



VIRGINIA GUN COLLECTORS ASSOC., INC.

WWW.VGCA.NET

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

NRA Affiliate Number G8162
CMP Affiliate Number 026160



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October 2017 VGCA Newsletter

♣ **September Presentation:** For our September presentation, we tried something a little different. Instead of one person presenting on a single topic, we had no less than eight VGCA members bring in their “Three Favorites.” Members were asked to bring up to three items that exemplified their collection (the items did not have to be firearms). The items were be set up on tables around the meeting room and the owners talked about their significance as the other members walked from table to table. Some examples are captured below:



One of the most impressive displays included a Solothurn S18/1000 20mm anti-tank rifle. This thing was MASSIVE! The same member also displayed a WWII German GRB-39. Originally designed as an anti-tank rifle (the PzB-39), by 1941 it was obsolete in this role and was modified to launch anti-tank grenades



Note the member above hefting the Solothurn barrel. On the right is a Luftwaffe M30 survival drilling. This rare piece of WWII hardware was designed for Me109, Ju87, and He111 crews operating in North Africa. It consists of two 12 gauge barrels over a 9.3x74r rifle barrel. Less than 2500 examples were made in 1941-42. This example was complete with case, manual, and original test target!



Army marked with Boyt belt holster and USMC marked Boyt shoulder holster.

This “Three Favorites” (left) consisted of a Remington Model 8 in .35 Remington, a Rossi Model 59 pump in .22 Magnum, and 1911A1 US

This view (at right) down the table shows several “Three-somes.” One was three rifles made at the Springfield Armory – a M1873 “Trapdoor” made in the year that member’s grandfather was born, a M1903 made in the year his father was born, and an M1 “Garand” made in the member’s year of birth! Another “Three-some” was a much-modified Remington Model 788 (the member’s first gun purchase) in .22/250, A Winchester Model 52 “Pre-A” inherited from a Great-Uncle, and a WWI Royal Air Force Number 1 Mk I 1.5 inch (37mm) flare gun.





The evening was a success and the theme will be probably be repeated in years to come!

🔴 **September Business:** Vice President Rick Nahas brought the September membership meeting to order at 6:57 p.m. and led us through the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 38 members and guests in attendance – including two guests from the Garand Collectors Association (GCA).

Rick led the members in a moment of silence for the three VGCA members had recently passed.

Rick also mentioned that our VGCA President, Mr. Ernie Lyles, would be having open heart surgery in October and would “out of commission” for about six weeks.

The Gun Show Director (also Rick) gave a quick update and noted that there were only 5 tables available for our November Show.

It was announced that the VGCA Tour of the Colt factory in Hartford, CT as well as the behind-the-scenes glimpse of the Springfield Armory’s firearms collection went very well. All who participated were impressed.

Rob Becker reiterated that the “For Sale” ads in the VGCA Newsletter were free, but would only run for one month. After that, the ad has to be re-submitted for publication.

Phil Hill, our newest Director, mentioned his intent to champion a new Youth Membership. Details will announced in the future.

Dave Litchfield mentioned Ed Johnson’s estate. Most of Ed’s firearms have already been sold, but there remains an extensive collection of old Western Memorabilia, Winchester signage, posters, tools, knives, holsters, etc. Once these items have been priced, VGCA members will be given first opportunity to view/purchase during our show weekend.

Shannon Zeigler mentioned that there were show flyers available for members to take with them.

He also announced that future electronic copies of the VGCA Newsletter would be sent via Constant Contact.

President's Comments

Please keep our VGCA President, Ernie Lyles, in your thoughts and prayers as he recovers from his surgery on Wednesday, 18 Oct 2017. Our Vice President, Rick Nahas, will be assuming Ernie's duties until further notice.

✪ **Upcoming October 26th Meeting:** Unfortunately, the Heckler & Koch presentation scheduled for the October meeting had to be postponed. As the newsletter went to press, no replacement topic had been announced. Please see the VGCA website for any update.

As always, get there early for social time (and pizza) at 6 p.m., with the meeting starting at 7 p.m.

IN MEMORY

Mr. Dan Fitzell, life member of the Virginia Gun Collectors Association from Timonium, Maryland, passed away on 14 September 2017.

Other News!

