



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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March/April 2018 VGCA Newsletter

★ February Presentation

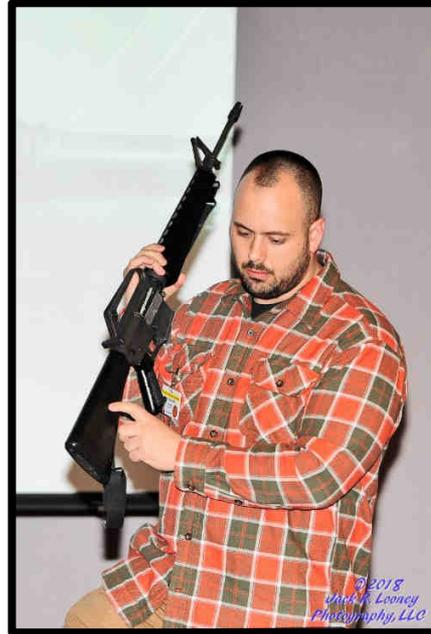
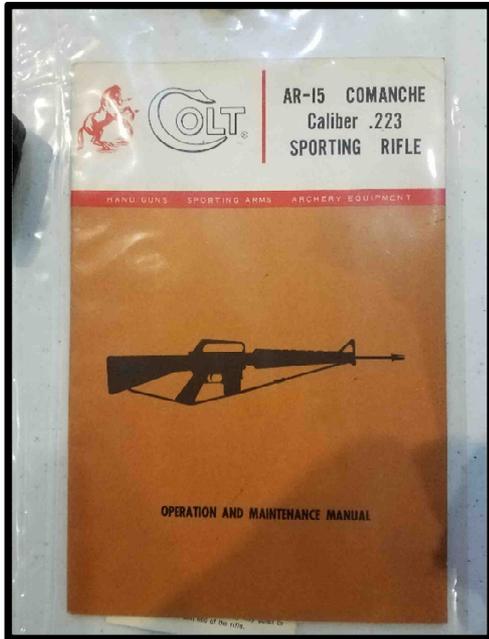
Our very own Mr. Ian Wulf gave a presentation on “Colt SP1s.” It is hard to believe, but the first civilian version of the M-16 was produced in 1963. That means these early rifles now qualify as “Curio and Relic” because they are over 50 years old!



The first civilian Colt SP1s were designated the R6000 “Comanche” and chambered in .223 Remington. Shortly after it was introduced, the Comanche name had to be dropped because a pistol by another manufacturer already used that name. Ian explained that only 23 SP1s were made in 1963. These early rifles did not have a forward assist and so there are no serrations on the bolt carrier. The bolt was chromed, but the barrel was not, and the butt plate was hinged. The early guns featured a “black-ish” finish and were built to noticeably tighter tolerances compared to modern AR-15s. In 1965, the SP1 listed for \$189.00.

Later SP1s featured a “bird cage” flash hider, chromed bore, a new buffer, and a grey phosphate finish. There were several variants offered through the years, to include:

- R6001 A carbine with a 16” barrel and 2-position collapsing stock
- R6002 Rifle with a Colt 3x scope that could be mounted on the carry-handle
- R6003 Carbine with a Colt 3x scope that could be mounted on the carry-handle
- R6004 Rifle with a Tasco “Tascorama” Red Dot sight (also mounted on carry-handle)
- R6007 Rifle with electroless nickel finish (only offered early 1980s, this is the rarest SP1)
- R6010 Chambered in .222 Remington (for countries that do not permit civilians to use military calibers)



*LEFT - A very early SP1 Owner's Manual that carries the "Comanche" nickname (quickly discontinued)
 RIGHT - Ian emphasizes a design feature of an early SP1*



ABOVE - Ian shows an early SP1 buffer design

The VGCA members present were treated to a detailed and fascinating look at a relatively new area for collecting. On behalf of those members, I want to extend a sincere "Thank You!" to Mr. Wulf!

🌟 **February Business:** President Ernie Lyles called the January meeting to order at 6:59 p.m. Ian Wulf led us through the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence to remember those in harm's way. There were 63 VGCA members and guests in attendance. The guests were introduced to the membership.

Rick Nahas reported that one month before our show we have 45 empty tables. Because there are two larger gun shows (Showmasters in Richmond and SGK in Fredericksburg) the same weekend as ours, we have lost several of our normal vendors, including Trader Jerry. Rick is examining several options, but the bottom line is we need members to support by reserving a display or sales table. Rick also reminded the membership that:

- There is an anti-gun demonstration/march planned for Washington D.C. the same weekend as our show. We must be prepared to deal with protesters at or near the fairgrounds
- All members must be diligent in following the show rules
- All guns MUST be zip-tied

Steve Gomes passed around a sign-up sheet for security volunteers

Shannon Zeigler made an additional pitch for members to sign up for a sales or display table. He reminded the members that the Executive Committee has authorized a one-time stipend of \$100 for anyone putting together a display for the first time. He asked that everyone invite friends, neighbors, and co-workers to come out to our show. Finally, he stated the Executive Committee will soon be voting on the VGCA annual budget.

Secretary Rob Becker made a pitch for the embroidered VGCA "polo" shirt and announced a sign-up for buying shirts in maroon, black, and royal blue. Costs run from \$23 to \$25 and sign-up began at this meeting and will run through the show in March. Rob also asked that everyone who brings in an item for Show-n-Tell please fill out a Show-n-Tell form. This will help him in writing about your treasures in the newsletter. He also repeated his request for any articles from the members – especially reviews of gun shows, books, or museums.

Marc Gorelick announced that there are two new firearms articles that have been posted on the VGCA website. He also mentioned that the VGCA has reserved one table at the Chantilly Gun Shows to raise awareness of the VGCA and help recruit new members.

Bill Chronister stated that he ran out of membership forms tonight but would make sure that all interested parties would receive a form!

