

The Potomac Arms Collector's Association



P. O. Box 1812
Wheaton, MD 20915

Established
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NRA Affiliate Collectors' Club # G8031
Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Assoc. Affiliate
NRA Club - Meritorious Achievement Award, 1989
NRA Gun Collectors' Org. Achievement Award, 1992
NRA Outstanding Newsletter Awards, 1994 & 1998

January, 2005

News Notes

The January 20th meeting will feature a presentation on Queen Anne era (early 1700s) British flintlock pistols by PACA member Charles Rathell of Bethesda Maryland. Members of the Virginia Gun and Maryland Arms Collectors Associations are welcome to attend the meeting as guests and/or prospective members of PACA. All PACA members are encouraged to bring guests and items for show and tell. Volunteers and/or suggestions for future speakers and topics are welcome. Please contact Jim Vaughan at 301-384-7177 or email him at Jimxhoosier@aol.com with your suggestions.

P.A.C.A. Roster: Please make the following corrections to your rosters:

- Alvin Beck's correct telephone number is (610) 603-9262 and his email address is kanda381@earthlink.net.
- Bill Bonsteel's email address is wpbonst@goeaston.net.
- Ron Wolford's telephone number is (301) 582-1409
- Frank Krasner's telephone number is (301) 874-5012

I regret to inform you that Doug Lampe's father, who resided in Arizona, recently passed away. Doug, our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

Membership Reminders:

- **Wicked Weather** – Once again, if the *Montgomery County Snow Emergency Plan* is in effect, the PACA meeting will be cancelled and not re-scheduled for that month. The next meeting will be held on our normally scheduled date the next month.
- **If you haven't yet paid your dues (now \$30.00)**, please bring to the meeting or send to Treasurer Dale Maschino, 7710 Falstaff Court, McLean, VA 22102 at your earliest convenience.
- **Contact John Vagnetti** by the end of this month if you want to order any "Sackups".

Show Calendar

January 15-16 – Richmond VA: C&E Gun & Knife Show - 3000 **Mechanicsville Turnpike**

January 15-16 – Allentown PA: Appalation Promotions - Expo Center at Lehigh Valley

January 22-23 – Salem VA: C&E Gun & Knife Show – Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard

January 22-23 – Bealton VA: Old Dominion Gun Shows - Hugo's Show Hall

January 29-30 – Charlottesville VA: Old Dominion Gun Shows – E. Rivanna Vol. Fire Company
3501 Steamer Dr. Keswick, VA

February 4 – 6 - Dale City VA: Old Dominion Gun Shows VFW Post 1503, 14631 Minnieville Rd.

Collectors' Corner

The Needle-gun and Cartridge, *Chamber's Journal*, 18 August 1866- from the www.inventors.about.com website.

Recently seen on eBay: Reproduction M1942 Bayonets & scabbards



The Needle-Gun and Cartridge

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL, 18 AUGUST 1866

INVENTORS more frequently wear their lives, out in endeavouring to get their inventions adopted, than succeed in realising a fortune by the production of their brain. This has not, however, been the case with Herr von Dreyse, who has not only lived to see his invention adopted, but what is even more rare, has, we are told, acquired a handsome fortune by it, and been ennobled into the bargain, on the ground of the eminent service he has rendered to the state in providing it with a weapon and ammunition possessed of such destructive powers as the needle-gun. How a man feels, or ought to feel, who has invented an instrument which enables a greater number of his fellow-creatures to be maimed and killed, than could be accomplished by any other means, is a matter which none are more competent to discuss than German metaphysicians; we doubt whether our own slumbers would be altogether tranquil if we had served the state in a similar manner; but, on the other hand, we might find compensation, if not, consolation, in the title and the fortune.

The needle-gun, by means of which the Prussians have achieved victories with a rapidity that has astonished Europe, is no new invention, or one which has only just been made known; it was offered to France, and, no doubt, to other continental states; and we can quite well remember that its merits were discussed in this country many years ago; but the general opinion among those who professed to know more than others of such matters was, that its demerits were greater than its merits. We think, however, that a description of the gun and cartridge, and the manner in which the Prussian soldier is trained to use it, will shew that the objections that were made to it were more theoretical than real, and that as a good, useful weapon, it will hold its ground against any of its brother breech-loaders which have of late been shewing their qualities at Wimbledon. We do not, however, intend to advocate the use of this particular breech-loader, or to institute a comparison between it and others; we merely propose to give a description of the arm, the fame of which is ringing throughout the world, and causing a degree of excitement which almost amounts to a panic in those countries which are unprovided with it.

