decorated the *Kronan*. Examination of the sculptures indicated that many were covered in gold paint.*



*Right – Drawing of the stern of the *Kronan* by Francis Sheldon, 1660. Sheldon was the English naval architect and ship builder who designed and built the *Kronan*. The drawing shows the numerous ornate wooden sculptures and carvings that embellished the ship. Even the gun ports were decorated. Source National Archives of Sweden.*

Lest you think that the museum is entirely devoted to the *Kronan* and its cannon, there are a number of worthwhile other exhibits. For instance, there is a fascinating exhibit about the archeological excavation at Sandby Borg on the east coast of Oland. Sandby Borg was a ring fort constructed during the Migration Period (350-600 CE). When it was destroyed in what was likely a surprise attack and most of the inhabitants massacred, the victors left the victims where they had fallen with many of their personal possessions, including jewelry. Many of these are on display and it would be well worthwhile to see the display before visiting Sandby Borg itself. The museum also features the art of Jenny Nyström, a famous Swedish illustrator and painter from Kalmar, and a small exhibit devoted to the wood carvings of local artist Helge Carlson.



36 pounder bronze cannon from the Kronan.

The Kalmar County Museum is located at Skeppsbrogatan 51 in the old section of Kalmar. It is next to the harbor, is a pleasant walk from the bus and train station, and there is a large parking lot in front of it. The museum has an excellent restaurant with a large selection of Swedish dishes. There is also a gift shop that is well stocked with souvenirs, gifts and books. Unfortunately, many of the books are in Swedish. The staff is friendly and helpful. For those who read Swedish and are interested in Swedish history and the history of Kalmar, the museum's archives and library are a great resource.



The museum is open seven days a week but the hours vary each day and they may be subject to change depending on the time of the year.

Currently, they are:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 10am to 4pm.

Wednesday – 10am to 8pm.

Saturday and Sunday – 11am to 4pm.

The entrance fee for adults is 130 SEK (Swedish kronar). For students and retirees it is 95 SEK. And there is free admission for children and young people up to 19 years of age. Guided tours can be booked. One thing to know is that, like much of Sweden, the museum is cash-free, so you pay by card or Swish.

The telephone number is 0480-45 13 00, and the e-mail address is info@kalmarlansmuseum.se. For more information visit the museum's website at <https://kalmarlansmuseum.se/en/>.



★ VGCA Website Update ★

Your VGCA website has been recently updated with four new informative articles that have been added on the “ARTICLES” page. The new articles are:

- **THUNDER AND LIGHTNING:**
The Colt M1877 Double Action Revolvers, The Lightning, Thunderer and Rainmaker
By Marc Gorelick & Tim Prince
- **SWEDISH MILITARY PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS**
m/1863 to m/88
By Marc Gorelick
- **THE SWEDISH m/1877 REVOLVER**
By Marc Gorelick
- **THE CHINESE SHANXI TYPE 17:**
A Local Warlord's .45 Caliber Version of the Mauser C96
By Marc Gorelick

These, and many more fascinating articles can be found on your VGCA website at: www.vgca.net. The website also has a number of resources for VGCA members, including the latest information about VGCA meetings and gun shows (such as flyers, and table applications). There are also membership applications that you can print out in case you want to sponsor someone for membership in the premier gun collecting organization in Virginia. So go to the website (www.vgca.net) and check it out!



★ Show-n-Tell ★

NOTE: For anyone bringing in items for Show-n-Tell - please hold the item up so the members in attendance can see it. This will also help your photographer get a sharp picture and allow people who could not attend the meeting to see it clearly in the newsletter. We also ask that you provide a Fact Sheet (copies of the one below will be provided at the meeting) to assist the newsletter editor in accurately describing your item. Thank you!

