



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

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

NRA Affiliate Number G8162
CMP Affiliate Number 026160



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February 2019 VGCA Newsletter



President's Comments

To my fellow VGCA members,

Spring is just around the corner, which means our March 23-24 VGCA Gun Show is rapidly approaching. As many of you are aware, we are now the ONLY Gun Show at the Prince William County Fairgrounds! SGK Gun Shows, which normally does 2-4 shows at the PWC Fairgrounds each year, has cancelled all their future shows there. This gives us an excellent opportunity to showcase our club. We are going to be making some changes to the show entrance and gun check area to give the show a new look. Our goal is to emphasize the depth and quality of the items displayed for sale. The new set up also reduces some of the security burden and problem foot traffic congestion areas. Our Spring Show is almost SOLD OUT – as of February 12th there were only four tables available. If you are interested in renting one of those last tables, please contact our show manager, Rick Nahas, soon. Also, we can always use show security volunteers. If interested in helping with security, please contact our show security chief, Steve Gomes.

Hope to see everyone at the Spring Gun Show!

--*Bernie Breighner*, VGCA President

U.S. Percussion Conversions to Metallic Cartridge Breechloaders



Our first presentation in 2019 was by our very own Marc Gorelick (*left*). As many of you know, Marc specializes in collecting early U.S. cartridge conversions. This presentation, concentrating on Civil War era conversions, is the first of three presentations that Marc will give this year. The two later presentations will take us through post-Civil War Metallic Cartridges.

Marc pointed out that this time period was one of extensive experimentation and it is really impossible to describe all the variations. He also noted, though many of these conversion were patented, the patent

drawings and descriptions are often of little use as the weapons produced frequently bore little resemblance to the associated patent!

The U.S. Civil War (1861-1865), the Prussian Wars of 1864 and 1866, and the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 all demonstrated the superiority of the self-contained metallic cartridge. Nations with large inventories of now-obsolete muzzle loading arms sought ways to economically convert them to fire metallic cartridges. There were two types of conversions:

1. Muzzle-loading percussion weapons converted to breech-loading cartridge arms (example: Allin-type conversions)
2. Breech-loading percussion arms converted to breech-loading cartridge arms (example: Sharps-type conversions)

Before the U.S. Civil War, there were two attempts by the U.S. Army at converting existing long arms to fire self-contained metallic cartridges. They were the Morse and the Mont Storm.

MORSE ALTERATION

- The Morse was the first breech loading metallic cartridge firearm ever produced by the United States. It was also the first centerfire arm produced at a National Armory.
- Patented by George W. Morse, of South Carolina, his breechloader was adopted for trial and in September 1857 he sold the rights to the U.S. Government for \$10,000 to convert 2,000 percussion muzzle loading muskets to breech loading rifles.
- Model 1816 .69 caliber muskets already altered to percussion were used for this conversion. The bores were rifled and they were given long range sea sights. The cartridge was a .69 caliber

centerfire cartridge designed and patented by Morse. Springfield Armory converted 55 guns and had made the parts for 570 more before funds ran out. More funds were appropriated but for work at Harpers Ferry. The necessary machinery was transferred from Springfield to Harpers Ferry in July 1860. When the Civil War started the Confederates captured the armory and removed the machinery. It is estimated that about 650 guns were completed.

- To make the alteration, the upper part of the barrel near the breech was cut away and a new breech bolt hinged at the rear so it could swing up and to the rear was attached. The nipple was removed and the top portion of the bolster machined off. The front section of the hammer was cut away and the remaining hammer served as a locking device for the breech block. The breech block is swung up at half cock, opening the chamber for loading. When the breechblock is closed the gun is brought to full cock and fired. The hammer/locking lever drops driving a locking bolt forward, locking the breech and striking the firing pin, driving it forward to strike the rear of the cartridge.

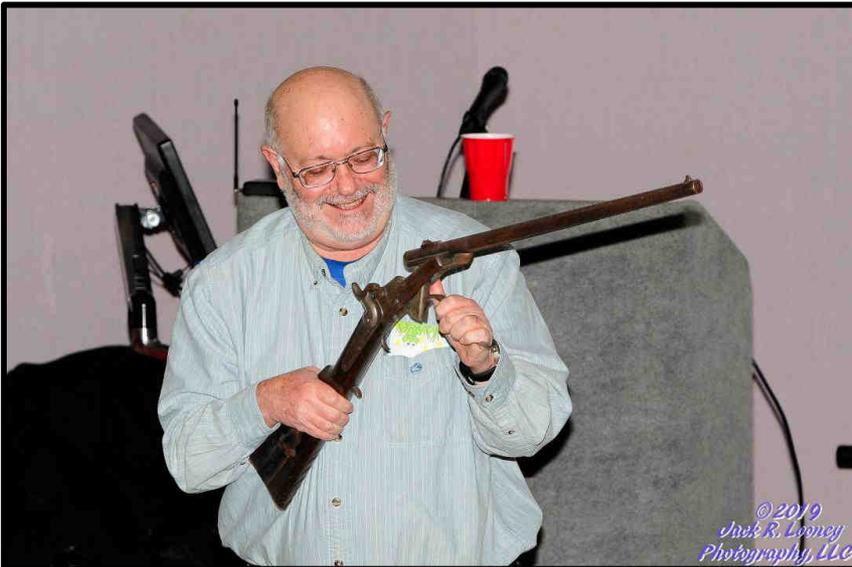
MONT STORM

- It is unlikely that any US alteration has caused as much confusion as the Mont Storm. The pre-Civil War Mont Storm conversion is a bit of a mystery. Many historians and gun writers, including Norm Flayderman and Arcadi Gluckman have stated that Mont Storm's 1850's U.S. conversion was for a .58 caliber rimfire cartridge. Others, including Claud Fuller and John McAuley, state that it was altered from a percussion muzzle loader to a percussion breech loader. One reason for the confusion is that William Montgomery Storm's earlier British patents, while covering the same upward swinging breech block were for a percussion system while his US patent 15,307 dated July 8, 1856, was supposedly based on the use of a metallic cartridge. However, close examination of the patent drawings and reading of the patent description point to the conversion being a percussion forearm.
- To further support this, a report of an 1859 US Navy test of two of his breechloaders indicated that there was considerable escape of gas and that "the cap would not set off the charge because of vent location." Also, there is a Mont Storm breech loading conversion of a Pattern 1853 Enfield muzzleloader that was briefly adopted by the British Army in 1865 before the Snider was adopted. This Mont Storm used percussion caps on a combination percussion nipple and handle on the right side of the breech and used a special Mont Storm "skin" cartridge.
- On the other hand, three examples of Mont Storm conversions of Model 1863 Springfield rifle-muskets exist that closely follow the drawings in his 1856 patent and the 1867 reissue of the patent. These conversions are in .58 rimfire and were likely made for the Laidley Board arms trials of 1865. Documents from that Board describe the Mont Storm: "*For conversion of muzzle-loading arms. The gun presented was an altered Springfield rifle. Length of barrel, 36 1/2 inches. Calibre .58. Adopted to rimfire cartridge. Weight of entire arm, 9 pounds, 3 ounces.*"
- The Board's written description of the Mont Storm action is almost exactly the same as the description of the 1858 conversion except that the following were added: "*The retractor is positive in its action and the firing-pin in usual form and passing through the breech-block. The lock of original gun is retained.*"
- Unfortunately, the original Mont Storm conversion cannot be examined because no original Mont Storm U.S. Armory manufactured muzzle loader conversions to metallic cartridge are known to exist today. Neither have any of the Harpers Ferry armory plans or drawings of the firearm survived. They were all destroyed in 1861.