The appearance of the needle-gun is not so very different in externals from an ordinary muzzle-loader as to attract sudden attention. The hammer is absent, but in place of it there is a stout knob or handle, which would make it a very formidable weapon in the hands of the Brandenburgers, if used in the manner which is said to be a favourite one with them when at close quarters - as a kind of battle-axe or club. When the gun is loaded, this knob is held in a notch deep enough to keep it firmly in its place, and prevent the cylinder to which it is attached from being blown out by the explosion. When it becomes necessary to reload the gun, the thumb draws back a slide to which the spring is attached the complete performance of which is announced by a little click, and the right hand then grasps the knob or handle, and brings it to an upright position, which allows of its being drawn back towards the stock. When this is done, a cavity is revealed, in which the cartridge is placed; it is then pushed forward towards the barrel, and the breech is closed. In the cylinder is contained the coil or spring to which the needle is fastened. This spring is drawn back in the manner we have mentioned, and only the point of the needle can be perceived projecting ever so little through the hole drilled in the tube of the cylinder, which keeps it in its position, and guides it straight to the point desired.

The cartridge used in this weapon is an invention in itself, and shews the inventor's intimate acquaintance with a fact which we understand to have been little known at the time, and which is not generally acknowledged even now, but respecting which there can be no doubt whatever in the minds of those who know any-thing of such matters. Even so small a quantity of powder as is contained in a cartridge, when the grains are pressed closely together as they are in that position, does not explode simultaneously and by igniting the gunpowder at the part nearest the bullet, the whole force of the gas generated is directed on the bullet, and the escape of gas from the breech, which some assert takes place, is diminished, if not altogether prevented. A more important consideration than this is, that when the ignition takes place in front, the strain on the gun is lessened. As for the escape of gas in the case of breech-loading guns, of which so much is said, when a gun is effective at a range of a thousand paces, as the needlegun is said to be, and as we know it to be at eight hundred paces, we may be sure that the gas which escapes must be so infinitesimally small that it need not be taken into account. It was doubtless owing to his knowledge of this advantage of igniting the gunpowder in front, that the inventor placed the fulminating powder between the ball and the gunpowder, for which, too, he might have had another reason - namely, diminishing the risks of accidental explosion. When the coil or spring to which the needle is attached is released, the needle enters the cartridge at the base, passes through the gunpowder; and strikes against the fulminating compound, which instantly explodes, and ignites the gunpowder.

The fulminating powder does not occupy the whole of the space between the bullet and the gunpowder; if this were so, there would really be the danger from accidental explosion by concussion which has been brought against it. Between the bullet and the powder, the pasteboard is so thick as to allow of a hole being drilled in the very centre of it, in an exact line with the point of the needle, and this hole is filled with the fulminant, which is thus protected from pressure on all side so effectually as to account for the entire absence of accidents, notwithstanding the careless treatment they are certain to

receive from the soldiers, who, from, long familiarity with them, we may be quite sure, do not treat them with especial gentleness. Every man on going into action is supplied with sixty of these cartridges, which he carries in two pouches moving on a belt, so placed that they balance each, other. When he has fired away the contents, of one, he pushes it out of the way, and substitutes the other. As the operation of loading consists merely in, dropping the cartridge just as it is in the cavity prepared for it, without biting or any other preliminary, there is no difficulty in firing the gun ten or twelve times in a minute; but the soldiers are directed, even in the hottest part of the action, not to fire more than five times in a minute. As a matter of fact, they seldom fire even at this rate, and for the very sufficient reason, that, as the picked shots begin firing at the enemy when they are at eight hundred yards distance, the whole of their ammunition would be exhausted before they came to close quarters. Much of the destructiveness of the Prussian fire arises from the accurate aim taken by the men. Full of confidence in their weapon, and its superiority over the muzzle-loaders at close quarters, they watch the approach of their antagonists with calmness, and do not throw away any of their balls in random shots: the old saying that every bullet has its billet, applies with greater truth to Prussian bullets than to those of any other army. To this cause must be assigned the large proportion of Austrians who are to be seen with their arms in slings suffering from what are merely flesh-wounds, of which they speak with a kind of contempt; but inasmuch as these wounds were severe enough to disable them, the shot may be considered to have done its work as effectively as if it had shattered the bone.

