



# VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.ORG



Est. 1983 (A Non-Profit Organization)

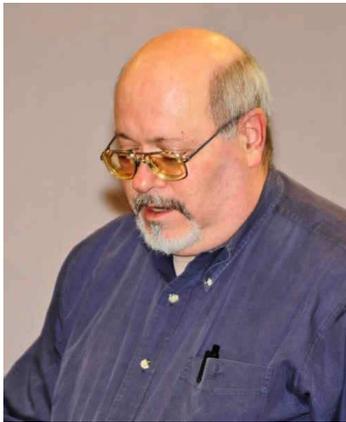
NRA Affiliate Number G 8162

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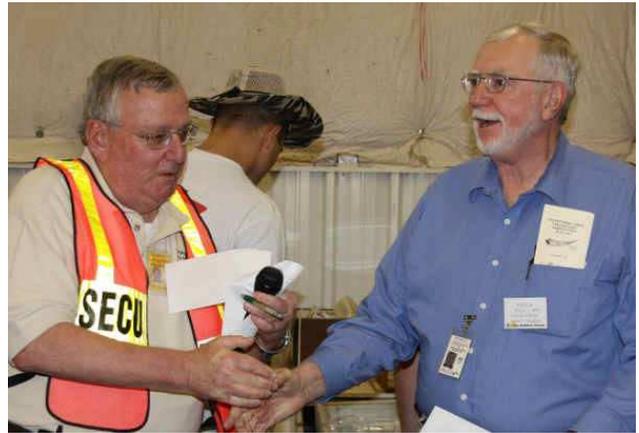
## April 2009 VGCA Newsletter



**Presentation at the February 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** The presentation for the evening was given by **Marc Gorelick** and **Jim Burgess** covering *Early Cartridge Conversion Rifles*. Marc started with an overview of how after the U.S. Civil War, and the success of the self contained metallic cartridge, the US, and other powers were seeking to adopt cartridge firing breech loading arms. However, then as now budgets would not permit the adopting and outfitting of armies with new arms, so they embarked on programs to convert the aging stores of muzzleloading muskets and rifled muskets to breech loading arms. Marc told how Erskine Allin of Springfield Armory patented his invention which started a long series of converted arms bearing his name – the Allin Conversions, which preceded and evolved into the Springfield Trapdoor series. Marc displayed a newly acquired ‘First Allin’, and was followed by Jim with a ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Allin’ (1866) in .50-70 Centerfire made from an 1864 Rifled Musket. Marc then showed the 1868 ‘3<sup>rd</sup> Allin’, a shorter lighter rifle favored by troopers in the Apache wars. He followed with the ‘4<sup>th</sup> Allin’ although this was not technically a conversion, but a newly manufactured arm. Other rifles discussed included US conversions like the Miller Conversion in .58 Rimfire, the 1869 Roberts Conversion in .58 Centerfire that was originally sold to the NY militia, but when payment was not made, the rifles were adopted by the South Carolina militia. Sharps percussion rifles and carbines of 1859, 1863, and 1865 were converted to .50-70 for \$4.00 each. And 1864 Springfields became 1868 Remington Springfields when the Springfield barrel and butt were mated to the Remington #1 Rolling Block action. This technique was also used by the Swedes who used the barrels of 1860 Carl Gustafs muzzleloading muskets on the Remington Rolling Block action. Jim B., then covered the Needham conversion (referred to as the Fenian Rifle) as they were used in an abortive attempt by Irish nationalists or “Fenians” to invade Canada, where they were repulsed by Snider-Enfield armed Canadian militia. To support this section, Jim then covered the Snider-Enfield, a .577 caliber cartridge conversion of the 1853 Enfield that was

used by the British Empire and also sold to both sides in the US Civil War. They did an excellent job with a well organized and very effective tag-team session which held interest and gave members a great overview of this critical time where both breech loading arms and metallic cartridges became the world standard. Interestingly, both the US trapdoor system and the British Snider breech were used by the US and the UK until the turn of the century and even later by militia, cadets, and yeoman volunteers. Well done!! (Continues on Page 3)

# VGCA Meeting of February 26<sup>th</sup> and the VGCA March 2009 Gunshow



#### Photo Legend for Previous Page

UL – Marc Gorelick and Jim Burgess on Early Cartridge Conversions; UR – Roberts Breech Detail; UML – Needham Breech Open; UMR – Snider-Enfield Breech Open; LML – Bill York gets 1<sup>st</sup> Place for his Radom Pistol Display; LMR – Jim Vaughan receives 2<sup>nd</sup> Place for his Iwo Jima Display; LL – Bill York's Radom 1935 Display detail; LR – Detail of Jim Vaughan's Iwo Jima Display.