VGCA Show-n-Tell Fact Sheet

Manufacturer: _____

Model: _____ Action Type: _____

Caliber: _____

Years of Production: _____ Total Produced: _____

Year this example was manufactured (if known): _____

Significance: _____

Question(s) for members: _____

Name (optional): _____

Where acquired (optional): _____ When acquired (optional): _____

A message from your VGCA Photographer--

I ask those who bring items in for Show-and-Tell to PLEASE hold the item UP and in view of the audience so that they can be seen clearly, and so that I might be able to get a decent picture for the newsletter. PLEASE stand behind the tables and simply hold the item at chest or waist level, face forward, stand still, and give me a five or six seconds to grab a decent photograph of the Show-and-Tell item.

If you do not want your Show-and-Tell item to be shared with other VGCA members, just tell me in advance and I will not attempt to take a photo of it.

I do the photography for the VGCA and its' members, not for myself, and not for any personal gain. Your assistance in documenting your items will be a great help. I spend an average of five hours editing the pictures for the newsletter and not having a clear view of the subject has been a great and constant frustration for me.

Your help will assist in making a better newsletter for all VGCA members. Thank you!

Jack Looney

JANUARY SHOW-N-TELL

Member 1 brought in a first year production C96 (*right*). This particular pistol has provenance linking it to a British officer who was responsible for setting up a communications center on the English coast, where it listened to German radio communications during WWI.



Member 2 was able to share a nice Mauser M712 “Schnellfeuer” (*left*) from the NRA’s National Firearms Museum collection. This select fire variant of the Broomhandle, with its wooden shoulder stock holster and 20-round detachable magazine, has been unofficially designated the Model 1932 by collectors, based on the year that it was introduced by Mauser. A small number were procured by the German Wehrmacht during World War II, where it was designated the Model 712.

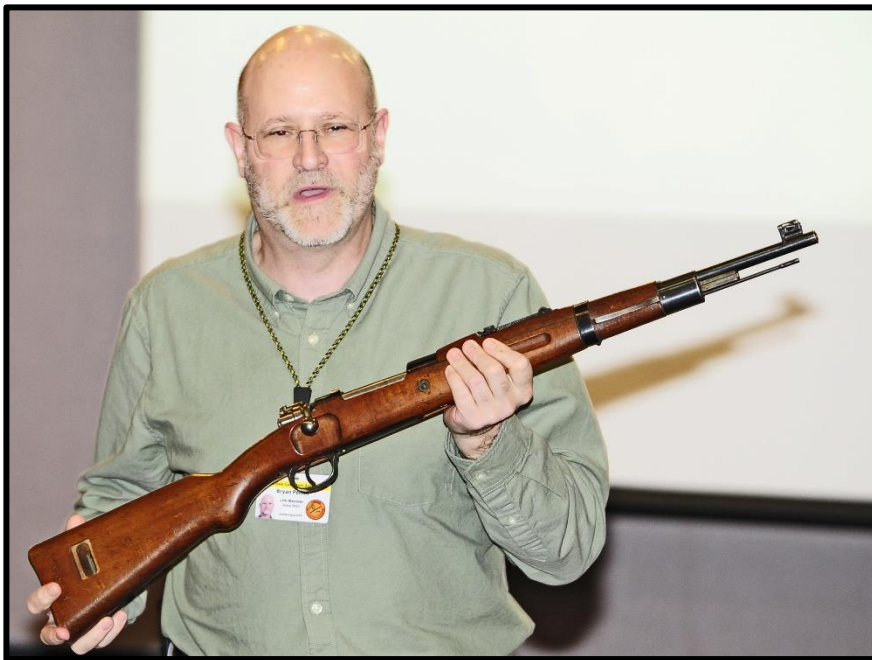
Member 3 (*right*) brought in three excellent representative C96s. The first was a pre-World War I commercial pistol chambered in 7.63mm with the Mauser banner stamp made in 1913. The second was a classic WWI “Red 9” made in 1915. The last was an early post-war “Bolo” model with the slightly smaller grips and shorter 99mm (3.9 inch) barrel. After WWI, Germany was limited by the Treaty of Versailles to pistols with a barrel length shorter than 100mm. This example was made in 1919.



Member 4 (*left*) shared two interesting C96 variants. The first was an early Mauser (1899-1900) flat side Broomhandle with a short 6-round magazine. One interesting feature of this early model is that the safety works in reverse of later models.