Emory Hackman, as the chairman of the election committee, announced that the election for VGCA officers will take place in May. The following members have announced their candidacy:

President – Mr. Bernie Breighner
Treasurer – Mr. Shannon Zeigler
Secretary – Mr. Rob Becker

We are still looking for someone to run for vice president. If you are interested in running for any office, please contact Emory before the April membership meeting.

President's Comments

Brother Members,

I want to thank the membership for stepping up for our spring gun show. Our members helped fill up the tables and also helped with the show duties such as security and safety on a gun show weekend with three shows in the area. I will be stepping down a President with this election and want to thank the other officers and board members with helping me during the last two years.

--Ernie Lyles, President

★ **Upcoming April 26th Meeting:** Our next meeting will have presentations by Rick Nahas and Phil Hill, as they preview for us the items they will be taking to the NRA Annual Membership meetings in Dallas, TX next month. As always, social time begins at 6 p.m. (there will be pizza) with the meeting beginning at 7 p.m.

★ Other News! ★

The Spring 2018 VGCA Gun Show

The VGCA hosted our spring Gun Show at the Prince William County Fairgrounds on March 24th and 25th 2018. Despite competition from the Richmond (Showmasters) and Fredericksburg (SGK) gun shows that same weekend - which caused some of our regular vendors to cancel from our show - we had a very success event!

At 1058 attendees combined over the two days, attendance was up from our last two previous shows (1001 in March 2017 and 784 in November 2017) and those attending seemed to be eager to buy. Several table holders mentioned that sales were brisk.



A show attendee checks out the award-winning display of Polish Radom rifles and pistols.

On Sunday, all the volunteers were recognized for their hard work and dedication during set-up and security with a letter signed by the VGCA Officers and Directors, as well as a \$20 gift certificate. The letter and gift card are just a token of the appreciation that our club owes these individuals (listed below) who volunteer their time and effort to make our shows happen. We could not do it without you!

Set Up Volunteers

Jim Burgess	Emory Hackman	Rich Nahas	Ben Ernst
Bob Chapman	Lynn Jones	Joe Roberts	Marc Gorelick
Ed Costello	Rick Jones		Larry Hare
Steve Gomes	Ernie Lyles		Bill York

Security Volunteers

Bill Alexander	Bob Chapman	Jim Hoffman	Joe Roberts
Paul Blemberg	Ben Ernst	Paul Kadowski	Bill Troy
Chris Britton	Jim Frigiola	Jim Lindsey	Carol Troy
Jim Burgess	Steve Gomes	August Przybilla	Carl Warhurst

Overnight Security

Jack Looney	Steve Gomes
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This is how each of our shows begin – with an empty fairgrounds hall and the ever-present Rick Nahas



And then the volunteers get to work, setting up tables and labeling them in preparation for the arrival of our vendors, members, and displayers!

In addition to the volunteers, the first-ever VGCA Member of the Year was announced during the show. The VGCA Member of the Year is a new award designed to recognize the member who contributed the most to the Virginia Gun Collectors Association over the previous year (current VGCA Officers and Directors are exempt). The winner is determined by a vote of members attending the December and January membership meetings. **The 2017 VGCA Member of the Year is Mr. David Litchfield!** Dave received a well-deserved plaque and the option of \$100 cash or a free table at each of our shows in 2018! Dave has been an untiring advocate of the VGCA and is constantly recruiting new members. Congratulations Dave - and thank you for your continued support to the VGCA!

The real treat of our March Show was the number and quality of our educational displays! There were ten judged displays and five more that were not judged for a total of 15 – a record number for one of our shows! Our dedicated judges (special thanks go to Marc Gorelick, T.J. Parmele, and Jim Burgess) had a very difficult job!

The judged displays are noted below:

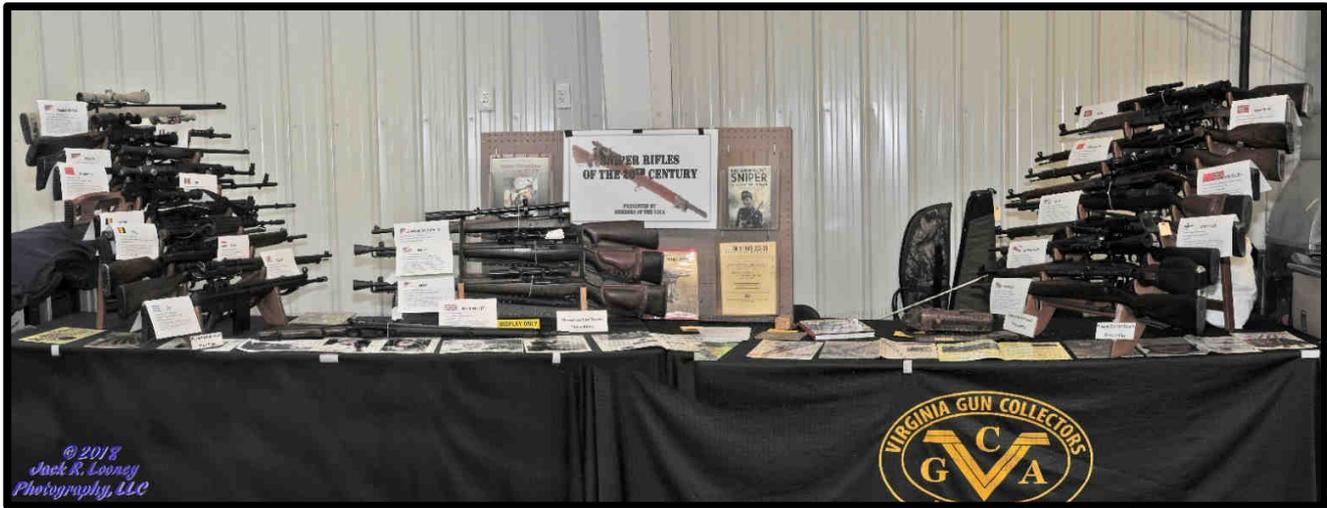
DISPLAY TITLE	EXHIBITOR	NOTE
F.B. Radom Vis	Wally Ustupski	1 st Place
U.S. Cavalry Carbines, 1865-1900	John Vagnetti	2 nd Place
Sniper Rifles of the 20 th Century	Dave Litchfield	3 rd Place
Heckler & Koch MP5	Bernie Breighner	Judges Choice
Remington Double Barrel Shotguns 1873-1910	Mike Alsop	Judges Choice
Early 20 th Century American Battle Rifles	Wes Chapell	First Time Exhibitor
Custom Built Short Barrel Rifles	Phil Hill	
U.S. Weapons of the Vietnam War	Steve Gomes	First Time Exhibitor
Great War Rifles	Mark Tatum	
Firearms Engraving	J.J. Roberts	



