



# VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

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NRA Affiliate Number G8162



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## September 2015 VGCA e-Newsletter



★ **VGCA Presentation for August 27, 2015:** The August presentation was provided by VGCA member Bill Troy and his lovely wife Carol. Bill is the President of the Thompson SMG Collectors Association, and his wife was a prior president. Bill started out with a brief overview of the inventor of the Thompson submachine-gun, John T. Thompson, a career military officer born on New Year's Eve in 1860. In 1882, he graduated West Point and had a career that involved some of America's most famous military small arms. In 1903, he was testing the M1903 Springfield rifle. In 1915, he set up the production for Remington Arms to make the British P-14 Enfield Rifle. In 1916, he setup Remington and Westinghouse for production of the M1891 Mosin-Nagant rifle for the Russians. His WWI experience however, told him that there was a strong need for a weapon to perform as a "trench broom" to support the assaulting and clearing of enemy trenches. To this end, he formed the Auto-Ordnance Corporation to manufacture his newly developed "auto rifle," however soon discovered that the blowback action he favored was not suitable for full power .30-06 ammunition. He then focused on the .45 ACP pistol cartridges; however the resulting gun is not ready for production until 1919 after the war had ended.

The first Thompson guns were made by Colt. After testing the Thompson is adopted by the USMC, however the US Army only bought 400 guns. While the US military was less than enthusiastic, the guns were a hit on the civilian market. Ads in the 1920s featured images of cowboys in chaps defending a ranch from Mexican bandits, and the guns achieved true notoriety in the hands of Prohibition gangsters, which resulted in the National Firearms Act of 1934 which mandated registering and taxing machineguns. Even so, by the start of WW2, only 4000 of the 15,000 gun production run had been sold. The British military however did purchase a large number of the guns, which were very popular, as evidenced by a famous photo of Winston Churchill holding a Thompson. The initial price for the Thompson submachine-gun was \$175.00 without the Cutts compensator. The early Colt Model M1921A without

a compensator had a cyclic rate of 850 rounds per minute (rpm). In 1926 Auto-Ordnance (AO) began offering the Cutts compensator option. There was also a very rare Model of 1923 in, 45 Remington for longer range and power that was based upon a heavily modified M1921. Another gun of the Colt era was the Model of 1921/28 which had a reduced cyclic rate of 700 rpm at the request of the US Navy along with a horizontal for grip option.



Mr. Troy then covered the guns of the WW2 era, starting with the Model of 1928. Manufacturing commenced with Colt tooling being shipped to Savage Arms in Utica, NY and to Auto-Ordnance in

Bridgeport, Connecticut. Between the two companies, over 670,000 Thompsons were produced. All of these guns had the Blish system to retard the cycling force of the bolt. Magazines were offered in 20 and 30 round stick magazines, 50 round drums, and 100 round C-drums (C=Roman numeral 100).

During WW2, the Thompson was modified to simplify production to reduce costs and production time, improve the handling and ease of use, and also to eliminate features that wartime experience had shown were not necessary. Elimination of the Blish system was one change, as was a simplification of the sights and elimination of the finned barrel and compensator and the vertical pistol fore grip. Additionally, the cyclic rate was reduced to 500-575 rpm. This reduced the costs per gun from the M1928 at \$62 to the new M1 costing \$43. Eventually over 1,000,000 guns were manufactured.

Post-WW2 production was by Auto-Ordnance in West Hurley, New York and will have the letters NAC in the serial numbers. Guns were made in both .45 ACP and .22LR calibers during 1985 and 1986. 247 guns were sold as commemoratives for WW2, Korea, and Vietnam. Bill closed out his talk with a number of collector tips of what to look for if purchasing a Thompson. As expected, there was a long Q&A session and Bill and Carol provided their insight on the guns they had on display and also on the Thompson SMG Collectors Association. If you missed this meeting you missed a great presentation.

📌 **Business Meeting for August 27, 2015:** President Jim Burgess opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Jim also recognized 4 guests for the evening. Show Manager **Rick Nahas** reported that we still had 7 tables vacant for the November show. VGCA Treasurer **Shannon Zeigler** provided a report on the Association's books and urged members to buy table for the show. VGCA Membership Coordinator **Larry Hare** presented to the gathered membership prospective new member candidates Robert M. Marshall, a former US Coast Guardsman and Fairfax Police Officer, and Michael J. Cogswell of Vienna, VA. Both gentlemen were sponsored by Larry Hare. After each provided an introduction they were voted into the Association by unanimous votes.

**(PLEASE NOTE:** As recent VGCA shows have been known to sell out, with only 7 tables left, now would be a good time for members wishing to have a sales table or team up with another member for a sales table to reserve a table for the November show. This is also a great opportunity for members to try their hand at doing an educational display table to display their collection and provide insights on the guns and their role in the country's sporting heritage or history. Contact **Rick Nahas** ASAP to get your spot for either type of table.)

