



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

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(A Non-Profit Organization)

NRA Affiliate Number G 8162

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Newsletter July/August 2006

Program from the June 22, 2006 Meeting: Club Vice President Jim Burgess introduced member Hal Johnson's presentation on converting a Swiss Model 1881 Vetterli Stutzer originally chambered for the 10.4mm x 38 Swiss Ordnance rimfire round to a centerfire system. The Stutzer, or short rifle, was a specially made Vetterli rifle equipped with set triggers and issued to selected Swiss military marksmen. It was also very popular with hunters and target shooters due to its accuracy. What set the rifle apart from most Vetterlis (in addition to the Stutzer version being relatively uncommon in the US) was that Hal, a master machinist, had modified the rifle to centerfire

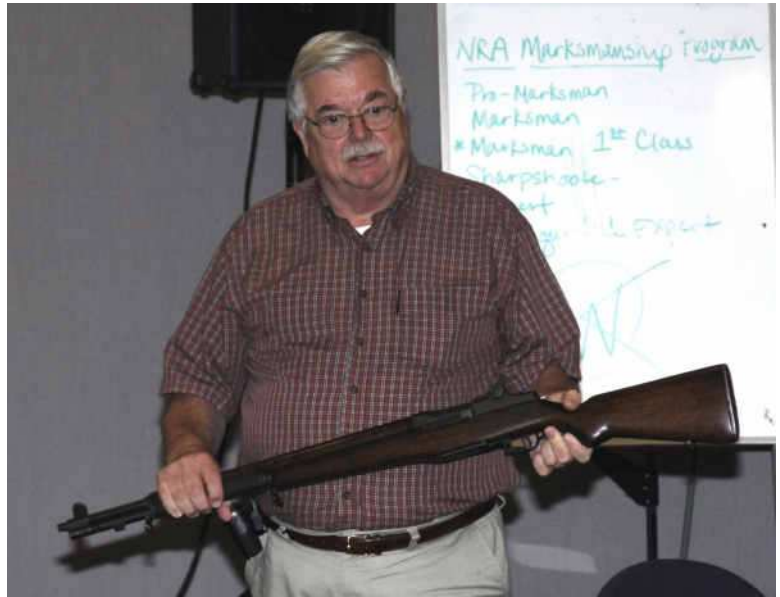


configuration using a spare original Swiss bolt and striker assembly which he carefully machined on a lathe to accept a centerfire firing pin which replaced the original forked dual striker rimfire firing pin. He then proceeded to develop hand loads and provided the audience with an overview of the various obstacles and

quirks he encountered in his journey to bring this elegant old rifle back to the potential for which these rifles are known in Europe. Hal reported brass was an issue, however, he successfully modified .348 Winchester cases and fireformed the brass, only to discover the resizing dies were too small. However, persistence paid off and he reported this rifle, one of the last Vetterli Stutzers made at the Waffenfabrik Bern in the late 1880s, with his conversion and his custom loads produced 2" groups at 100 yards.



Hal also showed some seldom seen Swiss Vetterli accessories including an extremely rare muzzle cover, and an original leather cartridge box in outstanding condition. He also brought a Vetterli sawback bayonet which had been modified by filling the attaching slot with wood and having the release button flush with the pommel. These long bayonets, in addition to their normal use by engineers and riflemen, when modified as described, also served as a badge of rank for non-commissioned officers and as a parade sidearm for musicians.



**June 2006
SHOW & TELL Session**

UL: Lindsay Schaff shows an early M1911 with Treasury Department provenance.

UR: Don MacCormack with his British Lend-Lease M1 Garand with early features and an unusual size Ordnance wheel cartouche.

L: Larry Hare displayed a nice Ross Sporter with prominent tiger striping in the wood of the stock.

R: Roger Sherman and one of his 2 P-38 pistols.

LR: A member displays a nice complete M1935 Hungarian rifle with matching bayonet.

Thanks to Sonny, Con, Ernie, John, and others not pictured for sharing their expertise and pieces.