- On Sept. 22, 1858 the US purchased the right to convert 2,000 muzzle loading arms from Mont Storm for \$2,500 using his system. According to Ordnance Department reports and reports from Harpers Ferry, 400 Model 1841 “Mississippi” rifles were converted to the “Mont Storm plan” at Harpers Ferry in 1860-1861. The Model 1841’s had been rebored from .54 to .58 caliber and the conversions supposedly used a rimfire cartridge that was invented by Mont Storm.
- The conversion outwardly resembles the Allin Trapdoor conversion and was accomplished by cutting away the upper part of the barrel at the breech and fitting the Mont Storm system - a breech block hinged at its forward end. A small round handle on the right side of the breech block is used to open and close it. A flat faced hammer strikes a firing pin which runs roughly parallel to the top of the angled breech block and strikes the cartridge. The hammer also actuates the breech locking bolt which enters through the rear of the breech block and is one of the basic features of his patents. The breech block’s chamber is open towards the front and the cartridge is placed in it backwards. When the breech block is swung closed the bullet end of the cartridge faces the barrel.
- On April 18, 1861 Confederate forces raided Harpers Ferry, seizing a lot of machinery and arms. The small Union garrison of 50 men set fire to many arms to prevent them from falling into rebel hands. It is believed that all 400 completed Mont Storm conversions of Model 1841 rifles were destroyed in the fires.

One would think that with all the different firearms used during the Civil War, and the large number of metallic cartridge firearms used (such as Henry, Spencer, Maynard and Sharps & Hankins), that there would be many conversions of percussion guns to metallic cartridge breechloaders, but that is not the case. There were only three guns that started the war as percussion firearms and ended the war firing self-contained metallic cartridges – and they were all breech loading carbines from the start. They are the Gallager, the Joslyn and the Starr.

GALLAGER CARBINE CONVERSION

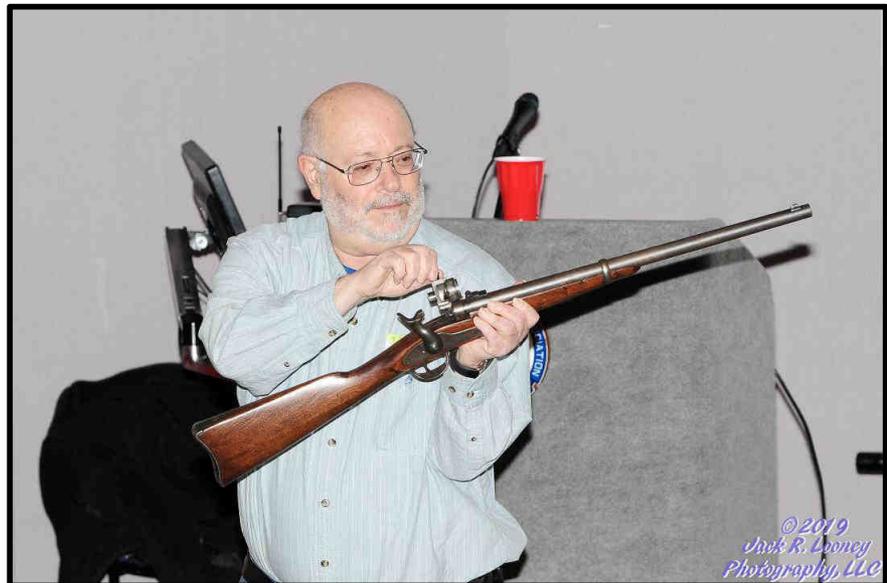


There was probably no gun as disliked by those who had to use it as the Gallager percussion carbine. They were highly inaccurate, would frequently misfire, fail to extract, barrels burst, parts would frequently break, sights fall off, and screws break, all at the most inconvenient times during combat. Commanders were known to have refused to accept them or to have turned in their unit’s Gallagers for older percussion muzzle loaders. Despite all the complaints and protests the Union purchased 17,728 percussion Gallagers during the war.

- The mechanism was invented by Mahlon J. Gallager of Georgia, who was granted US patent 29,157 on July 17, 1860. They were manufactured by Richardson & Overman of Philadelphia, PA. The mechanism was a break-open type that was actuated by a lever that also acted as a trigger guard.
- Unlatching and depressing the operating lever would force the barrel forward a short distance before dropping the muzzle and raising the chamber for loading. After a cartridge was inserted the lever would be raised and the breech closed.
- Three types of ammunition were provided for the percussion Gallagers. The first had a rimless brass case with a hole in the back for the flame from the percussion cap to enter and ignite the charge, much like a Maynard cartridge. The second was the Poultney Patent with a paper and brass foil case and the third was the Jackson Patent cartridge; a strip of tin wrapped in several layers of paper.
- On March 11, 1865 the Ordnance Department placed an order for an additional 5,000 Gallagers and they were delivered that spring. However, these had been altered to fire self-contained metallic cartridges and were chambered for the .56-52 Spencer rimfire cartridge. The action is identical to the percussion model but it has a cartridge extractor and the percussion nipple was replaced with a firing pin device.
- In May 1865 the St. Louis arsenal received 2,500 metallic cartridge Gallagers with 500,000 cartridges. They were intended for state volunteer cavalry units being sent to the western plains, such as the 7th Iowa Cavalry. After they were withdrawn from service, many of the cartridge conversion Gallagers were sold as surplus in 1870 and purchased by France for the Franco-Prussian war.

JOSLYN CARTRIDGE CONVERSION

Benjamin F. Joslyn of Connecticut designed a number of different breechloading firearms, before, during and after the Civil War. Perhaps the earliest breechloading firearms made under one of his patents is the Model 1855 .54 caliber percussion carbine with a “Monkey Tail” type action, and the Model 1855 .58 caliber percussion breechloading rifle, also with a “Monkey Tail” type action. However, he is best known for his .52 caliber Model 1862 and 1864 carbines. The first of these patents was for the swinging breech block feature with the subsequent patents being refinements (*above*).



- It was the Model 1862 that started as a percussion arm and ended as a metallic cartridge firearm. The early Model 1862 Joslyns were percussion with the nipple threaded into the rear of the block. They are extremely rare.