✪ VGCA VISITS THE COLT FACTORY

By Marc Gorelick, VGCA

Photos by Rob Becker, VGCA (unless otherwise attributed)



Fourteen members of the Virginia Gun Collectors Association visited Colt Manufacturing LLC in West Hartford, Connecticut on September 20, 2017. The visit was set up by VGCA Vice-President Rick Nahas. Colt extended the welcome mat and provided a superb guided tour of the factory and custom shop, as well as a meeting with the Colt research staff. Colt has had its ups and downs in recent years, like much of the firearms industry, but it appears to be in good shape. The venerable firearms manufacturer had a rough time but has emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy and while military and law enforcement/security sales are still important, it appears to be pivoting back to the civilian market.

A case in point is the recent introduction of the Colt Cobra revolver. Designed for concealed carry, it is all steel construction, small frame, .38 caliber (+P capable) with a 2" barrel and fiber-optic front sight. It holds 6 rounds and has a Hogue overmolded grip to enhance control.



Colt Cobra. Photo – Colt.

The Colt factory, which is co-located with Colt company headquarters, has been at its current location since 1994. The factory is divided into three sections – 1) handguns, 2) M-240 General Purpose Machine Guns, and 3) rifles (M-16 and M-4). Colt makes standard M-240's and M-240L's, or light. According to Bob Grainger, the Colt 2nd shift Director of Operations, who graciously took the group on an outstanding and informative tour of the factory, there are 450 factory employees operating in two shifts, although Colt can surge to three shifts. Colt can make 1,000 guns a day with plenty of surge capacity. The large

manufacturing area was an impressive mix of old and new technology. The old technology carried on the tradition of Colt quality and individual attention to detail while the vast array of modern automated and computerized manufacturing machines brought efficient, cost-effective and ultra-precise fabrication to the mix. For instance, Colt invested \$10 million in new computerized machinery to make the M-240 machine gun. Quality control and multiple inspections were evident throughout the manufacturing process. Colt uses 100% U.S. made parts in its guns and manufactures most of the components on site. Raw forgings and some smaller parts, such as springs, pins and barrel nuts are purchased from sub-contractors, but they still have to go through a rigorous inspection before they are allowed on the factory floor.

At the beginning of the factory tour, the VGCA members saw the Cobra line, where a special order of Cobras was being fabricated for the Friends of the NRA. Colt graciously escorted the group around the factory where it observed the equipment in operation. The group saw milling machines, heat treating equipment, the chemical finishing department where bluing took place, computerized engraving of dot-matrix serial numbers and other markings, hardening of parts in furnaces, phosphating of barrels and other components, rifling of barrels and robotic assembly of components to exact tolerances. Polishing is still done with old technology – humans and polishing belts. Barrels come in as 20 foot long blank rods, are cut to the proper length and rifled in the factory by button broaching. Those rifled barrels that are to be chrome lined are sent to a sub-contractor but are still put through rigorous testing when they are returned to the factory. Colt is known for the tight tolerances of its guns and there are quality control inspections and testing of components, sub-assemblies and finished products all along the manufacturing process to ensure that both government and civilian products meet the highest standards and perform flawlessly.



Colt Trooper Patrol Carbine. Photo - Colt.

All Colt firearms, both military and civilian, are tested before they leave the factory. There is a 100 yard range for testing rifles and machines guns and a shorter range for handguns. The civilian guns are made to the same high standard as the military weapons. Colt has many U.S. government contracts and there are three government inspectors in the factory on a full-time basis who have the authority to pull any part or gun destined for the government and test it at any time. Guns are tested for both targeting and accuracy, and for function and endurance. The targeting and accuracy test is computer controlled and the results recorded for each firearm. The function and endurance tests for government contract guns (including full-auto tests) is extremely demanding and includes firing 6,000 rounds from selected firearms. An interesting government inspection that ensures interchangeability of parts involves randomly selecting 10 completed guns and completely disassembling them down to the smallest of the 170-180 components. The parts are mixed together and the guns reassembled. They are then test fired for accuracy and for function/endurance. Colt has many Foreign Military Sales contracts and deals with 90 countries. These guns are as rigorously inspected as those destined for the U.S. military. Colt uses the best quality ammunition in these tests. Colt also manufactures the M-203 Grenade Launcher at the factory that is attached to M-16's.