The second was a transferrable select fire Mauser “Schnellfeuer.” With a rate of fire of 900-1000 rounds per minute, the 10 and 20 rounds magazines don’t last very long! Fortunately, the bolt stays locked back when the

detachable magazines are dropped, which speeds the reload process. Also noteworthy is that detachable shoulder stock for the “Schnellfeuer” is slightly different from the standard model as it requires a separate cut-out for the selector switch.



Member 5 brought in a recently acquired Persian cavalry carbine (*above*). Known as the Model 1328 (number based on the Persian calendar which equates to 1949) with a 17.5 inch barrel and chambered in 7.9x57 (8mm Mauser), this is simplified version of the earlier Model 1930 carbine. Unlike the earlier carbine which was produced by Brno in Czechoslovakia for Persia, the Model 1328 was produced at a Persian factory that had been set up by the Czechs. Produced for only two years, this example was made in 1950. It features the “Lion and Sun” crest on the top of the receiver (*above right*).

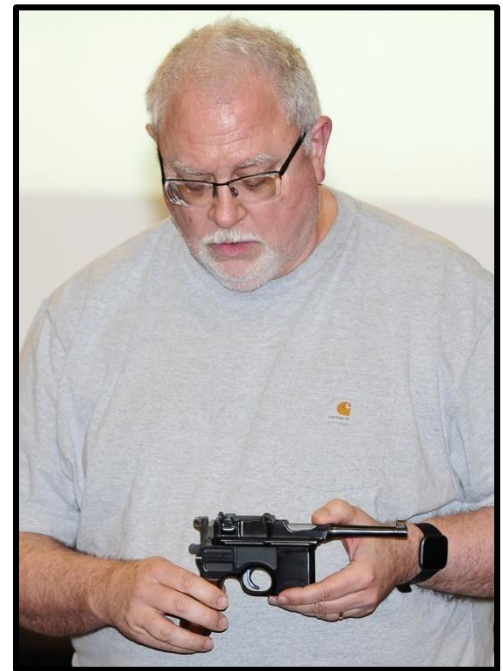


Member 6 shared a Model 1899 Italian contract Broomhandle (*at left*). The Italian Navy purchased 5,000 M1899s chambered in 7.63 Mauser with the early large ring hammer and a slightly modified design. As a cost-saving measure, the Italians asked that lightening cuts in the frame be eliminated. However, Mauser only made special orders in lots of 10,000 or more. The Italians agreed to subsidize the entire 10,000 production run, but only until Mauser could sell the additional 5,000 pistols above their Navy’s needs on the civilian market. This particular example has all matching numbers.

Member 7 brought in four C96s (*below*) – a full size pre-WWI commercial variant chambered in 7.63mm, a post-war “Bolo” also chambered in 7.63mm, a WWI German military contract in 9mm, and a mystery pistol in 9mm that was an early war production, reworked in 1920 to comply with the Treaty of Versailles restrictions but lacks both police markings or a “Germany” export stamp. One interesting accessory originating from China is the knife that can be converted into a shoulder stock (*below, top left*). For a more detailed description of these pistols, see the Show-n-Tell section of the January 2024 Newsletter.



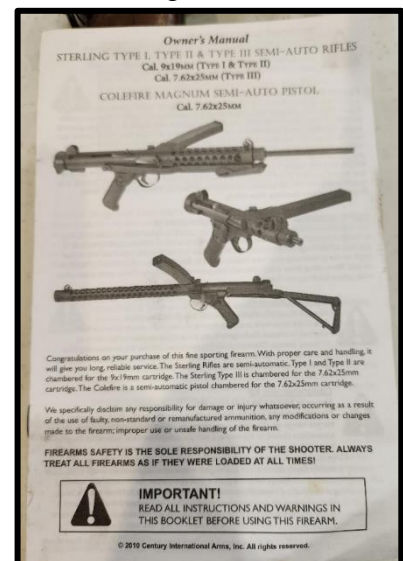
Member 8 shared his shooter grade “Bolo”. This pistol was made in the mid-to-late 1920s and was originally chambered in 7.63mm Mauser - as evidenced by the rear sight graduated to 1,000 meters. At some point it was buffed, polished, and refinished, had a barrel liner put in to change the caliber to 9mm Parabellum, and was given reproduction “Red 9” grips. Despite its matching numbers, this C96 has limited collector value and is now a good looking shooter in a much more common caliber than the original 7.63mm. Member 8 suspects this example was among the lower grade imports that came in from China and was refurbished once it arrived in the U.S.



