

LSA QUARTERLY



The Louisiana Shooting Association

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Volume VI No. 2

Part 1: A Hunting Rifle for the 21st Century in 6.8 mm Remington SPC

By

Jay D. Hunt, Ph.D.

The loads mentioned in this article are safe in my particular rifle, but should not be used without first reducing the load in your rifle, and working up to maximum loads. Check your loading data against a reliable source before attempting to work up a load.

Paul Mauser was born in Oberndorf am Neckar, Germany in 1838 to a family of gunsmiths: his father and his

four older brothers were all gunsmiths. Arguably, Paul Mauser had the biggest influence on military and hunting rifles used throughout the 20th century. His first successful design was the Model 1871, which was adopted by the German Empire as the *Infanterie-Gewehr* 71. This early design was a conventional looking bolt action chambered in 11 mm using black powder cartridges. The action included only a bolt guide rib as its single locking lug, locking forward of the receiving bridge. The original design was a single shot, but in 1884, the design was updated with an 8-round tubular magazine designed by Alfred von Kropatschek, making it Germany's first repeating rifle. This version was designated the *Gewehr* 71/84.

Throughout the late 1800s, Mauser continued to improve upon his basic design. The culmination of Paul Mauser's genius was the development of the *Karabiner* 98K, which Mauser patented in 1895. The *Karabiner* 98 *Kurz* (often abbreviated Kar98k, K98, or K98k) was a bolt action rifle chambered for the 7.92 x 57 mm Mauser cartridge (often referred to as the 8 mm Mauser) that was adopted as the standard service rifle in 1935 by the German *Wehrmacht*.

In 1903, the United States adopted a new service rifle based on Mauser's model 1898 design, which was designated the M1903 Springfield rifle. The adoption of the Springfield bolt action was preceded by nearly 30 years of struggle and politics, using lessons learned from the Krag-Jørgensen rifle and contemporary German *Gewehr* 98 bolt-







From top to bottom, the *Gewehr* 71, *Karabiner* 98 *Kurz*, and the M1903 Springfield are shown.

action rifles. The M1903 not only replaced the various versions of the U.S. Army's Krag, but also the Lee Model 1895 and M1885 Remington-Lee used by the U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps, as well as all remaining single shot trap-door Springfield Models 1873.

For an excellent and detailed look at the M1903 Springfield rifle, see the articles written by our very own James D. "Danny" Hudson, III in the following issues of *LSA Quarterly* available on-line: Apr-Jun, 2009; Jul-Sep, 2009; Jan-Mar, 2010; Apr-Jul, 2010.

Despite the dramatic changes going on in rifle design at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the vast majority of hunters still used single shot rifles or lever action repeating arms. The "new fangled" bolt action rifles were military arms, not hunting rifles. Many hunters felt that using a bolt action rifle with a 5-round magazine was "not needed, was overkill, and simply was not 'fair' to the game being hunted."

This line of thinking seems ridiculous to the vast majority of hunters today, given that the bolt action design has been the basis for most hunting firearm for almost 100 years. As the doughboys returned from Europe in late-1918 and 1919, the bolt action rifle was familiar and surplus rifles were cheap. Many hunters either "sporterized" a M1903 by

cutting down the stock and took game with it, or stripped the .30-06 barrel off the M1903 action, and used the receiver to build a custom hunting rifle in various calibers of the day. Some of the most popular commercially available bolt action rifles still use the basic Mauser M1898-style action or one that can be directly traced to his innovative design. That Paul Mauser's design is still viable 117 years after his patent was granted speaks volumes of the durability of this advancement.

Fast forward to 1959, when ArmaLite sold its patent for Eugene Stoner's magnificent AR-15 rifle to Colt. The U.S. Air Force first adopted the AR-15 in 1962, which ultimately was designated the M16. Although the development of the M16 was complicated and far from painless, the M16 has been the basis of the main service rifle for the U.S. armed forced for 50 years with no end in sight. The rifle has gone through several iterations, and forms the backbone of the small arms carried by U.S. Army troops, as well as U.S. Marines and special forces.

Although the basic design of the M16, or the civilian version AR-15 has been with us for over 50 years, the vast majority of hunters today feel that using a semi-automatic rifle with the potential for a large capacity magazine is "not needed, is overkill, and simply is not 'fair' to the game being hunted." Does this sound familiar to you? These arguments against hunting with the AR-15 are as ridiculous today as the arguments against using bolt actions rifles were in 1910.

There is, however, one valid argument: the .223 Remington (the cartridge for which the AR-15 was designed to shoot) is considered by many sportsman, and most states, to be inadequate for taking deer-sized game. Many states require a bullet of at least 6 mm (0.243 inches) and a magazine capacity of no more than 5-rounds for hunting deer. Louisiana does allow the use of .22 caliber center-fire rifles and has no regulations related to magazine capacity when hunting deer. The basic AR-15 in .223 Remington is legal for taking deer in our state, although many of the rifles sold to sportsman are really not configured as hunting rifles.