*Wally Ustupski even dressed the part while displaying his Polish **Radom Vis** 35 collection. This display (previously shown at the NRA Annual Members meeting) took 1st Place!*



John Vagnetti's display of U.S. Cavalry Carbines 1865-1900 earned a well-deserved 2nd Place from the judges!



Dave Litchfield led an effort by several members of the VGCA to display *Sniper Rifles of the 20th Century*. This impressive gathering of rare and expensive pieces earned 3rd Place!



Bernie Breighner's display of *Heckler & Koch MP5s* earned the 1st Judge's Choice award.



Mike Alsop received a Judge's Choice for his display of *Remington Double Barrel Shotguns 1873-1910*



Wes Chapell, a first-time exhibitor, put together this display of Early 20th Century American Battle Rifles



The display of Custom Built Short barreled Rifles was provided by Phil Hill

The non-judged displays (many were judged/won awards at previous VGCA shows) were:

DISPLAY TITLE	EXHIBITOR	NOTES
Arvo's Six-Shooters	Phil Hill	Previously displayed
Military Semi-Automatic Action Types	Shannon Zeigler	Previously displayed
The SKS Carbine – Collecting a Cold War Warrior	Rob Becker	Previously displayed
Civil War Era Handguns	Manassas Battlefield Trust	
National Firearms Museum pieces	National Rifle Association	



LEFT - J.J. Roberts put his engraving prowess on display!

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Steve Gomes poses with his M151 in front of his display of U.S. Weapons of the Vietnam War

The displays were truly special this time. The VGCA thanks all of its exhibitors – the displays are what separates our shows from all of the others in northern Virginia! My apologies to those displays that weren't photographed – we will try do better next time!

★ Thank you to all who helped assemble the 20th Century Sniper Rifle Display

I wanted to extend a special “Thank You!” to everyone that contributed to the 20th Century Sniper Rifle Display at our march Gun Show. Rob Becker designed the Display Sign and had it made, as well as researched every rifle and created the individual info sheets attached to each gun. Carl Warhurst supplied the netting used to secure the magazines, photos, and artifacts displayed on the table. The following members supplied one or more of the rifles: Carlos Davila, Gregg Dixon, Jim Frigiola, Bernie Brightner, Emory Hackman, Addison Hurst, Jeff Perkins, Zack Leiner, Shannon Zeigler, and Dave Litchfield. All of us also thank the judges for their tough challenge to make award decisions based on the finest selection of displays I have seen during my time in VGCA. We were pleased to win 3d place. As promised, I will dispense a share of our award money to each member who contributed. Please see me at the April Meeting.

Many Thanks, Dave Litchfield



✪ **Membership Chairman's Report March-April 2018:** Please welcome our new Annual Member(s).

- **Benjamin Ernst** of Fairfax, VA was sponsored by **Shannon Zeigler**
- **Michael Irvin** of Woodbridge, VA was sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Jerry Murphy** of Herndon, VA was sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Michael Smith** of Alexandria, VA was sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Charles Smith** of Purcellville, VA was sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**

Gentlemen, welcome aboard and congratulations. Your IDs have been mailed to your home addresses..

New Member Applications: At the February 2018 Meeting and the March 24-25 Gun Show, VGCA received Membership Applications from the following individuals for your review. The applicant's information and sponsor's name is published below for the review of the VGCA membership. If there are any comments, please notify an Officer or Director before the September Membership Meeting.

- **James L. Lindsey** of Springfield, VA is sponsored by **David Litchfield**
- **Frank Ogden** of Springfield, VA is sponsored by **Shannon Zeigler**
- **Clive Philpott** of Centreville, VA is sponsored by **Bill Chronister**
- **Dale Race** of Arlington, VA is sponsored by **Thomas Seaha**
- **David Zimmermann** of McLean, VA is sponsored by **Shannon Zeigler**
- **Gerald Bennett** of Gathersburg, MD is sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **George B. Dungan III** of Montross, VA is sponsored by **Shannon Zeigler**
- **Benjamin Henry** of Phoenixville, PA is sponsored by **Delmar Whitacre**
- **Tim Messick** of Vienna, VA is sponsored by **Ed Costello**
- **Russell W. Penka** of Rocky Mount, NC is sponsored by **Dean Schlemmer**
- **Sydney A. Rodda** of Culpeper, VA is sponsored by **Phil Hill**
- **Richard R. Bunn** of Alexandria, VA sponsored by **Bill Chronister**
- **Ha Chon** of Mt. Airy, MD sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Richard A. Croy** of Vienna, VA sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **James Locklear** of Linden, VA sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Edwin Lyon** of Sterling, VA sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Daniel Noonan** of Vesuvius, VA sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**
- **Keith Webster** of Manassas, VA is sponsored by **Bernie Breighner**
- **Jaleel Atum** of Reistertown, MD is sponsored by **Marc Gorelick**

IMPORTANT: Please keep your contact information and addresses current: If you are not receiving newsletters or other VGCA mailings, or have changed either your USPS mailing address or your e-Mail address, please provide corrected information ASAP to Membership Chair, Bill Chronister at vgca_membership@cox.net (note underscore between *vgca* and *membership*). For e-mail non-receipt, *FIRST CHECK* your SPAM folder or ISP settings. While convenient, using work e-Mail addresses may affect your receipt of newsletters or ballots due to enhanced security and attachment restrictions often used in corporate or government systems. Thanks!!!



