



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

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NRA Affiliate Number G8162



President and Founder (Emeritus) Ed Johnson

Acting President
Show/Reservations Manager
Membership

Jim Burgess
Rick Nahas
Larry Hare

Cell: 571-215-8761
Cell: 540-946-2050

jet53sw@aol.com
LaurenceHare@gmail.com

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★ **VGCA Presentation for June 25, 2015:** The presentation for the evening was delivered by **Robin “Rob” Becker** who covered *The SKS Family of Rifles*. Rob started with an overview of the AVS-36, an early select fire Soviet automatic rifle designed by Sergei Simonov, the designer of the SKS or (7.62 Self-loading Carbine System Simonov model year 1945), now commonly referred to as the SKS-45 (for its year of adoption in the USSR), or just SKS. In 1935, after a competition between Simonov's design and a rifle made by Fedor Tokarev the AVS-36 was

accepted into service. However, once in service in early WWII, it was found that the AVS was unsatisfactory for field usage due to its complex mechanisms and sensitivity to dirt, as well as ammunition quality. Among the arms designed by Simonov in this time period, his semi-automatic anti-tank rifle, the PTRS-41, is in a sense the "grandfather of the SKS." This originated since the action of the self-loading anti-tank rifle, a large, heavy, rifle chambered in 14.5 x 114 mm, was scaled down to form the basis of the SKS. We were very fortunate to have a club member bring in his NFA registered example that stretched across a whole table, dwarfing the assorted SKS rifles and give a short description of the rifle. Another feature of the SKS was its use of an intermediate cartridge which recognized that most encounters took place between 100 meters to 300 meters. This led the USSR to the development of a shorter, less powerful round, the 7.62 x 39 mm M1943, which being a rimless design solved some of the problems with Soviet semi-automatic rifles that used the full power 7.62x54R, a rimmed cartridge.



Rob went on to cover the wide distribution of the SKS rifle. It was manufactured by 8 countries in the Communist Bloc, and used for over 40 years by 20 countries. The rifles were manufactured in the USSR, China, Yugoslavia, North Korea, North Vietnam, Romania, East Germany and Albania. Of these the USSR, China and Yugoslavia produced the majority of the rifles. In fact, Russia produced over 2.5 million rifles between 1949 and the late 1950s; a considerable number since the AK-47 was adopted only 2 years after the SKS was adopted. The PRC produced many, many rifles in both military and civilian configurations and even had versions with stamped receivers and prototypes with full auto capability. For the collector, the rarest variants are the North Korean and North Vietnamese models. Fortunately there were examples of both on display and the North Vietnamese example had official Vietnam era “capture paperwork.” According to some experts, less than 50 North Korean SKS rifles are documented as being in the US. All of these factors make the SKS a collectable classic, although in the past 5 years prices on Russian and some PRC models have soared due to dwindling supplies of popular models from specific countries and their general popularity as shooters with cheap

ammo and lots of accessories. The presentation was greatly enhanced with a wide variety of SKS rifles from both our speaker and members of the audience. A Q&A session followed, and members took closed looks at the PTRS and the multinational display of exhibits.

❖ **Business Meeting for June 25, 2015:** President Jim Burgess opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. He also welcomed Richard Fierman back from his recent illness. Welcome back Richard! Jim then moved on to introduce the speaker for the night's presentation. (See Above). The business meeting that followed the Presentation was short and sweet. Show Manager **Rick Nahas** had reported that we still had 30 tables vacant for the November show. VGCA Treasurer **Shannon Zeigler** provided a report on the Association's books. VGCA Membership Coordinator **Larry Hare** reported that there were no new membership applications for consideration.

(**PLEASE NOTE:** As recent VGCA shows have been known to sell out, now would be a good time for members wishing to have a sales table or team up with another member for a sales table to reserve a table for the November show. This is also a great opportunity for members to try their hand at doing an educational display table to display their collection and provide insights on the guns and their role in the country's sporting heritage or history. Contact **Rick Nahas** ASAP to get your spot for either type of table.)

Acting President's Comments

I hope everyone has had an enjoyable summer, found some time to relax, do a little shooting and perhaps collect a few things worthy for show and tell. The VGCA Executive Committee has been busy lately and I hope to report at the next meeting our progress on revamping the Bylaws which were last amended in 2000. We will also need to discuss preparations for the November show which is creeping up on us. As always we will need plenty of volunteers for set-up, security and the safety table. We will be passing around sign-up sheets for volunteers at this and the next two meetings.

Rick reports that eight individual tables are still available for the November show. Keep in mind that display tables are still free for members. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, this is a good opportunity to showcase your collection, educate the public, support the club and possibly win a monetary award. Why more members don't do this is beyond me. Please consider filling out a table application form and doing a display. You may want to partner with somebody to share the workload. There is still plenty of time to put something together for November. I hope to have some flyers with the table application form available at the meeting.

I'm looking forward to this month's presentation by Bill Troy on Thompson SMGs. These iconic .45 caliber "spray and pray" devices that it is said "made the 20s roar" are in a class all by themselves and we are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable person within our ranks to give us a complete history of their development and explain the variations. If you haven't already done so, mark your calendars for Thursday, August 27.

-Jim Burgess

Other News!