One of the highlights of the tour was a visit to the Colt Custom Shop. Here master gunsmiths assemble guns by hand and tune them to meet special orders from customers. The custom shop has a two-year backlog. The engraving section was a star attraction of the tour. The VGCA group saw and talked to the master engravers who were there. All engraving in the Custom Shop is done by hand and the engravers are true artists and masters of their craft. Customers can send in photos of what they want and the artisans will translate the photos into magnificent works of art. The people in the custom shop, as well as the workers on the factory floor were friendly and seemed to display a pride in their work as well as the Colt tradition.



VGCA members discuss Colt shipping documents with Ms. Haynes (Colt Historian) – and examine individual records in detail.

The last part of the tour was extremely fascinating – the group met with Colt Historian Beverly Haynes and Colt Archivist Paul Szymaszek who allowed them examine original Colt paper records. Although Samuel Colt started manufacturing revolvers in 1836, and Colt Manufacturing was established in 1855, Colt shipping and production records go back only as far as the Civil War (1861) with a gap from 1864-1871. The records examined were in bound books and included records from the Civil War, 1878 and 1883 shotgun records, World War Two 1911 production for 1943, and Colt Python records for the 1950's. Haynes and Szymaszek talked freely about the intricacies and difficulties of research in the Colt archives. For instance, they have to search by serial number, which are usually not in numerical order, there was no cross-referencing of gun with customer in the old records, and the hand written entries can hard to decipher because of bad handwriting, strange abbreviations and/or fading ink. While Colt began scanning the paper records about 15 years ago to preserve them they were not indexed. So if you were wondering why Colt charges as much as it does for an archive search it is because of the time and effort involved.



Onion dome at the original Colt factory in Hartford, CN (not the current factory). Note the infamous Colt “Prancing Pony” on top!

🌟 **Membership Chairman’s Report:** Please welcome our new Annual Member.

- **Nick Pietrzak** of Fairfax, VA was sponsored by **David Litchfield**.

Nick, welcome aboard and congratulations. We hope to see you at the Monthly Membership Meeting on Thursday, October 26, 2017.

New Member Applications: The VGCA has received a Membership Application from the following individual 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 October Membership Meeting.

- **Mark Howard** of Manassas, VA is sponsored by **David Litchfield**

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!!!

Show-n-Tell

There was no Show-n-Tell in September because the main presentation was a large-scale Show-n-Tell!

In Review

The “In Review” section of the newsletter 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 NEW MARKET BATTLEFIELD MILITARY MUSEUM

By Marc Gorelick, VGCA

Just off Interstate 81 at the exit to New Market, Virginia, is a hidden jewel of a museum for history buffs and arms collectors alike. It is truly a “must-see” for anyone interested in guns or American history. The New Market Battlefield Military Museum is not to be confused with the nearby state-owned and operated Virginia Museum of the Civil War, which interprets the 1864 Battle of New Market with emphasis on the role of Virginia Military Institute Cadets. Rather, the New Market Battlefield Military Museum is a privately owned museum that is the only such facility on a nationally recognized Civil War battlefield. The museum was created and is owned by one man, John Bracken, and houses most, if not all, of his extensive collection of rare and historical artifacts from American history, with particular emphasis on the Civil War, especially the Battle of New Market, and firearms.



The museum’s collection is the result of a life-time of collecting and includes many rare and historically important firearms, such as a Sharps 1853 carbine documented to John Brown’s raiders at Harper’s Ferry, and a complete cased set of Remington Model 1858 Army revolvers that belonged to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that was captured by Capt. Oliver E. Bryant of the Union Army. Many of the weapons on display, whether guns or swords, are documented to specific individuals, including common soldiers and generals, such as Union General Joe Hooker and Confederate General William Barksdale. Also on display is William S. Hart’s Model 1894 Winchester in .38-40. Tying guns to individuals adds a personal touch to the displays and makes them come alive for the visitor.