🌟 A "Thank You" from Mr. Dave Litchfield, VGCA's Member of the Year for 2017

I am much honored to be selected as VGCA's first "Member of the Year", based on votes from the members. Thank you to all who voted for anyone. Thank you to the Board of Directors for creating this award as well as formally recognizing our show volunteers with gift certificates. VGCA depends entirely on unpaid volunteers to accomplish 100% of the work needed to operate VGCA, especially security and show committee work during the shows. I urge every member to select at least one task group to join and support.

Thanks,
Dave Litchfield



VGCA WEBSITE UPDATE

Two new articles have been posted to your VGCA website. These well-written pieces by VGCA member Marc Gorelick are about two important variants of the Winchester Model 1895 rifle and their place in history. One article is **THE U.S. ARMY WINCHESTER MODEL 1895 RIFLE** and the other article is **WINCHESTER MODEL 1895 RUSSIAN MUSKET**. Please go to your VGCA website at <http://www.vgca.net>, click on Education (Education Page) and learn more about these historic and collectible firearms.

VGCA MEMBERSHIP IN THE CMP RENEWED

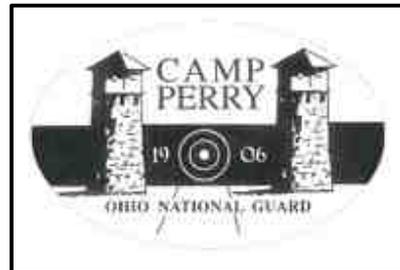
The VGCA renewed its membership as an affiliate club with the Civilian Marksmanship Program for 2018. Our club number is **026160**. Because the VGCA is a CMP affiliate club, VGCA members receive certain benefits. For instance, it's an ideal way for individuals to gain access to training, facilities, equipment and the ultimate goal of taking your marksmanship to a higher level. Qualified U.S. citizens who are members of a CMP affiliated club may qualify for the purchase of an M1 Garand rifle. M1 rifles are graded and priced according to condition. The CMP also sells some types of .22 cal. target rifles that were procured by the military for training. Qualified members of a CMP affiliate club may qualify to purchase a 1911 pistol. And you can purchase ammunition, parts and accessories from the CMP or take part in CMP programs. For more information, visit the CMP website at - <http://thecmp.org/>.



CMP MILITARY RIFLE MATCHES AT CAMP PERRY

By Marc Gorelick, VGCA CMP Liaison

The National Matches were first held in 1903, moved to Camp Perry, Port Clinton, Ohio, in 1907 and continue to take place every summer at that location. The National Matches have become a huge, national shooting sports festival with well over 6,000 annual participants. School students and competition event shooters range from beginners to many of the world's best. This year the National Matches will be held from July 8 through August 8.



Of particular interest to VGCA members and who collect and /or shoot U.S. and foreign military firearms are the Garand, M-1 Carbine, Springfield, Modern Military Rifle, Vintage Military Rifle, and the Vintage Sniper Team Match Matches.

The **Modern Military Rifle Match** is for competitors who fire modern semi-automatic military type rifles of U.S. or foreign manufacture that comply with CMP Games Rules. This match is intended for standard production or as-issued rifles with no special accurizing or match conditioning. The Modern Military Rifle Match was added in 2017 to the National CMP Games Events.



The **John C. Garand Match** is a CMP Games event where competitors must use "as-issued" U. S. M1 Garands in the regular John C. Garand Match or they may use National Match or certain modified M1 Garand's in the Unlimited Garand Category. The Garand Match Course of Fire is designed so that both new and experienced shooters can complete it. As a result, the Garand Match attracts large numbers of recreation-oriented

shooters who come to this match because its combination of camaraderie, history and competitive challenge makes firing in this match an especially enjoyable experience. The John C. Garand Match is a very colorful match, with many competitors appearing in World War II and World War I period military uniforms. The priorities for Garand Match day are clearly on fun, fellowship, enjoyment and respect for tradition. The 200-yard As-Issued Military Rifle Match Course A is used for the Garand Match

There is also an **M-1 Carbine Match**. This 100-yard match was fired during the National Matches in the early 1950s, but it was not fired between then and 2006. "As-issued" U. S. Military Carbines that comply with *Competition Rules for CMP Games Rifle and Pistol Matches* Rule 5.2.1 must be used.

The **Springfield Rifle Match** is a CMP Games event where all competitors must fire "as-issued" M1903 or M1903A3 rifles that comply with CMP rules for as-issued military rifles. The course of fire is 200 yards. As a CMP Games event, the Springfield Match stresses participation, camaraderie and history and offers an ambience that makes Springfield Match Day a truly enjoyable experience for competitors.

Of enduring interest to collectors is the 200-yard **Vintage Military Rifle Match**. This is a CMP Games event where competitors must fire “as-issued” U. S. Krag or M1917 rifles or manually operated foreign military rifles. The Vintage Military Rifle Match encourages recreation-oriented target shooters to use these fascinating military rifles in target shooting events that strive to preserve military marksmanship traditions.

Collectors of sniper rifles may be interested in trying their marksmanship in the **Vintage Sniper Team Match**. This match is designed to reproduce the conditions under which skilled long range military snipers operated. Two riflemen work together as a team. During the match, each team member functions alternately as a shooter or a spotter. After one team member finishes firing, they switch roles and the other team member fires. Firing is done at distances of 300 and 600 yards from the prone position. Shooters may use either a sling or sand bag support, but not both. Wind doping is critical and firing must be done quickly; targets are exposed for each shot for only 20 seconds and then withdrawn for 20 seconds. Competitors must use Korean War, World War II or earlier as-issued military sniper rifles or replicas of those rifles. Optics on these rifles must also be original issue or replica scopes from the same period. A complete list of approved rifles and optics is provided in the *Competition Rules for CMP Games Rifle and Pistol Matches*.