📌 **September Meeting: John Dahlgren and the Plymouth Rifle:** VGCA member Marc Gorelick will give an exciting presentation about Admiral John Dahlgren, the acknowledged father of U.S. naval ordnance and the developer of the famed Plymouth Rifle. This fascinating multi-media presentation will cover the development, manufacture and use of this historic firearm and its unique bayonets, from before the Civil War through World War II. It will also include tips for collectors. Marc has written and had articles published about the Plymouth Rifle and Admiral Dahlgren. Bring in your own Plymouth Rifles, bayonets and related items for "Show and Tell".

#### Acting President's Comments

I'd like to thank everyone who signed up to help with security for the November show at the last meeting. We will continue to pass around the sign-up sheet at the upcoming meetings for those who were not ready to make a commitment so far in advance. Any help you can provide, even just a couple of hours one day, will be greatly appreciated. Many hands make light work for all of us. We also have need for set-up volunteers and show judges. See me if you can help.

If you missed the last meeting you missed a good one. My hat is off to Bill Troy and his wife for a great presentation and other VGCA members who brought in Thompsons for show and tell. You can read all about it elsewhere in this newsletter but it was well worth being there to see these firearms up close. You won't want to miss this month's program which will be presented by our own Marc Gorelick. His topic will be Plymouth rifles, a subject near and dear to my heart. These .69 caliber, percussion, muzzle-loading rifles were adopted by the Navy during the Civil War. I don't want to steal any of Marc's thunder as he will fully cover their development by Captain (later Admiral) John Dahlgren, production by Eli Whitney Jr., and subsequent use. Some are still being used in N-SSA competition.

At the last meeting I reported that the membership would be receiving copies of the new bylaws revision in the mail for review. These were mailed September 9 and everyone should have received their copy by now. If you did not receive a copy, please let us know so we can send another copy to a correct mailing address. I originally wanted to have a membership vote to approve the revised bylaws at the upcoming September meeting but the current bylaws mandate that any amendments be must sent out for review at least 15 days in advance of such a vote. We did not meet that deadline so the vote will be postponed to the October meeting. That should give everyone plenty of time to thoroughly examine the document and analyze the differences. Come to the October meeting prepared to vote for or against the changes.

Meanwhile, I hope to see you Thursday, September 24!

-Jim Burgess

## Other News!

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

#### ***NEW AMENDED BY-LAWS FOR MEMBER REVIEW***

As announced at the August meeting, on August 20, 2015, the VGCA Board of Directors unanimously approved changes to the By-Laws. As stipulated in the current By-Laws, a copy of the proposed new By-laws was mailed to every VGCA member in good standing for review. Due to an oversight, for which the Board apologizes, the proposed new By-Laws were sent without a cover letter explaining what the enclosed By-Laws were or why it was mailed. This notice serves as a belated memorandum of explanation or cover letter.

There were a number of changes made to the By-Laws to bring them up-to-date, efficient and effective, improve club operations, governance, transparency and accountability, make the association better able to meet changing situations, and take advantage of changing technology.

Some of the major improvements include:

- *Clarifying the qualifications for Life membership (Article II) – this will define the procedures to conform to the current By-Laws and help provide for a better flow of income;*
- *Making the procedure for applying for membership more efficient and effective – this simplifies the process and improves vetting of prospective new members;*
- *Improving the timing and collection of dues (Article III) – this helps provide for a more reliable income stream and member benefits;*
- *Adding two appointed Directors to the Board, a Show Manager and Show Security Manager (Article VI) – this expands member representation and the knowledge base of the Board, and recognizes the reality of the importance of these positions in VGCA affairs;*
- *Clarifying duties and responsibilities of officers and directors; (Article V & VI) – This helps makes the Board more efficient, effective and accountable;*
- *Changing the date of elections from January/February to May of each year (Article VII) – This eliminates winter weather, Fall Show and holiday break issues, and allows for determining “members in good standing” for voting purposes;*
- *Providing for the possibility of electronic balloting (Article VII) – this will save money on printing and postage, and improve transparency and participation. Those without connectivity will still get ballots by mail; and*
- *Clarifying descriptions of tables at gun shows (Article IX) – this improves the show operation and helps maintain the quality of the show.*

Please take the time to review the new proposed By-Laws. They will be voted on at the October meeting of the VGCA by those members in good standing who are present. If you attend the meeting, the Board of Directors urges to vote **FOR** the new By-Laws.