- The basic design was for an action that consists of a swinging block that is hinged on the left side. To open the breech, a pin or knob on the right side is pulled out and the block lifted to the left, exposing the chamber. With the percussion carbine a nipple was in the center of the back side of the breech block. A hammer on the right side of the carbine struck the cap on the nipple sending flame into the chamber and igniting the charge. In the cartridge guns the hammer struck a firing pin.
- Soon after deliveries of the Model 1862s started Joslyn converted the percussion system to fire rimfire cartridges. The Joslyn was chambered for the .56-52 Spencer cartridge. The percussion nipple was replaced by a firing pin. The end of the firing pin is exposed in the Model 1862 but is surrounded by a protective shroud in the Model 1864. The Model 1864 also has a gas vent.
- The Model 1862 and the Model 1864 are very similar with some overlap in features. Left over parts from the 1862 were used in early 1864s and parts from 1864s can be found on late Model 1862s. A major improvement in the Model 1864 was a latch that held the breech block more securely.
- The Joslyn Model 1862 and 1864 were among the most widely used carbines during the Civil War with about 16,500 being produced. After the war Joslyn cartridge carbines were carried by the 1st Nebraska and 11th Ohio Cavalry on the frontier until their mustering out in July 1866 and by the 5th U.S. Colored Cavalry until that unit was mustered out in March 1866. In 1871, 6,600 carbines as well as 1,600 rifles that had been converted to use the .50-70 Government centerfire cartridge were sold to France for use in the Franco-Prussian War. Many were seized by Germany, sold to Belgium, converted to shotguns and shipped to Africa.

STARR CONVERSION CARBINES



The original Starr breechloader was a .54 caliber percussion carbine with a falling and rotating breechblock. It, and its metallic cartridge conversion, were covered by Starr's patent 21,523 dated Sept. 14, 1858. The patent covered Starr's hinged breechloading system and the annular breechblock groove described in the specifications. The carbines were manufactured by the Starr Arms Company at various plants in New York State.

- The army first tested the carbine in January 1858 and Ordnance Department officers rated it as superior to the Sharps, which it resembles. They praised its accuracy and ruggedness.
- The Starr percussion carbine is operated by unlatching the combination operating lever/trigger guard and pushing the lever down and forward. The operating lever pivots on a pin located beneath the lower front of the breech frame. This drops the breech plate and breech block follower and allows the breech block to drop down and backwards. This

exposes the chamber for insertion of a paper based linen cartridge. Raising the operating lever to its closed position raises the breech block and closes the breech. An annular groove in the face of the breechblock fits snugly against the extended breech, forming an effective gas escape check. The hammer is cocked, a percussion cap is placed on the nipple and the gun is ready for firing.

- During the Civil War the Starr Arms Company provided 20,601 percussion carbines to the Federal Government at a price of \$29 each. Although it was a solid performer, it got a reputation for misfiring. However, investigation showed that the misfires were caused by using the wrong ammunition. Like many contracted arms during the Civil War the Starr had its own ammunition. Instead of using ammunition designed for the Starr, the army supplied Sharps paper cartridges. The Starr chamber and its land-to-land bore are of a larger diameter than the Sharps. When a Sharps paper cartridge was put into a Starr chamber it went in much further than a Starr cartridge, leaving enough distance between the back of the cartridge and the breech block that the flame from the percussion cap could not ignite the charge. When Starr cartridges were used the gun worked well but its reputation had already suffered.
- The Starr Arms Company proposed to alter its carbine to fire the .56-52 Spencer rimfire cartridge. The .52 caliber cartridge carbine model was produced under the same patent as the percussion carbine. Very little had to be done to alter the carbine to fire metallic cartridges. The breech frame had to be modified a little and a cartridge extraction feature was added to the left side of the breech mechanism. A firing pin went diagonally through the breech block and the shape of the hammer was changed making it smaller and straighter.
- Ordnance officers tested the cartridge version in January 1865 and it was successfully fired at the rate of 15 rounds/minute. In February the Ordnance Department contracted for 5,000 metallic cartridge carbines at \$20 each. Starr delivered 5,002 by April 11, 1865.
- Twelve cavalry regiments were equipped with Starr carbines (either percussion or cartridge fired). After the war Starr cartridge carbines were issued to the 2nd U.S. Cavalry. Parts of the regiment were assigned to guard the Bozeman Trail in Wyoming and Dakota where they were in action against the Sioux and Cheyenne. Company C was assigned to Fort Phil Kearney. Twenty-seven men from Company C were among the many dead when Capt. William Fetterman led his command into an ambush. About 1,000 Starr cartridge carbines were sold to the British War Department, which sent 250 to Canada.
- By early 1867 the 2nd Cavalry had exchanged the last of their Starrs for Spencer carbines. Coincidentally, the Starr Arms Company was also dissolved in 1867, ending the Starr family involvement in arms making that dated back to the Revolution.

Our thanks go to Marc for this excellent presentation. This article was produced primarily from Marc's personal notes.



★ **Upcoming February 28th Meeting:** Our February presentation will be on the **MP44 Sturmgewehr**, the first assault rifle, by VGCA President Bernie Breighner. Social time begins at 6 p.m. (there will be pizza) in the NRA Headquarters Conference Room, followed by the meeting beginning at 7 p.m.



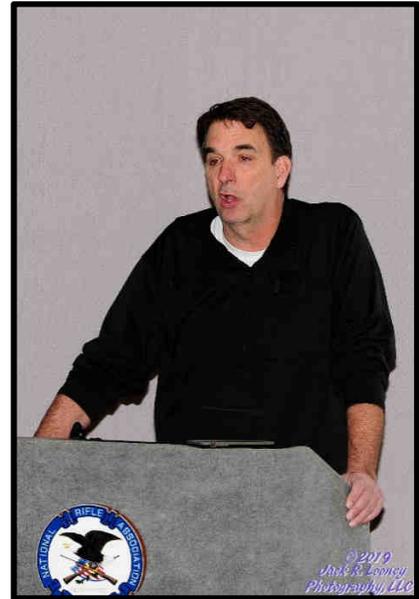
❖ **January Business:** President Bernie Breighner called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Jim Burgess led us with the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country. There were 66 VGCA members and guests in attendance and the guests were introduced to the membership by their sponsors/hosts.

Bernie (*right*) gave a “State of our Club” update.

Our current membership stands at a total of 466 life and annual members. Bernie said our goal is to increase membership to 500 this year. We were reminded that January is the deadline for annual membership renewal.

Financially, the VGCA is in good shape as well, with no major debts or liabilities.

The Spring VGCA Gun Show is on track for 23-24 March 2019. As of this date, there are still 19 tables available for rent or display. Speaking of displays, March will continue our recent trend of a large number of show displays, with nine people signed up so far. Bernie reminded us that the Prince William County Fairgrounds are for sale, so show dates beyond our spring show have not been confirmed (though we are 90% confident that our fall show will be held there as well).