In addition to the shooting, the National Matches offer a series of outstanding special clinics that are open to all competitors in the military rifle matches, and other interested persons. These clinics are of interest to collectors of military firearms. Any CMP Games competitors who have not previously fired in one of the matches are required to attend a clinic before they fire. All other competitors in these matches are encouraged to attend and take advantage of the information presented. These include: the **M-1 Carbine Clinic**, open to those who intend to shoot in the M-1 Carbine Match; the **Infantry Trophy Clinic** taught by the U. S. Marine Corps Rifle Team and includes classroom instruction on Infantry Trophy firing techniques; the **Garand & Springfield Rifle Maintenance Clinic** in which CMP Armorers will present this two-hour clinic on disassembly, assembly and maintenance of M1 Garand and M1903 Springfield Rifles with special attention given to accurizing steps that can be taken with these rifles and still keep them legal for firing in CMP-sanctioned As-Issued Military Rifle Matches; and the one-hour long **GSM (Garand, Springfield-Vintage Military Rifle) Clinics** that cover the Garand-Springfield-Vintage Matches with instruction and demonstrations about match rules, shooting positions and techniques, scoring and pit pulling procedures and how to fire the courses of fire.

For additional information visit the CCMP website at: <http://thecmp.org/> and <http://thecmp.org/competitions/cmp-national-matches/>.

★ February 2018 Show-n-Tell ★

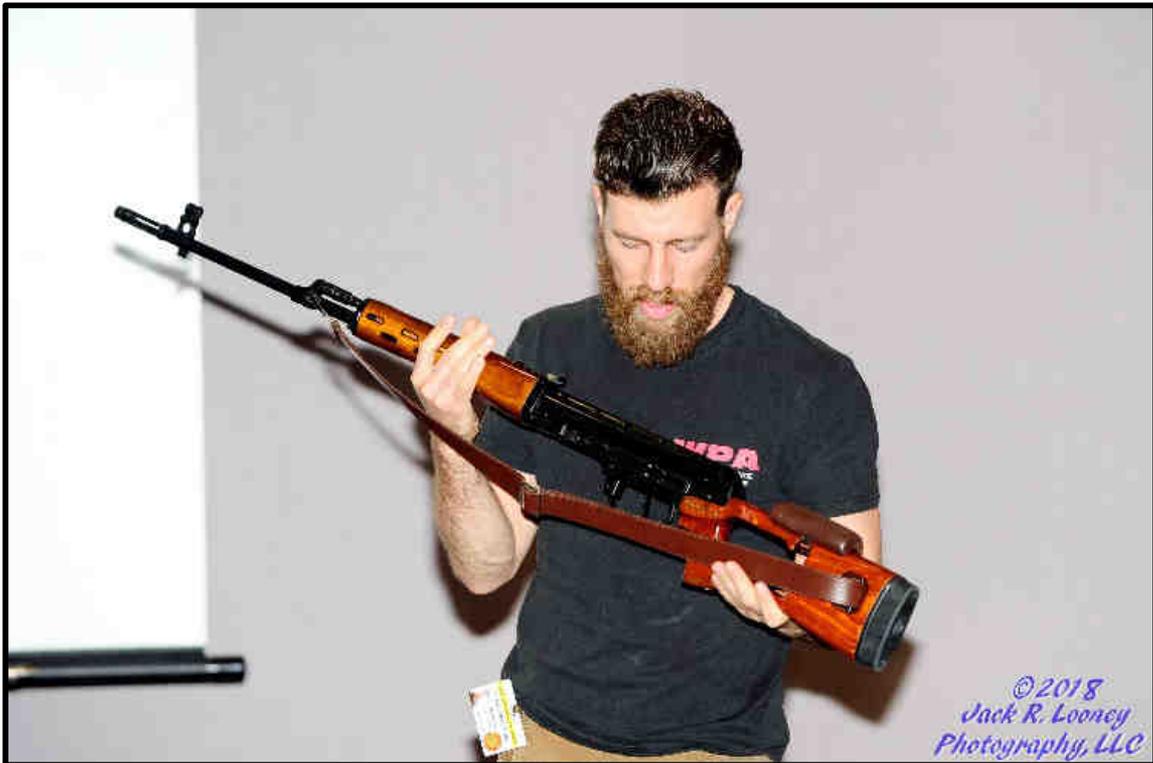


Member 1 (above) presented a Portuguese M1904/39 Mauser rifle. The original Model 1904 rifle was manufactured by Deutsche Waffen- und Munitionsfabriken (DWM) in 6.5x58 caliber. In 1939 it was converted to 7.92x57 (8mm Mauser) by boring out and rechambering the original barrel, as well as cutting the barrel length back to 23.5 inches. As part of the conversion, sight wings were added to the front sight and a gas escape hole was drilled into the receiver. One word of caution – do NOT try to disassemble the bolt on one of these rifles!

In keeping with the Colt AR theme for the evening, Member 2 (at right) shared a Colt 6520 AR15 – marked “Made in Canada”! Initially purchased by a United States law enforcement agency (one rumor says it was the Pennsylvania State Police), these were imported at a time when government demand exceeded Colt’s domestic ability to deliver. As these were going to a law enforcement agency, they were exempt from the assault weapons import ban. They have recently been replaced/made surplus and are now allowed to be sold on the civilian market.