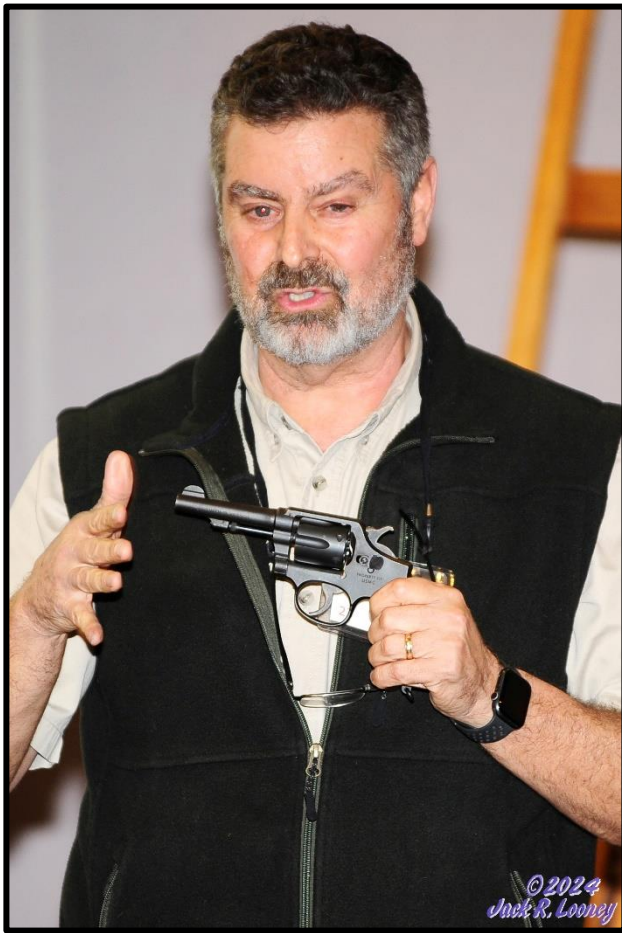
Member 9 brought in what he described as his favorite gun. It is late WWI production and Member 9 first saw this C96 when he was 16 years old. Ten years later he bought it from its owner – a teacher who had fought in the Battle of the Bulge during WWII. Our apologies to Member 9, but we did not get a picture of his Show-n-Tell piece.



Member 10 brought in two more of his continuing series of classic subguns made into semi-automatic rifles. This month it was Type I and Type II Sterlings (*left*) made by Century International Arms (*original owner's manual shown below*). Designed in 1944, the



Sterling was intended to be a more reliable submachine gun than the STEN, but as WWII was winding down and the British Army had literally millions of STENs on hand, there was no rush to adopt the Sterling. Ultimately adopted in 1953, one of the keys to the Sterling's enhanced reliability was its improved magazine (replacing a key weak point in the STEN system) featuring twin rollers instead of standard follower.



Member 10 also brought in a very nice condition Smith & Wesson “Victory” Model (*left*). This K-frame double action six-shot revolver chambered in .38 Special was a substitute standard sidearm for U.S. forces during WWII when there were insufficient Model 1911A1 pistols to go around. Over 590,000 Victory Models chambered .38 S&W were supplied to our allies in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa under the Lend-Lease program. A further 352,315 chambered in .38 Special – like this one – were supplied to U.S. forces. This example is dated to 1942 and has United States Marine Corps (possible spurious) markings.

What do you do when you don't have a C96 to bring for Show-n-Tell? Well, Member 11 downloaded a program from the internet and used a 3-D printer to create an authentic looking copy – even down to a different colored plastic for the grips! Well done sir!