The VGCA is attempting to expand its social media presence (our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts are listed on the first page of the newsletter). Our website presents some challenges and we are working hard to ensure it remains updated and current.

We are trying to organize a VGCA Picnic and Day-at-the-Range at NORVA for the fall and will provide details as we get closer. Speaking of NORVA, they will be hosting a Military History Day on 15 June 2019. It is expected to cover three centuries of military arms and we will announce more details in the Newsletter.

The VGCA Executive Committee is trying to arrange a few tours in 2019. Possibilities include a tour of the Army archives on Fort Belvoir, a trip to Florida to tour Reed Knight’s Institute of Military Technology, and maybe even a trip to England to have Richard Jones (former editor of *Janes All the Worlds Small Arms*) take a lucky few through the Royal Arms collection at Leeds.

Bernie also announced, in keeping with the VGCA’s chartered purpose of promoting firearms collecting, that we are looking a publishing a book this year. One subject could be the shooting/range log of Ned Roberts (of the .257 Roberts fame), while another topic could be the WWII U.S. Army’s analysis of the German FG-42 machine gun.

Bottom line – your VGCA is looking forward to a very active year!

Bill Chronister announced that he had the ID Cards for our newest annual members, but had not yet printed our renewal annual members or the new life member cards.

Steve Gomes asked for security volunteers to help during the March VGCA Gun Show. He passed around a sign-up list.

Marc Gorelick still needed volunteers to man the VGCA Table at the February Chantilly Gun Show. Remember, volunteering means you get into Chantilly for free as an Exhibitor!

Bernie announced that the VGCA Member of the Year for 2018 is . . . Jack Looney! See the article in this newsletter for more details.

Bernie also announced that Rob Becker would represent the VGCA at the National Rifle Association's annual membership meetings in April with his display of WWII Flare Projectors and Signal Guns.

Dave Litchfield got up and thanked the VGCA Executive Committee (officers and Board of Directors) for their dynamic leadership over the last two years. He then led the members present in a round of applause.

★ Other News! ★

★ Membership Chairman's Report - February 2019:

New Members: Please welcome our newest Annual Members:

- **David R. Bealmear** of Crozet, VA was sponsored by **Chris Britton**
- **Andrew Cox** of Sterling, VA was sponsored by **Matt Gminski**
- **Eran Eva** of McLean, VA was sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Wayne Lee** of Front Royal, VA was sponsored by **Matt Gminski**
- **Lacey Lorence** of White Plains, MD was sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Benjamin J. Trichilo** of Oakton, VA was sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**

Gentlemen, welcome aboard! Your Annual IDs will be mailed to your home address on your membership application before the March Gun Show. Congratulations!

New Applications: We have a new group of VGCA Membership Applicants. The applicant's information and sponsor's name is published below. If there are any comments or questions on any applicant, please notify an Officer or Director, and the Membership Chair before the February 15, 2019.

- **Ronald Alan Atkinson** of Centreville, VA is sponsored by **John Isoldi**
- **David A. Happ** of Bethesda, MD is sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Adrian Hayes** of Arlington, VA is sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Clay D. Laurie** of Potomac Falls, VA is sponsored by **Joe Roberts**
- **Ken Morgan** of Woodbridge, VA is sponsored by **Matt Gminski**
- **Steve Papovich** of Elkwood, VA is sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Victor Pinte** of Fairfax, VA is sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **William Robitaille** of Fairfax, VA is sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Gregory Sanders** of Fincastle, VA is sponsored by **Chris Britton**
- **John E. Wormley, Jr.** of Woodbridge, VA is sponsored by **Jim Burgess**
- **Cameron Cowherd** of Ft. Myer, VA is sponsored by **Chris Britton** and **David Litchfield**

For questions, please email **Bill Chronister, Membership Chair** at vgca_membership@cox.net or call me at 703-204-0138.

★ 2018 Member of the Year Announced -
Congratulations Jack Looney!



VGCA President Bernie Breighner (above left) congratulates the Member of the Year for 2018, Mr. Jack Looney (right). Jack has volunteered as the VGCA photographer “for longer than he can remember!”

By popular vote, Mr. Jack Looney was selected as the VGCA Member of the Year for 2018. Announced at the January membership meeting, this recognition goes to the club member (not currently an officer or Director) selected by his/her fellow members as the one who has contributed the most to the VGCA over the course of the year. As Member of the Year, Jack was given a plaque and \$100 Voucher good with any vender at one of our shows!

Jack Looney has been a fixture at VGCA meetings for a long time, standing in the back of the conference room and taking pictures of the presentation and show-n-tell items for the newsletter.

I asked Jack when he joined the VGCA. His is an interesting story:

Jack: “I do not remember exactly when I was joined to the VGCA, but I can tell you it is all the fault of Marty Eakes . . .

Marty and I had been trading camera lenses for many years, and one day I went to see him at the flea market at Double Toll Gate, and he had a 98 Mauser I just HAD to have, (in .30-06, marked 'BRANDL' on the barrel, which was made by H.W. Hyem!). He had a couple of odd old cartridges that he said I ‘... might be interested in, and, by the way, the VGCA is hosting Mikhail Kalashnikov. If you can photograph his visit, we will buy you dinner at *Fuddruckers*, and I will sponsor you to join, and pay your first year membership.’

So, yea, how could I say no to *THAT*, I mean, hey, *FREE FOOD!*

I followed General Kalashnikov, Elena, and Igor, around for two weeks- except the day they had the parade at the Tank Farm, the one day I could not get out of commitments.”

I also asked how he got involved taking pictures for the newsletter:

Jack: "After the first meeting I was pretty well hooked, but I thought the newsletter was boring and sort of dull, so somewhere along the line I brought my camera in and asked Addison (Hurst) if he wanted me to take photos for the newsletter. At first the look on his face said "This long hair hippy freak wants to do WHAT?" (yes, I am certain that is what he thought!), so we talked it over, and I started adding some life and color to the newsletters."