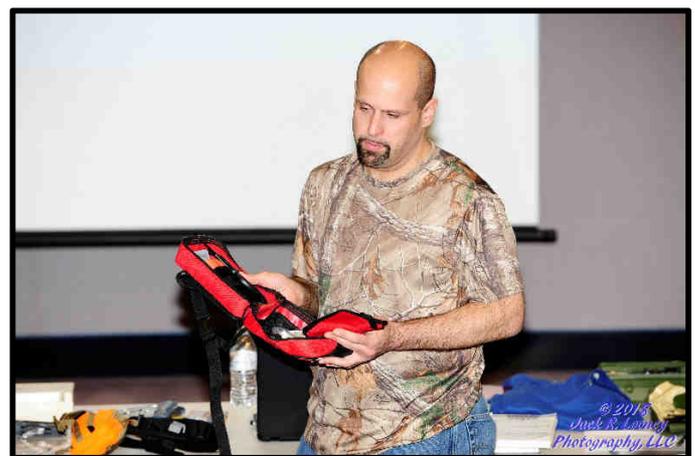
Member 2 also brought in a 12 Gauge Browning Citori. This particular over-under shotgun was made in Japan. Finally, Member 2 showed us a 20 Gauge Sears and Roebuck over-under shotgun, made in Italy for the American retailer. Both of the shotguns are being sold for a family friend.





Member 3 (above) brought in Chinese Type 85 rifle. This follow-on to the Type 79 was a short-stroke piston semi-automatic rifle that copied of the Soviet SVD sniper rifle. Like the SVD, it is chambered in 7.62x54r (the longest serving military round ever) and is capable of close to 1 MOA accuracy. The rifle includes the full complement of accessories - an optic, the para jump case, bayonet (unique to the Type 85), tools, cleaning kit, and the BBG601 laser. Fewer than 1000 were imported “Pre-Ban” – that is, before the importation ban imposed in 1989.

Member 4 (right) astutely noted that many firing ranges, by their very nature, are often located far from “civilization” and medical help. Because injuries can happen, he developed three different Emergency Kits. The small “Pocket Kit” contains a pressure bandage and quik-clot and can fit in your pocket. The medium sized “Office Kit” adds a tourniquet and won’t take up much space in your desk drawer. The large “Range Kit” is designed for your range bag and includes trauma shears and a splint. Member 4 also mentioned that the American College of Surgeons offer training called “Stop the bleed” that he highly recommends.





Member 5 (above) presented an unusual Colt 6920 carbine. Marked “S.D.N. Mexico D.F.” – which translates to “Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional, Mexico, Distrito Federal.” This carbine chambered in 5.56 NATO was built for the Mexican government, but never delivered and was subsequently offered for sale in the United States. It was not, however, a production over-run. During the summer of 2017, the Mexican Peso experienced a 12% loss of value, which meant the Mexican government could not purchase as many carbines as they initially ordered. This surplus carbine was therefore not the result of a production over-run, but rather a customer “under-buy.” This Colt was offered for sale exactly as it would have been delivered to our southern neighbors – to include an operator’s manual printed in Spanish!

Member 6 (right) brought in a Yugoslav M57 pistol. Chambered in 7.62x25, the M57 is a copy of the Soviet Tokarev TT33 pistol, though with a slightly longer grip frame to accommodate a magazine that holds 8 rounds (+1 more than a standard TT33). As the Tokarev design had no manual safety, one has to be added to allow importation into the U.S. Tokarev pistols from Russia, Poland and Romania have had various thumb safeties added to the left side of the frame. This example has a “Glock-style” trigger safety, thus the frame has not been altered. Purchased for \$220 (a bargain!), this surplus handgun came with holster and cleaning rod.





Member 7 (above) shared an AR15 from the National Firearms Museum. It is a 1965 SP1 that was presented to Senator Richard Russel (D-GA) – and it has never been fired. Senator Russel served in the U.S. Senate for almost 40 years (1933-1971), and founded the conservative coalition.

★ In Review ★

“In Review” is a relatively new section to the newsletter (started 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 AMERICAN PRECISION MUSEUM
in the Robbins and Lawrence Armory
By Marc Gorelick, VGCA



Photo - The American Precision Museum

If you are looking for something beyond a vast array of historical guns, then The American Precision Museum in Windsor, Vermont will not disappoint you. It is not a firearms museum in the conventional sense. Rather, it is a paean to the machine tool industry, the “American system” of manufacturing and the U.S. gun making industry of the middle 19th century. A “machine tool” is a machine which makes parts

to other machines, such as screws or gun stocks. The museum has the largest collections of historically significant machine tools and gun making machinery in the United States.

The museum is housed in the renovated 1846 Robbins & Lawrence Armory and if you want to see the early machines that made guns and learn about firearms manufacturing during the mid-1800s, then this is the place. In addition to the many machines that made guns, the museum houses an extensive collection of firearms that traces the history of gun design and construction in the Connecticut Valley, beginning with custom guns made by Nicanor Kendall, David Hall Hilliard, and Asa Story. Moving into the era of the factory-made gun, the collection includes examples of every gun manufactured in the building over its long history, including the Pattern 1853 Enfield rifle and the 1841 Mississippi Rifle made by Robbins & Lawrence, the Model 1861 Special Musket manufactured by Lamson, Goodnow & Yale, the Jennings rifle (forerunner of the Volcanic rifle, which was forerunner of the Henry and Winchester), the Palmer carbine, the Ball repeating carbine, pepperbox pistols, and the rare Windsor Sharps rifle.



Ball Carbines. Albert Ball, working at Lamson, Goodnow & Yale during the Civil War, used aspects of the Henry and Spencer rifles in his own design. 1,000 Ball carbines were made by Lamson at the Robbins and Lawrence Armory.

Photos – American Precision Museum



U.S. Model 1841 "Mississippi" Rifle made by Robbins & Lawrence. American Precision Museum

Robbins and Lawrence was a leading manufacturer of firearms and a gun-making machinery pioneer. In 1838 Richard S. Lawrence, a brilliant mechanic, moved to Windsor and started making guns. He joined Nicanor Kendall, a local gun-maker and they started a new company. Four years later, businessman Samuel E. Robbins came to Windsor and, with Lawrence and Kendall, procured a government contract to produce 10,000 Model 1841 "Mississippi" rifles. Lawrence later bought out Kendall and the firm of Robbins and

Lawrence was born in 1850. A factory was built and it was in the fulfillment of this and subsequent firearms contracts that many of the early machines and machine tools to make interchangeable precision

parts were developed and fabricated. Besides being leading firearms manufacturers, Robbins & Lawrence can be considered founders of the precision tool industry. Although firearms manufacturing was their primary business, they also made and sold machinery and machine tools for making guns as a secondary business throughout the U.S. and overseas. These included innovative machines for rifling gun barrels.