UPCOMING for August 24 meeting – NRA/VGCA presentation: Former Federal Prosecutor Robert Goldman and FBI Special Agent Robert Wittman will address the NRA/VGCA meeting August 24th at the NRA Headquarter Building in Fairfax, VA. Mr. Goldman and S/A Wittman head up the FBI's Art Crime Team and are responsible for successfully returning over \$150 million dollars of stolen art and firearms. *Most recently, and of interest to collectors, are ongoing efforts to clean up aspects of the gun collecting community where unknowing and neophyte individuals have been preyed upon by unscrupulous dealers.* Most notably this team has successfully prosecuted George Juno, Russ Prichard, Richard Ellis and Michael Zomber. They recently brokered the safe return of Theodore Roosevelt's San Juan Hill Colt revolver to the National Park Service after a theft some 16 years ago. You may contact the National Firearms Museum at 703-267-1600 for directions and details. ➔ *The meeting begins at 7:00PM, and food will available shortly after 6:00PM.*

ADVANCE NOTICE for the September 28 meeting: We are fortunate to have a guest speaker scheduled for the September 28 meeting who will cover Japanese rifles and arms. Mr. Shannon Zeigler, a local resident and member of the Forks of the Delaware Historical Arms Society in Bethlehem, PA has agreed to give the presentation. He recently earned a second place at their May 2006 show with a fine display of some of the nicest Japanese military arms I have ever seen. Mark your calendars.

From the Podium - Announcements from the Club President, Addison Hurst:

- All guns brought in for show and tell at the monthly meetings MUST be TIED. If they are not tied or do not have a tie inserted in the chamber before they are presented, leave them in the case or at home. The only exception will be flint locks or percussion arms that have no cap on the nipple. (Even with a muzzleloader, it is a good idea to check the bore with a ramrod to ensure there is not a load present. Especially if it is a new acquisition) Ties will be present for all to use. Members can tie at home or tie when you arrive before show and tell. There can be NO exceptions.
- Show fliers for our October 14-15 VGCA Show at the PWC Fairgrounds will be at the meetings preceding the show. Please take a packet and distribute to all other shows in the area and outside of the area.
- As usual, we will need lots of help in setting up and taking down the tables and chairs for the PWC Show. Members are also encouraged to volunteer and assist in security. Sign up lists will be available both the August 24 and the September 28 meetings to sign up. Please try to sign up early.
- The club camera will be available at the monthly meetings, so all members needing the VGCA photo ID badge can get them at the NRA meetings. Yearly and life stickers will be finally be available.
- On the bad news front, Ken Fleming is not doing well. He has undergone more surgery and required amputation now below knee, as well as having other serious health problems. Prayers would be in order for Ken. Dave Quante is going to visit him soon and will provide more information later.

June 22 Business Meeting: The meeting was opened by Vice President Jim Burgess. Jim reported that the VGCA Skeet and Trap Team participated in the Crush'n Clays for Kids on June 10 at an event for the benefit of St. Jude Research Hospital. The event was held at the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter of the Izaak Walton League in Centerville, Virginia. The Team was Jim Burgess, Ron Kivett, Ken Killian, and David Sturr (a non-VGCA member substituting for Gary Holderman who obligated himself to a competing team). Jim said it is safe to say the team made a good showing for a very worthy cause.

Membership Report: Larry Hare presented the new member applications. Gregory Butcher of Criss Junction, Virginia was sponsored for membership by Ron Kivett and Ron Gibben. His membership was approved by a membership vote. John Babey, present as a guest, was also sponsored and voted into the club.

Rick Nahas provided an update on preparation and table sales for our October 2006 Fall VGCA Gun Collectors Show at the PWC Fairgrounds in Manassas, Virginia. He informed members that he still had 20 vacant tables, largely from the absence of the book vender, who will be off on a hunting trip, as well as some other table cancellations. Remember, that same weekend is also the large Chantilly Militaria show. If you have ever been considering getting a table, or doing an educational display on your favorite subject or family of arms, now is a great opportunity to request a table. More information updates will be given at the meeting.

June 22 Show and Tell – Plus a Message and Request from the Editor: *I would like to apologize in advance to two members who gave a show and tell presentation and whose names I did not get before they slipped out after the meeting. Unfortunately, I do not always match names with faces as well as I should. So, for future Show and Tell*

sessions, would members who have presented please see me after your presentation or after the session so I can get the correct spelling of your name, or alternatively, state your names before presenting. Also, if you do not want your name or item to be mentioned or appear in the newsletter, let me know and I will keep it out. (That does not apply to a certain person who never wants his photo posted. He knows who he is...) Speaking of photos, this month brought a repeat of last month on the photo front as Jack Looney took a really exceptional series of images. After the difficulty of selecting the photos for last month, and having to not include some great shots, this month was even harder. I would have like to have included them all, but I am unwilling to shrink them and lose detail.