Member 12 (*right*) recounted watching a movie in 1965 called “The Second Best Secret Agent in the Whole Wide World” – an imitation of the James Bond superspy movies. A Broomhandle Mauser features in the movie and Member 12 knew he had to get one. Fast forward to 1988 and Member 12 manages to buy one of the Chinese imports. Devoid of rifling, he had it rebarreled in 9mm for \$65.

He would go on to buy a “Bolo” in similar condition a couple of years later. He got it for \$40, though it was missing magazine parts. For another \$40 he got those parts and now has a functioning C96 for less than \$100, though the barrel in this one still lacks rifling.



Member 13 brought in two Beretta pistols. The first was a new Beretta 80X Cheetah (*at left, on the right*). Introduced in 2023, the 80X is made in Italy as a “baby Model 92 in .380 ACP.” It is a limited edition with the slide cut for optics, a custom trigger, and a 13-round magazine.

The second Beretta is also chambered in .380 ACP. It is the Model 85 BB (*at left, on the left*) and has an 8-round magazine. Produced from 1974-2010, several have been imported recently as police and government turn-ins/surplus.



Member 14 brought in three “pocket revolvers” from the mid-to-late 19th to early 20th century, all recent purchases at very reasonable prices (though all needed to extensively cleaned). The first (*top*) is a Smith & Wesson .32 Safety Hammerless 2nd Model. This 5-shot double action top break revolver has a grip safety and is chambered in .32 S&W. Approximately 78,500 were manufactured between 1902 and 1909.

The second is the Forehand and Wadsworth “Bull dog” (*middle*). This solid frame single action revolver is chambered in .38 Rimfire and is marked “BULL DOG” on the topstrap – though it is definitely NOT an English Bull Dog revolver. It has patent dates of OCT. 22 '62 and APR. 20 '75. Details are sketchy on this model – if anyone can fill in some of blanks, please contact one of the officers or directors.

Last is the “GOVERNOR” (*bottom*). This little revolver chambered in .22 Short was made by Thomas Bacon sometime between 1858 and 1864. In October 1862, Smith & Wesson sued several firearms manufacturers for patent infringement on their bored-through cylinder patent (Patent # 12649 granted on April 13, 1855 and acquired by S&W on November 17, 1856), among them the Bacon Arms Company. Bacon settled with S&W in late 1863 and was required to mark their revolvers “Manufactured for Smith & Wesson” starting shortly thereafter. As this gun lacks that marking, it was made before that change.

★ Upcoming Events and Shows ★

PLEASE NOTE: VGCA members are strongly encouraged to verify shows before driving to an event. These dates were confirmed when this newsletter was written, but are not guaranteed.

VIRGINIA – 2024

- Mar 9-10, 2024 – Salem, VA – Salem Civic Center – *C&E Gun Shows*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Fredericksburg, VA – Fredericksburg Expo and Convention Center – *SGK*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Richmond, VA – Richmond Raceway Complex – *Showmasters*
- Mar 23-24, 2024 – Hampton, VA – Hampton Roads Convention Center – *SGK*
- Apr 6-7, 2024 – Fishersville, VA – Augusta Expo – *Showmasters*
- Apr 6-7, 2024 – Dale City, VA - VFW Post 1503 – *VGCA (our show!)*
- Apr 19-21, 2024 – Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*
- May 4-5, 2024 – Fredericksburg, VA – Fredericksburg Expo and Convention Center – *SGK*
- May 4-5, 2024 – Harrisonburg, PA – Rockingham County Fairgrounds – *Showmasters*
- May 18-19, 2024 – Richmond, VA – Richmond Raceway Complex – *Showmasters*

MARYLAND – 2024

- Feb 24-25, 2024 – Easton, MD – Easton Vol Fire Department – *Granite Lodge #177*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Crownsville, MD – Anne Arundel Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Timonium, MD – Maryland State Fairgrounds – *Maryland Arms Collectors Association – the Baltimore Antique Arms Show*
- Apr 6-7, 2024 – Frederick, MD – Frederick Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Apr 13-14, 2024 – Timonium, MD – Timonium Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Apr 20-21, 2024 – West Friendship, MD – Howard County Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*