❖ **Fall Show Call for Volunteers:** If you're interested in working Security at the next show in November WE ALWAYS NEED VOLUNTEERS especially if we want to grow our show and provide more for you all. Please contact Kent Jefferies at KAJefferies@aol.com and remember that working on the Security or Setup teams gets you one free admission to the gun show for the weekend. If you're interested in volunteering in other ways please contact Rick Nahas whose contact information is provided above.

❖ **Current Speaker List for 2015:** What follows is our current sign up for speakers for the 2015 calendar year.

- **August 27:** Bill Troy: President Thompson Collectors Association
- **September 24:** Marc Gorelick: John Dahlgren and the Plymouth Rifle
- **October 22:** Steve Westbrook: American Hammer Shotguns of 1880s-90s
- **December 3:** Holiday Dinner/Show & Tell/Swap Meet

✪ **Continued Call of Articles for the Website:** We are making a call for articles for the website. They must be about guns or gun collecting not shooting sports or hunting. No political articles will be used. Articles may be about modern or antique firearms and may be historical and/or technical in nature. Detailed guidelines will be available on the website. Please fact check and proofread your own work. All articles may be submitted to Marc or Richard at web@vgca.net. Official Guidelines for articles may be found on the education page of the VGCA site.

Show and Tell



✪ Show & Tell for the June 25,

2015 Meeting: The show and tell for the evening largely followed with the theme of the Presentation. The session was started with **Member 1** displaying his very nice Russian arsenal refurbished SKS that was mounted in a Russian laminated stock. He then told how during the Vietnam war captured SKS rifles were often used for trading for supplies. **Member 2** showed a 19th century double headed shot (the correct period term), commonly known as a bar shot.



These pieces were used in naval warfare to take out the masts and rigging of sailing warship. **Member 3**, followed with his Soviet WW2 era, Russian SVT semi-automatic battle rifle in 7.62x54R. These rifles were effective but proved to probe to breakages, and were also fielded in sniper variants. **Member 4**, displayed his PRC Chinese-manufactured SKS rifle that was a GI bring-back from the Vietnam War era. **Member 5** presented his Yugoslavian Model 56/66 SKS Rifle. He also showed a Czechoslovakian VZ-52 rifle which filled a similar role as the SKS, but



used the Czech-specific 7.62x45 round. These rifles were later updated after Russian pressure to adopt the M-43 7.62X39 round into the VZ-52/57. The later rifle command a premium in the

collector/shooter market as the original 7.62X45 ammunition is very scarce. **Member 6** also displayed an SKS, but this time a unique variant produced by Albania. They are easily recognized by the handguard



covering the full length of the gas tube, a dual storage trap in the buttstock, and a high polish blued finish. It is estimated less than 10,000



of these rifles were ever imported. His second rifle was the Egyptian Rasheed rifle that filled the same role as the SKS but was a direct gas impingement action developed for the Swedish Ljungmann AG-42B rifle. Stepping back from the Soviet Bloc, **Member 7** showed his newly acquired British Enfield No.5MkI Jungle Carbine in .303 British and asked for member opinions. It was

agreed that it was the real item and a very nice piece at that. **Member 8** closed the session with his excellent condition Czechoslovakian VZ-52/57. These late production rifles are often in great shape since with the introduction of the VZ-58 which used a 30 round curved magazine, many were never issued or had a short run as a first line issued rifle. Another member, **9**, showed an interesting modification of a Vietnam era PRC SKS that was clearly more sophisticated than many of the field modifications done by NVA repair depots or Viet Cong insurgents. What the history of that rifle is could prove very interesting.

Upcoming Events and Shows

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

VIRGINIA 2015

- August 29-30, 2015 – Winchester, VA – Sportsplex & Indoor Events Center – *SGK Show*
- September 12-13, 2015 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Convention Center – *SGK Show*
- September 19-20, 2015 – Manassas, VA – Prince William County Fairgrounds – *SGK Show*
- October 2-4, 2015 – Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*
- October 10-11, 2015 – Winchester, VA – Sportsplex & Indoor Events Center – *SGK Show*
- October 10-11, 2015 – Harrisonburg, VA – Rockingham County Fairgrounds – *SGK Show*

MARYLAND 2015

- September 12-13, 2015 – Frederick, MD – Elks Lodge #684 – *Potomac Arms Collectors Association*
- September 19-20, 2015 – Annapolis, MD – Annapolis National Guard Armory – *Appalachian Gun Shows*
- October 3-4, 2015 – Timonium, MD – Timonium Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Gun Shows*

PENNSYLVANIA 2015

- August 22-23, 2015 - Carlisle, PA – Carlisle Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- September 5-6, 2015 - Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Complex – *Showmasters*
- September 12-13, 2015 - Allentown, PA – Rodeway Inn Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- October 10-11, 2015 - Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Complex – *Showmasters*
- October 17-18, 2015 – Allentown, PA – Allentown Fairgrounds – *Forks of the Delaware*

The e-mail address for any Newsletter related matters or a submission is Newsletter@vgca.net. Feel free to email items for inclusion in the newsletter. For changes of address or non-receipt of the newsletter, either via email or the mailed hard-copy, please contact Larry Hare. v/r Richard Pripeton, VGCA Newsletter Editor