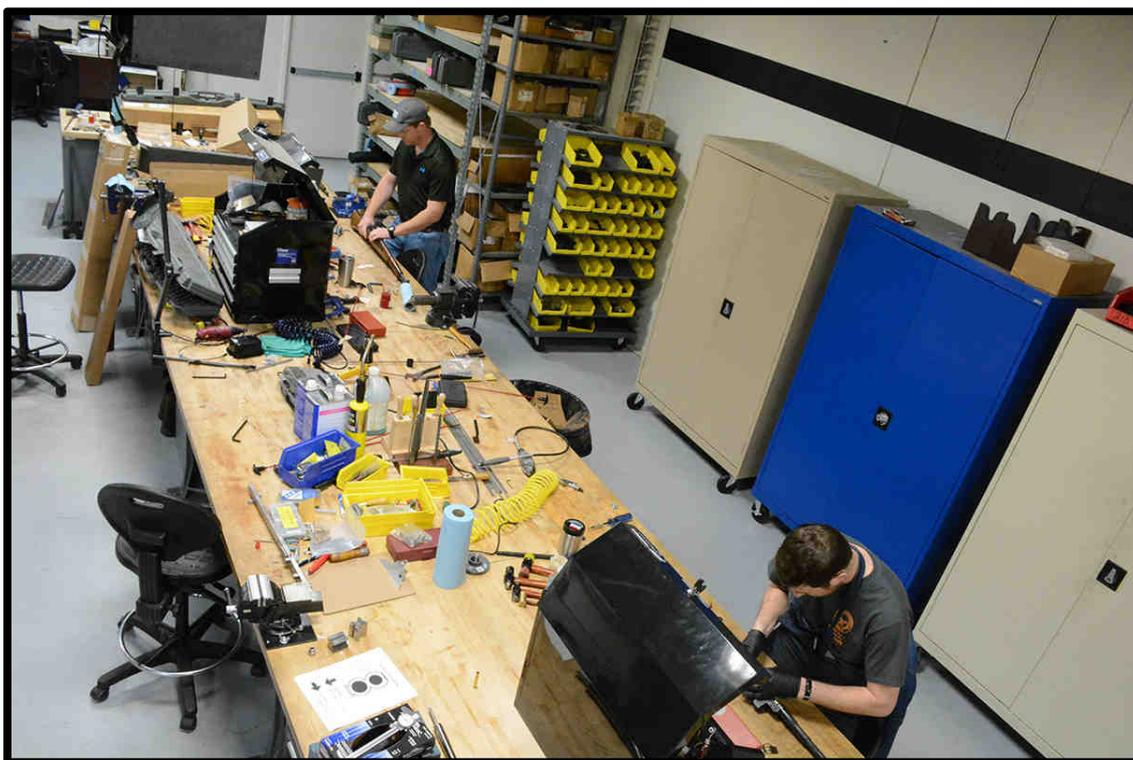
The rest – as they say – is history. For close to two decades Jack has been the VGCA photographer. He not only takes pictures during the membership meetings, but he also photographs all of the displays at our gun shows. You have seen his work showcased on our table at the Chantilly Gun Shows. On a personnel note, your humble newsletter editor could not do his job without Jack's photos. So, congratulations Jack – this recognition is well deserved!



CMP CUSTOM GUNSMITHING

By Marc Gorelick, CMP Liaison

Did you know that the CMP offers custom gunsmithing services to customers/members of CMP affiliate organizations such as the VGCA? The CMP Custom Shop has been providing gunsmithing services since it opened for business on October 1, 2013 and VGCA members in good standing who are CMP customers can take advantage of its services.



★ “Thank You” to the VGCA Volunteers at the February Chantilly Gun Show



VGCA Members Chris Britton (above left) and Jim Burgess (right) volunteered to share our story with prospective new members at the Chantilly Gun Show on Saturday, February 9th

Once again, the VGCA Executive Committee would like to extend a special “thank you” to those VGCA members who graciously volunteered to “staff” our table at the latest Chantilly Gun Show (February 8-10, 2019). They are:

**Marc Gorelick
Allan Rupp
Frank Cooper**

**Bill Chronister
Jim Burgess
Chris Britton**

**George Duggan
Joe Roberts
Jack Looney**

Special thanks go out to Marc for organizing the volunteers for each of these shows (six per year!) as well as to Bill Chronister and Joe Roberts for bringing in some special pieces from their personnel collections to display on the table – and to get conversations started!

The VGCA table at Chantilly has been almost solely responsible for doubling our new annual members this past year (ten potential new members were signed up during the February show alone!) - and that simply would not have happened without the support of our volunteers. Remember, volunteering to staff this table means you get in to the Chantilly show as an exhibitor **for free** – no small consideration now that the show entrance fee is \$16.00 per day! All you have to do is give a few hours of your time to tell folks about the Virginia Gun Collectors Association, what we do, and the benefits of membership.

Please contact Marc Gorelick or any other VGCA officer or director if you are interested in volunteering at future shows. The next Chantilly Gun Show is on April 12-14, 2019.



VGCA MEMBERS TO GET FREE ENTRY TO NVRHA SHOW



The VGCA entered into an agreement with the **Northern Virginia Relic Hunters Association (NVRHA)** for members in good standing to get free entry into each other's shows. VGCA members must present a valid VGCA ID to get into the NVRHA show, and visa-versa. The reciprocity agreement also covers having promotional tables in the other organization's show, much like we have a table at the Chantilly show.

The oldest organized relic hunting club in the country, the NVRHA, was founded in 1972 to promote the study and preservation of the American Civil War through the location, identification and preservation of military and related historical artifacts. It usually has between 150-200 members and holds its meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at the NRA headquarters. At its monthly meetings, the NVRHA has noted speakers present on all aspects of the American Civil War, including newly authored books. NVRHA members have published numerous books on the identity of Civil war artifacts and various other aspects of the war. Some books are widely used for reference by students, professors, historians, archaeologists, and relic hunters.

This year the NVRHA will hold its **47th Annual CIVIL WAR, WW1, WW2 & ANTIQUE ARMS SHOW** at the **Fredericksburg Expo Center**, 2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. (Right off I-95 by the Fredericksburg exit.) Show dates and hours are **Friday, March 29, 2019, 12PM-7PM and Saturday March 30, 2019 9AM to 4PM**. According to the NVRHA show flyer there will be over 200 tables of pre-Civil War, Civil War and up to World Wars 1 & 2 weapons, accoutrements, accessories, militaria, relics, memorabilia, books, paper goods and art. It is a must for those interested in American history. There is free parking and they encourage people to bring their families. Regular admission is \$8, good for both days, but VGCA members get in free with presentation of a valid VGCA ID card.

For more information about the NVRHA, go to their website at www.nvrha.com.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR VGCA TABLE AT THE NVRHA SHOW

The VGCA has a promotional table at the Northern Virginia Relic Hunters Association Show at the Expo Center in Fredericksburg, VA. One volunteer is needed on Friday, March 29, 12noon to 7PM and one on Saturday, March 30, 9AM to 4PM. See VGCA Board member Marc Gorelick if interested.

➔ THE VGCA NEEDS YOU! ➔

VOLUNTEERS WANTED TO MAN THE VGCA TABLE AT THE CHANTILLY SHOW
The VGCA has a promotional table at the Nations Gun Show at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, VA, April 12-14. Volunteers are needed to man the table Friday from 3-8PM, Saturday from 9AM-5PM, or Sunday from 10AM-5PM. By manning the table you get free entry to the show, which normally charges \$16 for one day entry and \$22 for a 3-day pass. Volunteers get plenty of time to walk the show and hunt for bargains. You also get to meet fellow gun collector and firearms enthusiasts. See Marc Gorelick or other Board member.