The show and tell had good participation and resulted in the members in attendance being treated yet again to a very nice showing of firearms and military history. It is one of my favorite activities at the meetings. It does keep getting better and better, and we continue to be treated to some very unusual and unique items, as well as some interesting stories which provide special provenance and reflections on our hobby, as well as individual members experiences. Thanks.

The Session kicked off with Lindsay Schaff showing a military M1911 from the year 1912. This pistol was his grandfathers and has a Treasury Department background. A member, whose name I did not get, showed a very nice M1935 8mm x 56 Hungarian rifle with bayonet. Dan MacCormack told about his Bristich proofed Lend-Lease M1 Garand with "GHS" marked stock, an unusual 'medium' Ordnance wheel cartouche, and all early features, including a flush-nut rear sight. Roger Sherman showed 2 Walther P-38s, one a 1940 Walther-made (ac code) with a commercial high quality finish, and a 1945 vintage arm with rougher wartime finish, ribbed grips, and a Czech-made Brno barrel. Sonny Laine showed a WWI USMC-style M1903 with Winchester A5 scope on tapered Unertl bases. The rifle, although not an actual USMC issue rifle, did have a rare original scope can. A second unidentified member showed an unusual and scarce Lee-Enfield Constabulary Carbine with New Zealand Mounted Infantry markings. Ed Costello and John Miller show the results of their experimenting with a 42mm Hotchkiss cannon using a Minie style bullet weighing about one pound. This was powered by 4.5 ounces of powder. It gives new meaning to knockdown power. Ernie Lyle introduced his Johnson Rifle Company 1947 vintage BB-gun as "a gun Larry Hare does not have." It is powered by surgical rubber tubing and moves a BB at 100 FPS. This unusual piece was allegedly introduced by the manufacturer at a party where the male guests shot balloons being worn by cocktail waitresses... (you have film of that??) Larry Hare showed his recently acquired Ross M-10 Sporter in .280 Ross with a striking tiger-striped wood on the stock. He also displayed a Ross M1910 Canadian single-shot .22LR trainer. John Babey brought 4 Smith & Wesson .32 rimfire caliber revolvers. One may have been one of 700 civil war issued revolvers that were sent to the 7th Kentucky Regiment and possibly used at the Battle of Richmond, KY. Con Rice closed with an very unique book display of Marine Handbooks from the 1940's up through the 1960s. The books covered USMC issued weapons from the M1903, the M1911, the BAR, and up through the M14 in later editions. It was quite an unusual collection.

Upcoming Events and Shows

VIRGINIA

- ☞ August 12-13, Richmond, VA - *Showmasters* at the Richmond Raceway and Fairgrounds
- ☞ August 12-13, Bealeton, VA - *Old Dominion Gun Shows* at the Fauquire Activity Service (FAS) Building.
- ☞ August 19-20, Richmond, VA - *North South Trader's National Civil War & Antique Arms Show* at the Showplace.
Contact: Show Hotline (540)672-4845 or show@nstcivilwar.com.
- ☞ August 19-20, Roanoke, VA - *Showmasters* at Roanoke Civic Center
- ☞ August 26-27, Richmond, VA - *Showmasters* at Richmond Raceway & Fairground
- ☞ September 16-17, Hampton, VA - *Southeastern Gun & Knives, Ltd* at Hampton Convention Center
- ☞ October 14-15, Manassas, VA - *Virginia Gun Collectors Association* at Prince William County Fairgrounds.
Contact: Rick Nahas, (571)215-8761.
- ☞ October 13-15, Chantilly, VA - *C&E Gun Show & Showmasters*, Dulles Expo Center Militaria Show

MARYLAND

- ☞ September 16-17, Howard County, MD - *Silverado Promotions* at the Howard County Fairgrounds

NOTE: As is customary, there will be no newsletter or meeting in October, the month of the Fall VGCA Gun Collectors Show at the Prince William County Fairgrounds. V/R Bill Chronister, Newsletter Editor