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➔ **Upcoming Presentation for the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting:** **Don't miss the April 23 membership meeting.** VGCA member **Larry Babcock** will discuss M1 Rifles and his excellent new book "M1 Garand Photo Essay" filled with highly detailed photos of great interest to collectors and history buffs. Bring all your M1s variations, (maybe even a "gas-trap model") for show and tell. This should be a great discussion.

➔ **And more on meetings....** For the meetings, we will remain on a "diet" — no pizza, etc. However, quality of the monthly meetings will continue. **Addison Hurst** talked to **Phil Schreier** at the NRA museum and was pleased to hear that there are to be four, not three, NFM/VGCA sessions planned. If you have never attended one of the special features, treat yourself, as these are rare and memorable opportunities. We will have pizza and food on these four special meetings. These dates are June 26, Aug 27, Oct 22 and Dec 3. The topics will be announced as soon as info is available.

**Business Meeting:** The business meeting was truncated by the absence of key officers, but **Rick Nahas** covered the state of table sales (many vacant as of 2/26) and other preparation for the show. **Larry Hunt** and **Larry Hare** discussed new ideas and enhancements of the VGCA website and signage for the March show respectively.

**Show and Tell:** Show and Tell started with **Hal Johnson** showing an extremely rare 1883 Swiss Vetterli ammunition testbed prototype in 8mm. This rifle while similar to the 1881 Vetterli but was obviously strengthened and had a unique take down mechanism. Fewer than 5 of these are known to still in existence and most are in Swiss museums. **Bob Sears** showed 2 documents, a Springfield Armory Engineering report from 1878 listing well known SA personnel such as Erskine Allin, Samuel W. Porter, etc. It clearly illustrated the mindset in US military circles which kept the US in the single-shot Trapdoor era when Europe had moved on to the repeating rifle and small-bore, smokeless ammunition. The second document told of VGCA member **Roger Sherman's** display of Japanese Rifles, and covered all early Japanese rifles. **John Morris** provided an update on the scale model Dahlgren cannon from the last meeting. He has successfully documented and authenticated it through meticulous research at the Library of Congress. **Larry Hare** closed by showing his Czech VZ52 autoloading rifle in 7.62X45. He then produced a comprehensive book on East Bloc weapons including a whole section on his rifle. Of note was the author of the book was none other than VGCA member **Hal Johnson**.

### **The Spring Virginia Gun Collectors Association Gun Show – March 28-29, 2009**

**Educational Display Awards:** The show had seven displays covering a range of topics. The Judges recognized the following two displays for awards.

- ⊙ First Place went to **Bill York** for his display of "*The Polish-German VIS (Radom) Pistol Model 1935.*"
- ⊙ Second Place was presented to **Jim Vaughan** for a well organized setup covering, "*Examples of American and Japanese Weapons and Gear used in the Battle of Iwo Jima.*"

Congratulations to the Award recipients and a well deserved thanks for the other fine educational displays.

**Special Thanks:** **Larry Hunt** expresses his special thanks and recognition to the following members who have consistently worked hard to keep our Gun Show safe: **Bill Alexander, Vernon Cochran, Bill Ludwig, Dave Litchfield, Jim Burgess, George Kirshbaum, Larry Burman, Carl Warhurst, and Tom Schwieger.** Your contributions and strong dedication are essential to the success of the shows. **Jim Burgess** wanted to also thank **Art Shingler**, and a new member listed above who also worked security, for their helping him in clean up and assisting Tommy Hypes (book vendor) pack his van.

**Notes: Just a reminder on the admission policy.** The Board and EXCOM decided in November 2007 and announced at the following December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and in the December Newsletter that the free admission to the VGCA Gun Show for members would be discontinued with a few exceptions. Free show admittance is restricted to: Military personnel "in uniform," law enforcement personnel with official credentials, and all table holders and

their support personnel, i.e. 2 passes for the 1st table, and one additional pass for each additional table. The final free admission category is a group always deserving of special thanks and recognition for their dedication and support, is the Gunshow Volunteers – the Security and Setup personnel. All others have to pay, so please do not give the gate personnel a hard time about a policy in effect for well over a year.