★ Show-n-Tell ★

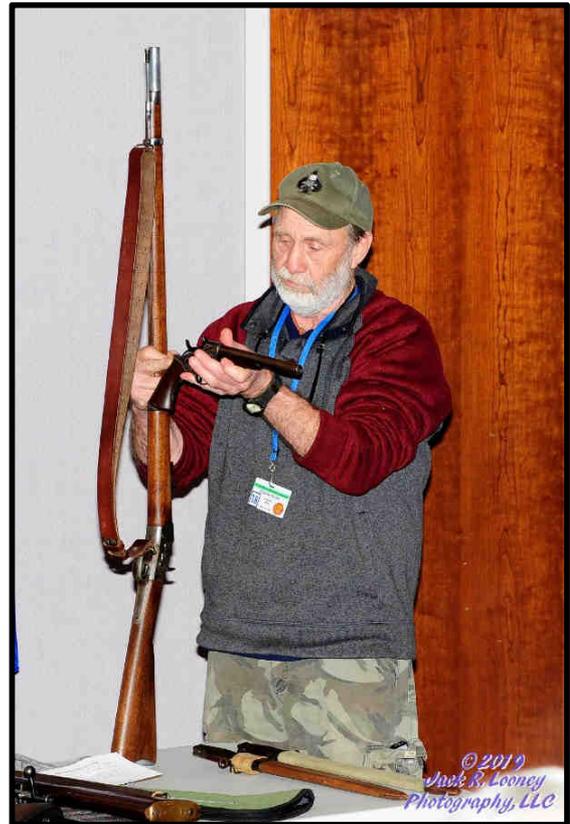
NOTE: Anyone bringing in items for Show-n-Tell, please hold them up so the members can see it. This will also help your Volunteer Photographer get a decent photograph of the special item you brought to show, and people who could not attend the meeting can see it clearly in the newsletter. Thank you



Member 1 brought in a very nice Enfield No. 2 Mark IV (left) training rifle chambered in .22 Long Rifle. This rifle was originally made in 1907 as a ShtLE No.1Mk1* and converted to a .22ShtLEMkIII rifle before its final conversion to a MkIV single shot trainer. Typical of Pre-WWI manufacture, the workmanship is superb, with superior wood/metal fitting. This rifle still retains the original "Volley Sights" mounted on the left side of the stock for mass unit-level indirect fire. It is marked indicating service at some point with the Royal New Zealand Army.

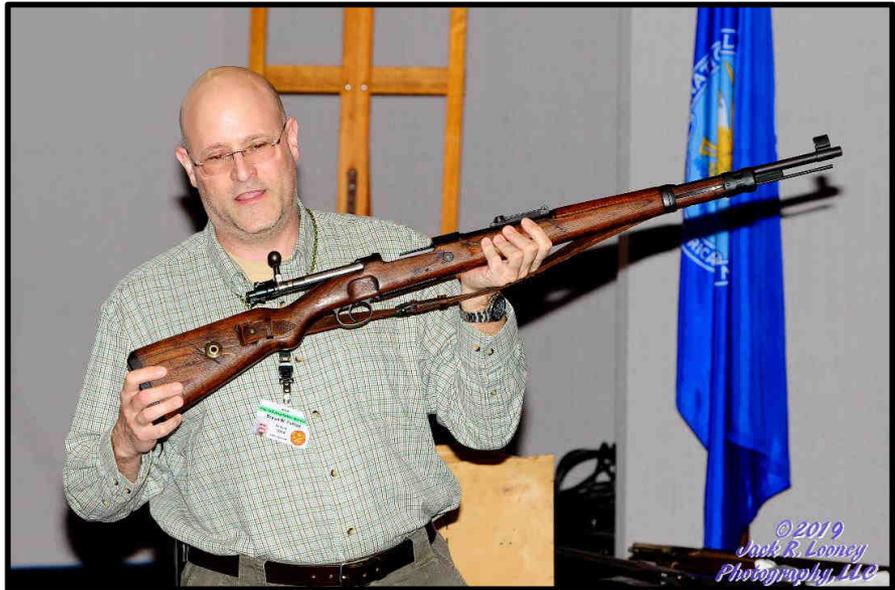
On a night when the presentation was on early U.S. cartridge conversions, Member 2 shared two early cartridge guns (*right*). The first was a Model 1871 rifle. Chambered in .50/70, this single shot rolling block was only manufactured for two years before being replaced by the Model 1873 “Trapdoor” rifle.

The second piece displayed by member 2 was another rolling block, this one a Remington Model 1871 pistol. Chambered in .50-25 centerfire, this single shot breech loader would seem to be a technological step backward given the prevalence and popularity of revolvers at the time. The Army acquired 5,000 Model 1871 pistols from Remington in exchange for 5,000 used Remington New Model Army percussion revolvers that the Army had in storage. Remington was glad to get the used revolvers, which it converted to cartridge guns and sold on the civilian market. The Army wanted a cartridge gun more powerful than the .36 caliber percussions it had, but shortly after acquiring the Model 1871, it adopted the far superior Colt Model 1873 “Single Action Army” in .45 Colt.



Member 3 (*left*) brought in an interesting “double conversion” Remington 1858 New Model Navy revolver. This single action 6-shooter was originally made as a .36 caliber percussion gun. In 1871, it was converted to .38 Rimfire. Sometime later (exactly when is unknown) it was converted again – this time .22 Rimfire! If only this gun could talk!

Member 4 (*right*) shared his recently acquired Portuguese M1941 Mauser in 8x57. In 1941, Mauser was contracted by the Portuguese Army to build 50,000 of the Model 1941, which was very similar to the standard German bolt action K98k rifle used throughout WWII. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of '41, the Germans quickly found themselves needing large numbers of every type of small arms. Less than half of the Model 1941s had been delivered to Portugal before the order was canceled and the remainder delivered to the German Wehrmacht. This particular example, with its distinctive Portuguese crest on the top of the receiver, has seen some use, was captured by the Russians, refurbished port-war and stored as war reserve stock during the Cold War.