The objections raised against the needle-gun in France, and repeated over here, possibly on no better authority, have been completely met by its performance in the campaign which it has been the principal means of rendering victorious. The gun does not foul rapidly; the cartridge does not explode spontaneously or accidentally; and, greatest objection of all, as it was considered, the needle does not easily or often break. When it does, we are told that the remedy is always at hand. Every man carries one or more needles always with him, and is competent to remove the broken fragment and substitute a fresh needle in an exceedingly short space of time.

That any weapon could be more effective in action, or less liable to be thrown out of good working condition by exposure to night-dews or rain, it is not easy to believe; but it is evident that much of its destructiveness will depend on the amount of instruction which each individual soldier receives in its use. Generally the soldier, to whatever country he belongs, takes far less interest in the result of his practice than is manifested by the members of Volunteer corps, and for reasons that are obvious. In the first place, the incentive of prizes is wanting; and in the next, in many armies, the soldier does not expect that he will ever be placed in circumstances where his life will depend on the accuracy of his aim. So far, as the French army is concerned, the Italian campaign taught them not a little, and judicious encouragement and explanations at the camp of Chalons, at Vincennes and elsewhere, have enlightened them still more; so that they have now, in certain corps, a large number of exceedingly good shots. The Prussian soldier has long been trained to fire his regulation number of balls as though they were objects to be deposited in an assigned position, and not to be merely got rid of with the least possible trouble to himself. The infantry of the line, during their military training, are required to fire one hundred balls a year per man. These have to be fired on succeeding days at a rate not exceeding ten per day. Five shots will decide whether a man remains for a time in the third class, or if he goes at once into the second; but no man is placed in the second class of marksman who has not proved his right to be there by the accuracy of his fire. The ordeal through which he has to pass before he is admitted into the class, is of course proportionally severe. The conscript begins his practice at one hundred and fifty paces from the target. Before and after every shot, he receives from the instructor a brief lecture explanatory of the why and the wherefore. Ever shot he fires is recorded on his card by the marker; and as soon as he has obtained a fixed number of marks by five balls in succession, he is put back fifty paces additional; and the same thing goes on until he has reached the maximum distance for the majority of them, including those of the first class - namely six hundred paces. There are many who think little of this range, and are allowed to fire at the target from a greater distance, as are the whole of the men composing the corps of fusileers, who, moreover, have to fire two hundred shots a year in lieu of one hundred. The targets used are of different kinds; some are fixed, others are in motion, and the soldier under instruction will sometimes be called upon suddenly to transfer his fire, from one to the other. It will be seen, therefore, why it was that every man in the Prussian army, with the exception, perhaps, of the newly-joined conscripts, was able to make such effectual use of the advantage which the breech-loading needle-gun gave him over the more antiquated weapon in the hands the Austrians.

From the www.inventors.about.com website.

REPRODUCTION M1942 BAYONETS ON eBay

This is an exceptional finish OL 16" uncut bayonet. It has correct GI markings but the bayonet and scabbard are after market quality reproductions. I have priced them accordingly. This Garand or Springfield 1903 bayonet retains close to 100% original metal finish. There are no dings, pitting, rust or other defects. The unmodified scabbard with ordnance bomb and U.S. is a match for the bayonet and is free of any defects. The scabbard has been painted USGI olive green. This bayonet is marked OL, U.S. and is dated 1942. Markings are crisp. *After 3bids, the winner paid \$92.56.*



This is a scabbard for the 16" Garand or 1903 rifle bayonet. It is a reproduction and priced to sell. Ordnance bomb markings are crisp. The originals are rare and expensive. This is a way to pay less but still have a scabbard for that orphan bayonet of yours.

This scabbard also received 3 bids and sold for \$33.76



M1910 Scabbard for M1905 Springfield Bayonet

This is a new reproduction of the M1910 Scabbard for the M1905 Springfield Bayonet. It is made just like the originals: Wood covered in rawhide covered in khaki web with leather tip and brass hook. No markings. Seam on trailing side of cover. Guaranteed to fit your bayonet and delight you, as it has over 300 previous buyers - many have bought several of these. This a "Buy it Now" auction on multiple quantities.



The "Buy it Now" price was \$ 42.00. Looks like it might be the USMC version – add a few scuff marks to the leather & rub a bit of dirt into the canvas = high priced fake.

If anyone has seen any of these items and can advise on how they differ from the originals, please send your observations to the Editor for inclusion in a future Newsletter.