Historians, arms collectors and especially gun collectors will enjoy the museum. The museum’s 130 exhibits follow and illuminate the history of the United States from prehistoric days to our latest military conflicts. The exhibits emphasize firearms and other weapons and the decisive role they played in

determining American history. While over half the exhibits are about the Civil War, others cover the other wars and weapons in American history. Displays include, but are not limited to:

- French and Indian Wars (weaponry)
- American Revolution (uniforms, weapons, personal items)
- War of 1812 (uniforms, weapons, personal items)
- Mexican War (uniforms, weapons, personal items)
- Pre-Civil War
- American Long Rifles & accouterments (including a display about Shenandoah Valley gun makers)
- Civil War
- The American Indian in the Civil War
- Battle of New Market (personal items, weapons, maps and information)
- Indian Wars and Native American art, culture and weapons
- The Spanish-American War
- World War I
- World War II (Original Items brought back from the European and Pacific theatres by U.S. soldiers, including an entire display about the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and another about Nazi persecution of Jews.)
- Viet Nam



All of the displays are well lighted and the objects easy to see with excellent signage and explanations that include their history. Besides weapons they include photographs, maps, uniforms, accessories and original documents. The hundreds of weapons on display include many rare and/or little known pieces – and many are in outstanding condition. They include Ketchum Grenades used during the Civil War in siege and trench warfare, American Indian Dag knives (first appeared around 1750 in the Great Lakes and introduced by the Hudson’s Bay Company as a trade item), and a .54 caliber U.S. Model 1807 flintlock carbine made at Springfield Armory. It is historically significant as the first official arsenal-made carbine, and the only gun made at a national armory under order of the Indian Department, as gifts for friendly Indians.

The Museum also houses an extensive collection of fossils found in America, as well as early American stone tools and weapons. Indeed, the collection of Native American items, including beautiful clothing, quill work and weapons, rivals that of many larger, more famous museums.



Part of the collection of Native American articles. Photo – New Market Battlefield Military Museum

The flags on display include many that are rare or unique, including the Virginia Flag carried by the Continental Morgan Guards at the trial and execution of John Brown and later in the Civil War by the 5th Virginia Infantry, and the Confederate battle flag of the 10th Virginia Infantry which was one of the few not surrendered at Appomattox.

The museum's Civil War exhibits cover a number of battles, including less well-known fights such as the Battle of Pea Ridge, where Cherokee and Creek Native Americans under Cherokee Brigadier General Stand Watie fought for the Confederacy. Watie was the only Native American General in the Confederate Army and the last Confederate General to surrender. Displays follow the history of selected units on both sides, such as the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry and the 1st New York Cavalry, as well as individual soldiers, such as Confederate William Ludwell Sheppard of Virginia, who joined the Confederate Army as a private, ended the war as a lieutenant, and went on to become a famous artist and sculpture. Also covered were the horrors of Civil War prisoner-of-war camps, including the Rock Island Military Prison, where 80% of the prisoners died. Fascinating items include Union and Confederate fired Minié bullets that collided during a battle and were fused together.

In addition to these militarily connected items, there is a section that contains a huge collection of toy guns and cap pistols and World War II era military toys. The gift shop is especially noteworthy as there are many original genuine items for sale – many of which come from the museum's collections. This is unique among museum gift shops. There is also an extensive library of about 1,000 non-fiction books for sale, many of which are out-of-print and quite a few are about guns. Both the articles and books appeared to be fairly priced.

The New Market Battlefield Military Museum is a relatively short drive for many VGCA members. The address is 9500 Collins Parkway, New Market, VA 22844. It is just off exit 264 on I-81 and is visible from the highway. Additional information is available on the museum's website: www.newmarketbattlefieldmilitarymuseum.com.

📖 Book

There will not be a book review this month, but rather, I will pass along some news that will no doubt impact the gun collecting community. Paladin Press, publishers of firearms and shooting-related books for 47 years, has announced that at the end of this year it will be going out of business. They are currently having a sale of their remaining titles at 55% off. But you will need to act quickly – books are selling fast and Paladin Press will cease taking orders on 29 November 2017. Their web site is: paladin-press.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 2017