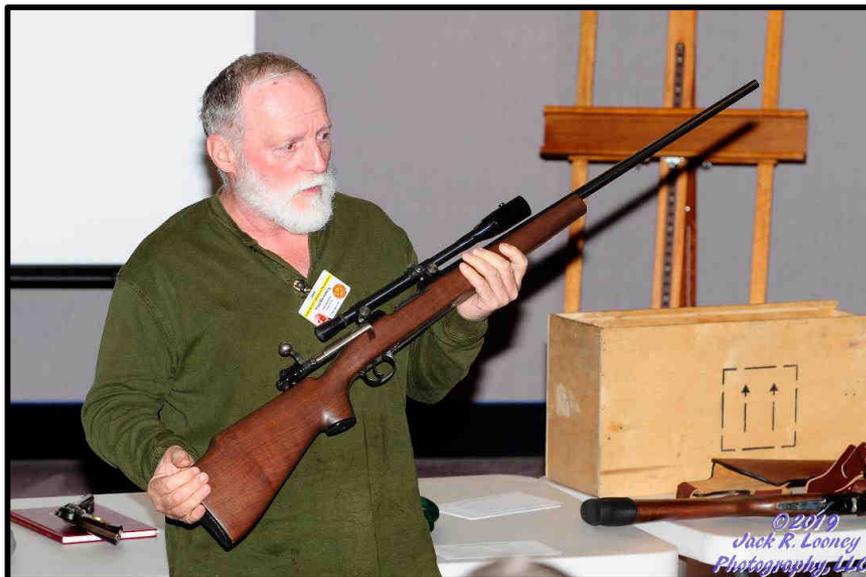
Member 5 shared a pair of M1905 bayonets. Originally designed for the M1903 Springfield bolt action rifle, the M1905 also fit the M1 "Garand" and served as the standard bayonet of the U.S. Military for almost 40 years. Member 5 bought one of these M1905s in 1958 for \$4.95. He played with it for about 2 weeks before it "went missing in action." Turns out his mother hid it from him out of concern for his



safety and it was discovered many years later in the attic! This particular bayonet was made at the Springfield Armory (SA) in 1910 (the scabbard was made at Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) in 1911) and is still "in the white." The second M1905 has a SA blade made in 1908, is blued, and came in a leather scabbard made by RIA in 1909. Most M1905s that accompanied the American Expeditionary Forces to Europe during WWI were blued so as not to glint/flash in the sun light. The scabbard has a rare web frog. Apologies – no photo available.

The photograph above shows U.S. GIs training with M1905 bayonets mounted on their M1903 rifles.

Member 6 (*right*) brought in an unusual piece – this one an over-under Stoen 20-ga shotgun with short (13 inch) barrels. Despite the short barrels, it group rather well. BATFE approval for the “short barreled shotgun” took almost a year. Member 6 noted his reason for doing this was “because he could!”



Member 7 (*above*) displayed a customized Mauser bolt action with a barrel by Parker Otto Ackley. P.O. Ackley (May 25, 1903 – August 23, 1989) was an American gunsmith, barrel maker, author, columnist, and wildcat cartridge developer. His “Improved” wildcat cartridges were designed to provide greater case capacity (and thus greater velocity) but could still safely chamber and fire the original cartridge. This rifle is in .220 Swift (or perhaps, .220 Ackley Improved?).



Member 8 (*at left*) shared a rather unusual “weapon” – a Polish RGA-86. Developed in the early 1980s, this is sold as a double action 15 shot flare gun designed for 26.5mm (1 inch) flares. Not much is known about the RGA-86, though it was probably developed a tear gas launcher for the police and not as a flare gun. A panel on the right rear of the cylinder is lowered for loading/unloading and the cylinder is wound under spring tension by rotating it counter-clockwise. Pulling the trigger fires the RGA-86 and releasing the trigger advances the cylinder clockwise.

Total production is unknown and only 250-300 were recently imported into the United States. It came in a wooden crate serial numbered to the “gun.” As a signal projector, it is not technically a firearm and can be mailed straight to your house!

Finally, Member 9 (*right*) brought a handgun from the NRA Museum collection. In keeping with the theme of the night’s presentation, this particular piece is a rare Colt Walker handgun that at some point was converted to .44 Henry. The .44 Henry is a rimfire cartridge that fired a 200-216 grain lead bullet over 26-28 grains of black powder. Compare that to the original chambering which fired a similar bullet over 60 grains (though Colt recommended “only” 50 grains) of black powder! Thus converting the Walker to .44 Henry not only damaged the revolver’s future collector value, it was a dramatic step backward ballistically! The barrel was also cut back and no longer has a front sight!



★ In Review ★

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

Museum

A TRIP TO THE MUSEUM: THE HUSQVARNA MUSEUM, Part II

Marc Gorelick, VGCA



Last month’s issue of the VGCA Newsletter described the firearms exhibits in the Husqvarna Museum in Husqvarna, Sweden. In this issue I am going to elaborate on one aspect of the museum’s firearms exhibits.

The weapons part of the museum includes a number of life-size dioramas of skilled gun makers who hand crafted Husqvarna’s top of the line double rifles and shotguns. The dioramas show the workers, including master gun smiths, at their stations, with all their tools. The signage explaining what they are doing is outstanding and provides deep insight into the art of making fine guns before the days of CAD/CAM and CNC machines. These men were master artisans who spent years as apprentices and journeymen learning their trade and honing their gunsmithing skills.

Among the professional craftsmen employed at Husqvarna were two who were crucial in the fabrication of fine, high-quality deluxe rifles and double shotguns – the Fitter and the Dresser.



Diorama of Fitter and Dresser. Photo – author.

The Fitter integrated the barrel(s), trigger mechanism and lock bolts of the gun. The trigger mechanism was filed “into shape” and the parts integrated for further processing. This was very exacting work,

where the artisan worked with files, blackening lamp and lights to make sure that the fit between the trigger mechanism and barrels would be perfect and gas tight. He would blacken the parts, merge the barrels and trigger mechanism and gingerly file away metal where the metal struck. The Fitter, like the Dresser, worked extremely carefully with his files. It was of extreme importance not to file too much because it would be difficult to correct any mistakes and the spoiled parts would have to be discarded. A Fitter normally served an apprenticeship of at least one year before becoming a journeyman and being allowed to fit guns. Husqvarna Fitter and Dresser Bertil Grandqvist described fitting work:

“It’s not possible to talk about parts of a hundred. This is craftsmanship. It is not an exact science. There is a limit, a point where it is good. A skilled professional knows precisely that point.”

The Dresser, or final assembler, was the person who “dressed” or “fitted” the double shotgun. After the Fitter was done aligning the barrel and trigger mechanism, and the stock maker had finished the initial work with the fore stock and butt of the gun, the shotgun was passed to the Dresser. The Dresser worked on the gun and made sure that all the parts fit and worked smoothly, from the smallest parts of the trigger and firing mechanism to the main components: barrels, trigger mechanism, ejectors, and so on. He ensured that there was tight fit between metal and wood. The Dresser then put the gun into what Husqvarna called the “white state” or “white dressing,” where all the parts were assembled but no surface treatment was done. When the “white dressing” was finished, the gun was taken apart and the serial number engraved on the various parts. The various parts were then returned to the stock maker, barrel worker and engraver for final processing. When this component processing was completed, the parts of the gun were returned to the Dresser, who carried out the “black dressing,” or final assembly into a finished hand crafted shotgun.