- ☆ **Current Speaker List for 2015:** What follows is our current sign up for speakers for the 2015 calendar year.
  - **October 22:** Steve Westbrook: American Hammer Shotguns of 1880s-90s
  - **December 3:** Holiday Dinner/Show & Tell/Swap Meet

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



☆ **Inquiry From UK Regarding The Lapointe Machine Tool Company and 8-Groove Gang Broach for Rifling the UK Bren Gun:** The VGCA received an inquiry from a UK BREN Gun collector of the first order asking for any information about the Lapointe Machine Tool Co. before and during World War II and any Canadian connections in regard to rifling BREN gun barrels in .303 caliber. The

Lapointe Machine Tool Co was the premier US Company for making broaching machinery, including for rifling gun barrels. It's broaching machinery and broaches were exported all over the world, including the UK.

According to the British collector, "sources who formerly worked at RSAF Enfield, say the use of broaches was not a British working practice for rifling the longer rifle/MG's barrels, (pistol/SMG barrels only) although that is not apparently the case with US production. So it is probable that this item is at least experimental in 'BREN' .303 terms and may reflect a Canadian knowledge of US working practices to provide a speedier method of rifling a barrel?"

John Morris (VGCA) explained, "The barrel is rifled in one pass of this tool. The broach is fixed and does not rotate on its axis but the barrel is free to rotate and is made to do so by the design of the broach. This broach speeds the barrel rifling operation and reduces the cost."

The website for Lapointe Machine Tool Company, now known as "Pioneer" is: <http://www.pioneerbroach.com/#!lapointe-hudson-broach-div-of-pbc/cegb>

Any member with specific information about an 8-groove broach for rifling BREN gun barrels, please contact Richard Jones at [richardjones320@hotmail.com](mailto:richardjones320@hotmail.com).

### Show and Tell



☆ **Show & Tell for the August 27, 2015 Meeting:** The show and tell for the evening did have an unexpectedly large number of items related to the evening's Presentation. The session was started with **Member 1** displaying a framed and mounted vintage photo of an FBI Academy night shoot of Thompson SMGs with tracer ammunition at their Quantico, VA range. The photograph appears to be from the early 1960s. **Member 2** showed



an exceptionally rare German Naval P-04 Luger with a 4" 9mm barrel. These unusual Lugers have Navy markings and a unique serial number range. **Member 3** presented 2 unusual Mosin-Nagant rifles. Both were "Blindee conversions" of the Mosin Nagant M-1891 7.62x54R rifles to

8mm Mauser that were done in Belgium. Some of these converted rifles found their way to the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War and the survival rate is low. These 2 were purchased as boltless barreled receivers. The member had bolts modified to the Blindee configuration and also located rare original Blindee converted stocks from the company that had originally imported the rifles. **Member 4** showed a Czechoslovakian Vz-35 Military Air Rifle Trainer. This trainer was the same size as the Czech Vz-24 Mauser in 8mmX57 Mauser caliber. These well-made air rifles used a small compartment to hold 4.4mm lead balls which would drop into a loading hole in the receiver. They also accepted the Vz-24 bayonets and military slings. **Member 5**, in keeping with the evening's theme and presentation had a small display of M1928 Thompson parts, including the rare shot cartridge magazine,



and Mills pouches, and a hard case for the 100 round C-Drums. **Member 6**, also kept with the themes, but his Thompson was a toy wooden model of a 1928 Thompson with fore end grip and drum magazine, similar models and home-made wooden guns were very popular with children playing army in the years after WW2. The 1960s TV show *Combat!* also inspired similar examples of craftsmanship and ingenuity. **Member 7** displayed his Savage (Utica) M1928 Thompson that was shipped to the United Kingdom in 1940. In the UK it was given Enfield swivels and British proof markings



when it was accepted in to military service. This global traveler returned to the United States after the war, and is still in excellent condition and has all original matching numbers. **Member 8**, showed a specimen that spoke of how influential the Thompson SMG was in history. He showed a 'dress-up kit' that made a Ruger 10-22, probably the most owner-modified rifle ever made, resemble a Thompson SMG, and looked like a fun shooting gun. **Member 9** showed a recent bargain purchase he made of a generic Polish P-64 pistol in 9x18 Makarov, and asked for recommendations for refinishing the pistol. Closing out the evening, **Member 10** presented an inert Chinese Communist shaped charge anti-armor grenade from the 1960s. He related that these grenades were still in use and commonly encountered in Iraq being used against US forces.

### Upcoming Events and Shows

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

#### VIRGINIA 2015

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

#### MARYLAND 2015

- September 19-20, 2015 – Annapolis, MD – Annapolis National Guard Armory – *Appalachian Gun Shows*
- October 3-4, 2015 – Timonium, MD – Timonium Fairgrounds – *Appalachian Gun Shows*

#### PENNSYLVANIA 2015

- October 10-11, 2015 - Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Complex – *Showmasters*
- October 17-18, 2015 – Allentown, PA – Allentown Fairgrounds – *Forks of the Delaware*

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