- 👉 Oct 28-29, 2017 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Conference Center – *SGK*
- 👉 Oct 28-29, 2017 – Salem, VA – Salem Civic Center - *C&E*
- 👉 Nov 4-5, 2017 – Manassas, VA – PWC Fairgrounds – *VGCA (our show!)*
- 👉 Nov 4-5, 2017 – Norfolk, VA – Norfolk Scope - *Showmasters*
- 👉 Nov 4-5, 2017 – Winchester, VA – Body Renew Fitness & Family Sports Center – *SGK*
- 👉 Nov 11-12, 2017 – Dublin, VA – UAW Union Hall – *Dublin Gun Show*
- 👉 Nov 11-12, 2017 – Richmond, VA – Richmond International Raceway – *Capital of the Confederacy Civil War Show*
- 👉 Nov 11-12, 2017 – Richmond, VA – Midlothian Kmart – *Showmasters*
- 👉 Nov 17-19, 2017 - Chantilly, VA – Dulles Expo Center – *Showmasters*
- 👉 Nov 25-26, 2017 – Hampton, VA – Hampton Roads Convention Center – *SGK*
- 👉 Nov 25-26, 2017 - Harrisonburg, VA – Rockingham County Fairgrounds – *C&E*
- 👉 Dec 2-3, 2017 – Dale City, VA – Dale City VFW – *Showmasters/Old Dominion*
- 👉 Dec 2-3, 2017 – Manassas, VA – PWC Fairgrounds – *SGK*
- 👉 Dec 9-10, 2017 – Doswell, VA – Farm Bureau Center at Meadow Event Park - *SGK*
- 👉 Dec 9-10, 2017 – Fishersville, VA – Augusta Expo Center - *Showmasters*
- 👉 Dec 16-17, 2017 – Fredericksburg, VA – Expo and Conference Center – *SGK*

MARYLAND 2017

- 👉 Nov 3-5, 2017 – Forest Hill, MD – Jarrettsville VFW - *Jarrettsville VFW*
- 👉 Nov 11-12, 2017 – Easton, MD – Talbot County Community Center – *Eastern Shore Arms Collector*
- 👉 Nov 11-12, 2017 – Frederick, MD – Frederick Fairgrounds – *Silverado Gun Shows*

PENNSYLVANIA 2017

- 👉 Oct 28-29, 2017 – Allentown, PA – Econolodge Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*
- 👉 Oct 28-29, 2017 – York, PA – Fairgrounds Memorial Hall – *TheGunShows.com*
- 👉 Oct 28-29, 2017 – Gettysburg, PA – Allstar Events Center - *Civil War & Militaria Show*
- 👉 Nov 4-5, 2017 – Lebanon, PA – Lebanon Valley Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- 👉 Nov 4-5, 2017 – East Stroudsburg, PA – VFW – *Jaeger Arms Promotions*
- 👉 Nov 4-5, 2017 –Greencastle, PA – Mason Dixon Auto Auction – *Appalachian Promotions*
- 👉 Nov 11-12, 2017 – Leesport, PA – Farmers Market – *Appalachian Promotions*

- Nov 11-12, 2017 – Split Rock, PA – 100 Mossywood Rd, Lake Harmony - *Eagle Arms*
- Nov 18-19, 2017 – Hermitage, PA – Hickory Post VFW – *LR Gun Shows*
- Nov 18-19, 2017 – Lake Ariel, PA – Lake Ariel Fire Company - *Jaeger Arms Promotions*
- Nov 18-19, 2017 – Morgantown, PA – Morgantown Center - *Eagle Arms*
- Nov 19, 2017 – Portland, PA – Portland Fire Company Hall – *James Steele*
- Nov 25-26, 2017 – Wind Gap, PA – Plainfield Fire Company - *Eagle Arms*
- Dec 2-3, 2017 - Monroeville, PA – Monroeville Convention Center - *Showmasters*
- Dec 9-10, 2017 – Harrisburg, PA – PA Farm Show Complex-Main Hall - *C&E*
- Dec 15-17, 2017 - Oaks, PA – Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Dec 16-17, 2017 – Harborcreek, PA – Harborcreek Fire Department Hall - *LR Gun Shows*
- Oct 28-29, 2017 – Allentown, PA – Econolodge Conference Center – *Eagle Arms*
- Oct 28-29, 2017 – York, PA – Fairgrounds Memorial Hall – *TheGunShows.com*
- Nov 4-5, 2017 – Lebanon, PA – Lebanon Valley Expo Center – *Eagle Arms*

SPECIAL NOTE – OHIO - 2017

- **November 18-19, 2017 – Wilmington, OH – The Roberts Centre – *OGCA Annual Meeting and Directors Elections***

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-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 or a submission 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 Larry Hare.