This custom Husqvarna Model 310/Eckermann shotgun was donated to the museum by Dresser (assembler) Nils Abrahamsson. He was one of the last craftsmen who made shotguns at Husqvarna and made this shotgun for himself before he retired in 1985. The weapon was made from parts of a gun that was never completed in 1920.

content, i.e., modern, new, collectible or antique, and I will include it as room permits. **Yellow** = Collector organizations.

VIRGINIA - 2019

- Mar 2-3, 2019 – Dale City, VA – Dale City VFW – *Showmasters*
- Mar 23-24, 2019 – Roanoke, VA – The Berglund Center – *Showmasters*
- Mar 23-24, 2019 – Manassas, VA – Prince William County Fairgrounds – *VGCA (our show!)*
- Mar 29-30, 2019 – Fredericksburg, VA – Fredericksburg Expo Center – *NVRHA*
- Mar 30-31, 2019 – Richmond, VA – Richmond Raceway Complex – *Showmasters*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 – Dale City, VA – Dale City VFW – *Showmasters*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 – Doswell, VA – Farm Bureau Center at Meadow Event Park - *SGK*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 – Fishersville, VA - Augusta Expo Center - *Showmasters*
- Apr 12-14, 2019 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*
- Apr 19-20, 2019 – Virginia Beach, VA – Virginia Beach Convention Center – *SGK*
- May 4-5, 2019 – Fredericksburg, VA – Fredericksburg Expo Center – *SGK*
- May 4-5, 2019 – Harrisonburg, VA – Rockingham County Fairgrounds – *Sporting Shows Unlimited*
- May 18-19, 2019 – Salem, VA - Salem Civic Center - *C&E*
- Jun 7-9, 2019 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*

NOTE: SGK has recently announced that they will no longer sponsor/promote gun shows at either Winchester, VA or the Prince William County Fairgrounds. Our VGCA gun show will now be the only such show at the fairgrounds this year.

MARYLAND - 2019

- Mar 16-17, 2019 – Timonium, MD – Timonium Fairgrounds – *Baltimore Antique Arms Show*
- Mar 22-23, 2019 – West Friendship, MD – Howard County Fairgrounds – *Maryland Sportsman & Outdoor Show*
- Mar 29-31, 2019 – Edgewood, MD – Edgewood American Legion – *Patrick Daily-Mark Logsdon American Legion Gun Show*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 – Frederick, MD – Frederick Fairgrounds – *Silverado*
- Apr 20, 2019 – Parkville, MD – Baltimore County Fish & Game – *Baltimore County Fish & Game Protective Association*
- Apr 27-28, 2019 - Timonium, MD – Timonium Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Promotions*

PENNSYLVANIA - 2019

- Feb 23-24, 2019 – Waynesboro, PA – 10205 Fish & Game Rd – *Waynesboro Fish & Game*
- Feb 23-24, 2019 – York, PA – York Fairgrounds-Memorial Hall - *Appalachian Promotions*
- Mar 2-3, 2019 – Leesport, PA - Farmers Market – *Thegunshows.com*
- Mar 2-3, 2019 – St. Thomas, PA – St. Thomas Firehouse– 264larry@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA – 2019 (continued)

- Mar 9-10, 2019 – Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Show Complex – *C&E Gun Shows*
- Mar 2-3, 2019 – Allentown, PA – Econo Lodge – *Eagle Arms*
- Mar 2-3, 2019 – Hermitage, PA – *Hickory Post VFW – LRGunshows*
- Mar 2-3, 2019 – Leesport, PA – Leesport Farmers Market – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Mar 2-3, 2019 – St. Thomas, PA – St. Thomas Firehouse – 264larry@gmail.com
- Mar 9-10, 2019 – Alexandria, PA – Alexandria Fire Hall – dweidel1170@gmail.com
- Mar 9-10, 2019 – Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Show Complex – *C&E Gun Shows*
- Mar 16-17, 2019 – Harborcreek, PA – Harborcreek Fire Dept Social Hall - *LRGunshows*
- Mar 16-17, 2019 – Kittanning, PA – Pony Farm Trap and Gun Club
- Mar 16-17, 2019 – Split Rock, PA – Lake Harmony – *Eagle Arms*
- Mar 22-24, 2019 – Oaks, PA – Greater Philadelphia Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Mar 30-31, 2019 – Gettysburg, PA – All Star Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Mar 30-31, 2019 – West Middlesex, PA – Hidden Valley Sportsmen’s Club – *Hidden Valley Sportsmen’s Club*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 – Lebanon, PA – Lebanon Valley Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 - Philadelphia, PA – National Guard Armory – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Apr 27-28, 2019 – Carlisle, PA – Carlisle Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Apr 27-28, 2019 – Monroeville, PA – Monroeville Convention Center – *Showmasters*
- Apr 27-28, 2019 – Wind Gap, PA – Plainfield Fire Company – *Eagle Arms*
- May 4, 2019 – Wilmore, PA – 185 Church Hill Road – jdjm04@gmail.com
- May 4-5, 2019 – Bloomsburg, PA – Bloomsburg Fairgrounds – *Eagle Arms*
- May 18-19, 2019 – Oaks, PA – Greater Philadelphia Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Jun 1-2, 2019 - Gettysburg, PA – All Star Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*

SPECIAL NOTE – 2019

- Feb 21-24, 2019 – Louisville, KY – Kentucky Expo Center – *Ohio Valley Military Society, Inc.*
(confirmed for the Kentucky Expo Center despite earlier rumors it may relocate)
- Mar 9-10, 2019 – Wilmington, OH – The Roberts Centre – *Ohio Gun Collector’s Association*
- Apr 6-7, 2019 – Tulsa, OK – Tulsa Fairgrounds (Expo Square) – *Tulsa Arms Collector Association - aka Wanenmacher’s (world’s largest gun show with over 4,200 tables)*
- Apr 12-13, 2019 – West Point, KY – Knob Creek Gun Range – *Machine Gun Shoot and Military Gun Show*

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. 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. Unless other arrangements are made, items will be listed for one issue of the Newsletter.

FOR SALE:

★ The L. C. Smith Collectors Association will conduct its 4th Annual Raffle on Apr 27, 2019. They are raffling a 1935 L. C. Smith .410 Gauge Field Grade with 26" barrels. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25. If interested, please contact VGCA member John Babey at 571-308-4978 or jrbzn13@aol.com

FOR SALE:

★ After more than two and a half years of research, VGCA member Bill Vanderpool has recently 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.

WANT-TO-BUY:

★ Member Kim Walton is interested in buying Newton and Meeker rifles. If you have one to sell; please contact him at (210)-602-0506 or copo6970@yahoo.com

WANT-TO-BUY:

★ Member Rob Becker is looking for an M8 grenade launcher designed for the M1 Carbine (it will be used for his "Flare Guns and Signal Projectors of WW2" display at the annual NRA meetings in April). If you have one to sell; please contact him at (703)-441-1211 or rpebecker@verizon.net

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 Bill Chronister.