PENNSYLVANIA – 2024

- Feb 24-25, 2024 – Allentown, PA - ParkView Inn & Conference Center - *Eagle Shows*
- Feb 24-25, 2024 – Ellwood City, PA – Wurtemberg-Perry Fire Hall – *W&P Twp Fire*
- Feb 24-25, 2024 – Kutztown, PA – Kutztown Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Feb 24-25, 2024 – Reeders, PA – Jackson Township Vol Fire Company – *Jaeger Arms*
- Mar 2, 2024 – Wampum, PA – Chewton VFD Hall - *Ellwood Wampum Rod and Gun Club*
- Mar 2-3, 2024 – Wind Gap, PA – Plainfield Township Fire Company – *M2 Promotions*
- Mar 2-3, 2024 – York, PA – York Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Mar 9-10, 2024 – East Berlin, PA – East Berlin Fish & Game – *Same*
- Mar 9-10, 2024 – Lander, PA – Lander Vol Fire Dept – *Same*
- Mar 9-10, 2024 – Morgantown, PA – Morgantown Expo Center – *Eagle Shows*
- Mar 9-10, 2024 – New Providence, PA - Southern Lancaster County Farmers Sportsmen's Association - *SLCFSA*
- Mar 16-7, 2024 – Franklin, PA – Rocky Grove Fire Hall – *Rocky Grove VFD*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Lake Harmony, PA – Split Rock Resort – *Eagle Shows*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Lewis Run, PA – Lewis Run VFD Station 6 – *Same*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – New Castle, PA – Scott Township Vol Fire Dept – *Same*
- Mar 16-17, 2024 – Wind Gap, PA – Plainfield Township Fire Company – *Jaeger Arms*
- Mar 17, 2024 – Portland, PA – William Pensyl Social Hall - *Portland Hook & Ladder Co. #1*
- Mar 23- 24, 2024 – Allentown, PA - ParkView Inn & Conference Center - *Eagle Shows*
- Mar 23-24, 2024 – Gettysburg, PA – Redding Auction - *Central PA Antique Arms Association*

PENNSYLVANIA – 2024 (continued)

- Mar 23-24, 2024 – Harrisburg, PA – Farm Show Complex – *C&E Gun Shows*
- Mar 23-24, 2024 – West Middlesex, PA – Hidden Valley Sportsmen’s Club - *Same*
- Mar 29-30, 2024 – East Greenville, PA – East Greenville Fire Hall - *Pennsylvania Antique Gun Collectors*
- Mar 30, 2024 – Harborcreek, PA – Gem City Gun Club - *Same*
- Mar 30, 2024 – Wampum, PA – Possum Hollow Sportsman’s Club - *Same*
- Apr 5-7, 2024 – Oaks, PA – Greater Philadelphia Expo Center – *Eagle Shows*
- Apr 6-7, 2024 – Monroeville, PA – Monroeville Convention Center – *Showmasters*
- Apr 13-14, 2024 – Matamoras, PA – Best Western Inn at Hunt’s Landing – *Westchester Collectors Inc.*
- Apr 13-14, 2024 – Quarryville, PA – Solanco Fairgrounds – *Eagle Shows*
- Apr 13-14, 2024 – Union City, PA – UCVFD Social Hall – *Randy Peterson*
- Apr 13-14, 2024 – Washington, PA – Washington PA County Fairgrounds – *ARH Sport Shop*
- Apr 13-14, 2024 – Wind Gap, PA – Plainfield Township Fire Company – *M2 Promotions*
- Apr 20-21, 2024 – Bloomsburg, PA – Bloomsburg Fairgrounds – *Eagle Shows*
- Apr 20-21, 2024 – Cresco, PA – Barrett Township Municipal Bldg – *Tall Timber Tactical*
- Apr 27-28, 2024 - Kempton, PA – Kempton Community Center – *Jaeger Arms*
- Apr 27-28, 2024 – Lykes, PA – Liberty Hose Co. #2 - *Same*
- May 11-12, 2024 – Allentown, PA – Allentown Fairgrounds – *Forks of the Delaware Historical Arms Society*
- May 18-19, 2024 – Carlisle, PA – Carlisle Expo Center – *M2 Promotions*
- May 19, 2024 – Portland, PA – William Pensyl Social Hall - *Portland Hook & Ladder Co. #1*