**Attendance:** Ed Costello reported that we had a gate of 2,059 and one half person. Don't ask how that half person got in there! In comparison, the only other time in the past 6 years that we have had a gate over 2000 was at Hugo's in March 2003 when we had 2,230. It was actually hard to move through the aisles at times.

**Notes from the Presidential Podium:** Thanks to all who helped make our Spring 2009 show at the PWC fairgrounds such a success — we had 2059 paid admissions!!! Ed Costello will have all the good news at this meeting. It was a great show given the competition of other shows. I had lots of comments that our show was friendly — people could ask questions and could learn lots. I talked to a lot of table holders/dealers — they were happy. I heard that many people who dropped us were kicking themselves and I hope to see them at our next show. Many people told me that our show was so different from EXPO. It would not surprise me a bit if we have to go to the second hall soon.

I was stunned by the number of people who brought in guns to be evaluated. They thought I was a resident expert. I am not, but I know to whom they should speak, and I did this. They were very happy. The remarkable thing was that many people said they did not know we offered this service, and they had friends who would have brought in guns had they only known about our “service”. Of course these additional folks would have paid at the door. The interesting thing about this was that they could have only seen this on the VGCA.com web page, the Washington Post ad or the postcard that Ed sends out. We continue this advertising as it sets us, as a Collector's Organization, apart from the large commercial shows or the other shows in the region. We will continue our new online presence on Gunshows-USA.com, a great site listing hundreds of shows across the U.S. We need to carve out a niche, and this may be a start. The Washington Post ad alone reaches well over a million people.

I was also amazed at the level of interest in the .50 BMG guns. It is good to educate the public and counter the media portrayal of these rifles. I think we made some progress in the support of shooting all guns, up to and including the .50 BMG. The public interest level was as amazing, as was the sticker shock.

I want to recognize Larry Hunt for his work on the Club's web page ([www.VGCA.org](http://www.VGCA.org)) and his work on coordinating the show security. He did a fantastic job and you should thank him — every member owes him a lot.

The board will soon determine the next show date. Send me your thoughts on the last show, including the displays and judging. We want to hear from the members about the shows and the club, and your thoughts and suggestions are most welcome. The board will consider all comments. I look forward to seeing you all on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April.

– Wm. Addison Hurst, Club President

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### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT on the NEWSLETTER

**Opt-In for the Mailed Newsletter:** *Second of 3 Announcements* – As mentioned last month, to minimize address errors and reduce postage costs, as well as encourage the enhanced e-Newsletter, we are initiating an **Opt-in Program** for the mailed Newsletter. In this issue and the next (May) issue there is a pre-addressed form for members to verify their mailing address and confirm their need to receive a mailed hardcopy. Members should complete the form, fold it, tape it closed, add a First Class stamp and mail it back to the address on the form to continue receiving the mailed newsletter. If no reply is received by the June newsletter, you will be dropped from the newsletter mailing list. If you wish to receive an e-Newsletter via email, please notify Larry Hare via email. **Opt-In** requests **MUST** be received by regular mail. We believe members without email should not be disenfranchised and mailed copies will continue, however, we strongly encourage those with email use it.

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Address for any Newsletter related matters or submissions is [VGCAnews@cox.net](mailto:VGCAnews@cox.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 at the numbers on page one. v/r Bill Chronister, Editor

**Dear Member:**

**Opt-In for the VGCA Mailed Newsletter:** As mentioned last month, to minimize address errors and reduce postage costs, as well as encourage the enhanced *e*-Newsletter, we are initiating an **Opt-in Program** for the mailed Newsletter.

In this issue and the next (May) issue there is a pre-addressed form for members to verify their mailing address and confirm their need to receive a mailed hardcopy.

Members should complete the form, fold it, tape it closed, add a First Class stamp and mail it back to the address on the form to continue receiving the mailed newsletter.

If no reply is received by the June newsletter, you will be dropped from the newsletter mailing list. If you wish to receive an *e*-Newsletter via email, please notify Larry Hare via email.

**Opt-In** requests **MUST** be received by regular mail. We believe members without email should not be disenfranchised and mailed copies will continue, if requested via this **Opt-In Form**, however, we strongly encourage those with email use it.

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Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code (Required) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number (Must Have Area Code): \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print Clearly**

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