Robbins & Lawrence rifling machine from 1853. These machines helped produce more than 1.5 million rifled barrels by the end of the Civil War. Photo – American Precision Museum

In 1851, Robbins and Lawrence traveled to London to demonstrate their rifles at the Great Exhibition. The rifles were made using interchangeable parts. They won a medal and later (1855) a British Army contract for 25,000 Pattern 1853 Enfield rifles. They also sold metal-working machines for the new British armory at Enfield, making the firm the first U.S. large-scale exporter of machine tools. Among the other guns that Robbins and Lawrence manufactured were the .54 caliber Jennings Magazine Rifle, Sharps Model 1849 breechloader (under contract while the Sharps factory was being built), and .28 and .31 caliber 5-shot percussion pepperboxes. It was the British contract that sank the company. The British contracted with the firm to help equip the British Army, then fighting the Russians in the Crimea. Besides the contract for 25,000 P-53's, Robbins and Lawrence expected to get a contract for another 300,000 weapons and the firm borrowed heavily to expand their manufacturing facilities. But the war ended, the contracts were cancelled or never made and Robbins and Lawrence were left with 12,000 undelivered rifles and a mountain of debt. The firm entered bankruptcy and failed in 1856. Colt bought some of the machinery and E.G. Lamson the rest. The Robbins and Lawrence Armory at Windsor was occupied by E.G. Lamson and during the Civil War he made 50,000 Model 1861 Rifle-Muskets for the Union armies. In 1864 Lamson received contracts for 1,000 Ball breech loading repeating carbines and 1,000 Palmer carbines. These were also made in the Robbins and Lawrence Armory. In 1870 Lamson sold his arms making tools to Winchester and Smith & Wesson.



In addition to the extensive firearms and machine tool collections, the American Precision Museum also has large collections of sewing machines, typewriters and measuring devices. The museum's large archival collection includes photos, drawings, records and associated materials relating to the last two hundred years of precision manufacturing. The museum also has an extensive library that complements its collections of firearms, machine tools, sewing machines, typewriters and measuring devices. Books include a large reference section for firearms. Both the archival and library collections are not normally accessible to the public, however researchers should contact the museum staff for reference requests. The museum is very child friendly and has working machine tool exhibits. Special tours are available with prior arrangement.

An Index Milling Machine. This is one of many Robbins and Lawrence index milling machines that were used at gun making factories in the northeast U.S. during the Civil War. Photo- The American Precision Museum.

The American Precision Museum is located at 196 Main Street, Windsor, VT 05089. It is closed for part of the year but will be open from May 26, 2018 – October 31, 2018 from 10:00AM to 5:00PM. Admission is \$8.00 for adults, \$5:00 for students and kids under six get in free. You can visit the museum's website at <https://www.americanprecision.org>.

Show

NVRHA 46th ANNUAL CIVIL WAR SHOW

By Marc Gorelick, VGCA



Last year I reviewed this show, which is put on by the Northern Virginia Relic Hunters Association (NVRHA). I went to this year's show on Saturday, April 14 and my impression is that the NVRHA is making efforts to grow and improve the show. The show was held in the Fredericksburg Expo Center in Fredericksburg, Virginia on Friday and Saturday, April 13-14. It is still not a gun show, per se, but rather an antique arms and historical item show with a focus on the Civil War. However, there appeared to be more guns on the tables and more private and dealer tables with guns than last year's show. The show is definitely improving as it has expanded to include World War 1 and World War 2 weapons and items. And I saw a small number of tables with guns and items from those wars. I believe that as the word spreads about the expansion, there will be an increase in early 20th century military items. There were dealers there who had late 19th and early 20th century sporting guns.

When I arrived I was impressed with the amount and variety of items at what is a small show. Although there was space for about 300 tables, and NVRHA table plan showed about 242 tables. Some of the tables were club and show admin tables but I counted only about five or six empty tables. The estimated 230-odd filled tables compares favorably with our VGCA show's size. It was admittedly a small, local show (if compared with the Baltimore Antique Arms Show), however there were many items of interest

for sale – military effects, memorabilia, equipment, books, paper goods, art, original photographs, and antique weapons and ammunition. There were many tables full of relics but this year the guns and edged weapons appeared to outnumber the paper. Besides the many Virginia table holders, there were a quite a number of out-of-state antique arms dealers, including Vin Caponi (antique guns) from New York, one from New Jersey, a number from the Pennsylvania and the Carolinas (including the Wilmington Iron Works – dealing in Civil War artillery items), and West Virginia. There were also dealers selling display items if you are thinking of doing a display.

I was greeted with a smile when I arrived. The dealers were invariably friendly and willing to talk. There was not a lot of foot traffic but there seemed to be quite a number of parents with their children attending the show. The aisles were wide and the place was well lighted. There was more than enough free parking and the food vendor was inside the hall with plenty of tables and seating. There were well designed and fascinating judged displays with prizes in several categories. One well documented display, which took up about six tables, showed almost every U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corp metal cap badge, from the founding of the republic to the 20th century. A certified commercial appraiser had a table but while I was there it appeared that he was advertising his services rather than doing appraisals. The NVRHA did have a couple of tables set up where they were doing photography of different relics and items. If you are a Civil War or later collector or history buff, this show is worth attending. Especially if they can successfully expand its post-Civil War to WW2 focus. The show can be done fairly quickly and there are plenty of eateries and shopping in the area. However, if you are only interested in modern arms, the show is not for you. You can get more information about the NVRHA and their Civil War show from the website at <http://www.nvrha.com>.