SPECIAL EVENTS / SHOWS – 2024

- Feb 22-24, 2024 – Louisville, KY – Kentucky Expo Center – *Ohio Valley Military Society*
- Mar 9-10, 2024 - Wilmington, OH – Roberts Convention Centre – *Ohio Gun Collectors Association*
- May 4-5, 2024 - Wilmington, OH – Roberts Convention Centre – *Ohio Gun Collectors Association – Annual Display Show*
- May 16-19, 2024 – Dallas, TX – NRA Annual Meetings & Exhibits

FOR SALE:

The "For Sale" section of the Virginia Gun Collectors Association (VGCA) Newsletter is provided as a service exclusively to the members of the VGCA and is intended for listing firearms and firearm related items. The VGCA, its officers, and directors are not responsible for any listings made in any VGCA Newsletter. We are not responsible for the accuracy (condition, value, etc.) of any listings. All buyers, traders, and sellers agree to comply with all local, state, federal, and international laws in regards to items sold via the VGCA Newsletter. It is their duty and responsibility to ensure the quality and value of the transaction and that all such laws are followed at all times. Buy, sell, or trade at your own risk.

If you would like to list an item (or items) in the VGCA Newsletter, please send your description, price, and contact information to rpebecker@verizon.net. I must receive your material no later than the second Sunday of the month for it to be included in that month’s newsletter. Items will be listed for one issue of the Newsletter.

FOR SALE:

✪ **FINNISH MOSIN-NAGANT** is authored by VGCA member Matt DiRisio and published by Wet Dog Publications. The list price is \$99.95. It is 584 pages long with over 1,500 color and black and white photographs.



For ordering information go to the Wet Dog Publications website at:

<https://www.fnbrowning.com/book-finnish-mosin-nagant>.

FOR SALE:

✪ After more than two and a half years of research, VGCA member Bill Vanderpool has published his book **Guns of the FBI**. This book is available at GunDigest.com or can be purchased directly from Bill by calling 703-626-2975. He is more than happy to sign a copy for you. Cost is \$50.00.

FOR SALE:

✪ VGCA member Charlie Pate has four books that he has authored for sale, at discounted prices to VGCA members. These include:

- "U.S. Handguns of World War II" - \$45.00
- "The Smith & Wesson American Model" - \$55.00
- "U.S. Military Arms Inspector Marks" - \$45.00
- "The Colt Model 1860 Army Revolver" - \$60.00

If interested, please contact Charlie at usarmsresearch@gmail.com

FOR SALE:

✪ VGCA member Larry Babcock has published a companion piece to his earlier book **M1 Garand Photo Essay**. This second book, titled **M1 Garand Photo Essay Volume II** covers all new material, to include the M1C and M1D sniper rifles as well as a myriad of M1 accessories. Best of all, both books are offered at a discount to VGCA members. Volume I is normally priced at \$69 and volume II lists for \$49, VGCA members can buy them directly from Larry for \$60 and \$40 each respectively - or \$90 total if you buy both. Look for Larry Babcock set up near the VGCA recruiting table at the next Chantilly Gun Show or order from him directly at larrybab@comcast.net / or text to 703-856-2561.

WANT TO BUY:

✪ Browning lever action Gold Medallion, short action, blue or silver.

Also: Browning lever action with pistol grip and take down. Prefer .308 but any considered.

Call King at 703 576-7016, if no answer leave name and number with brief description.

Thank you, King von Schilling

The e-mail address for any Newsletter-related matters is Newsletter@vgca.net - or you can reach 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 Rob Becker or George Dungan.