★ 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 - 2018

- ☞ Apr 20-22, 2018 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*
- ☞ Apr 28-29, 2018 – Manassas, VA – PWC Fairgrounds – *SGK*
- ☞ Apr 28-29, 2018 – Salem, VA - Salem Civic Center - *C&E*
- ☞ May 5-6, 2018 – Doswell, VA – Farm Bureau Center at Meadow Event Park – *SGK*
- ☞ May 5-6, 2018 – Norfolk, VA – Norfolk Scope Arena - *Showmasters*
- ☞ May 19-20, 2018 – Richmond, VA – Old Kmart on Midlothian - *Showmasters*
- ☞ May 26-27, 2018 – Hampton, VA – Hampton Roads Convention Center – *SGK*
- ☞ Jun 8-10, 2018 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*
- ☞ Jun 22-23, 2018 – Standardsville, VA – Greene County Fairgrounds – *GCF Outdoor Show*
- ☞ Jun 30 - Jul 1, 2018 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Conference Center – *SGK*
- ☞ Jul 7-8, 2018 – Manassas, VA – PWC Fairgrounds – *SGK*
- ☞ Jul 7-8, 2018 – Richmond, VA – Old Kmart on Midlothian - *Showmasters*
- ☞ Jul 14-15, 2018 – Hampton, VA – Hampton Roads Convention Center – *SGK*
- ☞ Jul 21-22, 2018 – Salem, VA - Salem Civic Center - *C&E*
- ☞ Jul 27-29, 2018 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*

NOTE: The next Dale City VFW show is not scheduled until October.

MARYLAND - 2018

- May 4-6, 2018 – Edgewood, MD – American Legion Post 17 – ksandlass@comcast.net
- July 14-15, 2018 – West Friendship, MD – Howard County Fairgrounds – *Silverado Gun Shows*

PENNSYLVANIA - 2018

- Apr 21-22, 2018 – Allentown, PA – Econolodge Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Apr 21-22, 2018 – Centre Hall, PA – Centre Co Grange Fairgrounds – *Outdoor Sportsman Club*
- Apr 21-22, 2018 – Philadelphia, PA – National Guard Armory – *Appalachian Promotions*
- Apr 27-28, 2018 – Gettysburg, PA – G'burg Fire Dept – hallowedgroundmilitaria@gmail.com
- Apr 28-29, 2018 - Monroeville, PA – Monroeville Convention Center – *Showmasters*
- Apr 28-29, 2018 – Scranton, PA – Ice Box Arena – *Jaeger Arms Promotions*
- Apr 28-29, 2018 – Carlisle, PA – Carlisle Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Apr 28-29, 2018 – Seneca, PA – Old Cranberry High School – *Front Sight Firearms & Training*
- Apr 28-29, 2018 – Schnecksville, PA – Schnecksville Fire Co - *Appalachian Promotions*
- Apr 28-29, 2018 – Hamlin, PA – Hamlin Fire & Rescue Bingo - *Jaeger Arms*
- May 5-6, 2018 – Bloomsburg, PA – Bloomsburg Fairgrounds - *Eagle Arms*
- May 5-6, 2018 – Butler, PA – Pullman Square - *Pennsylvania Gun Collectors Association*
- May 12-13, 2018 – Allentown, PA – Allentown Fairgrounds – *Forks of the Delaware Historical Arms Society*
- May 19-20, 2018 - Oaks, PA – Greater Philadelphia Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- May 26-27, 2018 – Gettysburg, PA – All Star Conference Center - *Eagle Arms*
- Jun 2-3, 2018 – Wind Gap, PA – Plainfield Township Volunteer Fire Company - *Eagle Arms*
- Jun 9-10, 2018 – Leesport, PA – Farmers Market – *Thegunshows.com*
- Jun 9-10, 2018 – Morgantown, PA – Morgantown Center - *Eagle Arms*
- Jun 16-17, 2018 – Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Show Complex-Main Hall - *C&E*
- Jun 23-24, 2018 – York, PA – York Fairgrounds-Memorial Hall - *Appalachian Promotions*
- Jun 30 – Jul 1, 2018 – Allentown, PA – Econolodge Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Jul 14-15, 2018 – Allentown, PA – Allentown Fairgrounds – *Forks of the Delaware Historical Arms Society*
- Jul 20-21, 2018 – Gettysburg, PA – G'burg Fire Dept – hallowedgroundmilitaria@gmail.com
- Jul 20-21, 2018 – Hamlin, PA – Hamlin Bingo Hall - *Jaeger Arms*
- Jul 21-22, 2018 – Philadelphia, PA – National Guard Armory – *Appalachian Promotions*

SPECIAL NOTE – 2018

- May 5-6, 2018 – Mansfield, OH – Richmond County Fairgrounds – *Ohio Civil War & Artillery Show*
- May 19-20, 2018 – Wilmington, OH – The Roberts Centre – *Ohio Gun Collector's Association*
- Jul 14-15, 2018 – Wilmington, OH – The Roberts Centre – *Ohio Gun Collector's Association*

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. Items will be listed for one issue of the Newsletter.

WANT-TO-SELL: Firearms

✪ I have processed over 1000 estate firearms for display and sale at **All Shooters Tactical Gun Store, 3310 Noble Pond Way in Woodbridge** (off the PWC Parkway, near the Woodbridge Post Office). We have sold over 400 guns so far from the collection. There are still many inexpensive rifles, shotguns, and pistols as well as higher priced guns available. For sale are all the .22s you could ever hope to see, as are many older Mossberg, Stevens, Savage, Winchester, Remington, etc. guns. There is a very nice selection of Enfields, Savage Over/Under .22LR/.22 Mag/.222 over 20 gauge Model 24s, all kinds of hunting rifles in all calibers, lots of Marlin lever actions, etc. When you visit, if you are looking for a particular firearm and don't see it, be sure to ask the sale staff to check in the back room. There are many additional guns in the back that are waiting for space on the walls out on the main floor, and the staff can go look for what you want. Please come out to AST and get your share! Thanks, Dave Litchfield

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

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.