Several iterations of the basic U.S. service rifle are shown. From top to bottom are the M16A1, M16A2, M4, and M16A4.

A couple of years ago, I removed a barrel from my competition service rifle after firing approximately 4000 rounds through it. For competition purposes, where we shoot at a 6-inch X-ring at 600 yards, the barrel was "shot out." But, the barrel was still way more accurate than most hunting barrels for reasonable ranges out to 300 yards. The stainless steel Krieger barrel has a .233 Remington Wylde chamber (see sidebar at right for an explanation) and a 1 in 7.7" twist, which are ideal for shooting the long 80-82 Gr. competition bullets. I took this competition barrel and asked Bob Jenkins to turn down the outside dimension of the barrel to reduce its overall weight, following which, I built a nice little predator hunting rifle using a flat-top Rock River Arms upper receiver. The barrel likes both the 60 Gr. Nosler Partition bullet, and the 70 Gr. Barnes TSX BT bullet (Barnes recommends a 1 in 8" or faster twist barrel for this bullet.) If you are considering a hunting rifle in .223 Remington and think you may hunt both predators, hogs, and deer with it, I urge you to get a rifle length barrel (as opposed to a carbine length barrel) with a 1 in 8" twist. This will allow you to shoot the more appropriate hunting bullets available in .224 caliber that are extremely lethal for coyotes, hogs, and deer alike.

Even though I had built the hunting rifle in .223 Remington, I still felt somewhat under-gunned for deer. Although very much in its infancy, designers have been working on new, more powerful cartridges for the basic AR-15 design. After careful consideration of

Some AR-15 manufacturers incorporate the use of a hybrid chamber specification known as the Wylde chamber. Designed by and named after Bill Wylde, this chambering was designed to accurately shoot the military ball ammo of the day while still feeding reliably. Coincidentally, it shoots the longer 80 Gr. bullets commonly used in the sport of Highpower Rifle Competition very well, and is one of the preferred chambers for that use. While the Wylde chamber allows for optimal seating depth of 80 Gr. bullets over .223 Remington and 5.56 NATO, it is capable of accepting both ammunition types. The Wylde chamber is used by most manufacturers who sell "National Match" configuration AR-15 rifle, barrels, and upper receivers.

the currently available cartridges, I settled on building a new deer hunting rifle in 6.8 mm Remington SPC (Special Purpose Cartridge). This cartridge, which is based upon the .30 Remington, was developed by Remington Arms with collaboration from individual members of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, U.S. Special Operations Command to possibly replace the 5.56 NATO cartridge in a Short Barreled Rifle (SBR)/Carbine. The 6.8 SPC was designed to address the deficiencies of the terminal performance of the 5.56 NATO cartridge currently in service with the U.S. Armed Forces.

.223 Remington Loads Developed for Hunting Predators, Hogs, and Deer

Bullet	Powder	Charge Weight (Gr)	Muzzle Velocity (FPS)	Use	Velocity at 300 yds (FPS)	Energy at 300 yds (ft-lbs)
55 Gr Hornady SP	Varget	26.4	3109 ± 18	Predators	1975	476
	IMR8208 XBR	25.8	3165 ± 20	Predators	2017	497
	A2495	26.2	3199 ± 14	Predators	2043	510
	IMR4320	26.1	3057 ± 15	Predators	1935	457

The 6.8 mm Remington uses bullets of 0.277 inches, which is the same caliber as the venerable .270 Winchester, although the ballistics of the two cartridges are wildly different. The .270 Winchester was developed by necking down the .30-06 Springfield to 0.277 inches, with SAAMI specifications for an overall length of 3.340" and a case capacity of 67 Gr. of water. The 6.8 mm Remington, on the other hand, was developed from the .30 Remington case, has an overall length of 2.315" (see discussion on magazines below) and a case capacity of 37 Gr. of water (45% less case capacity). Although the performance of the 6.8 mm Remington is limited by the length of the AR-15 magazine, the cartridge is still a solid performer for deer size game out to about 200-300 yards, depending on bullet selection. Given the need for a relatively short-for-caliber overall length, lighter bullets yield the best performance in the AR-15 platform. For deer and hogs, bullets in the 95-115 Gr. weight range give the best combination of velocity and terminal performance. Assuming that bullets require a velocity of 1800 fps to perform on game, the 95 Gr. Barnes TTSX has enough velocity out to about 350 yards, and the Sierra 110 Gr. GameKing has enough velocity out to about 250 yards to expand and quickly kill game. In comparison, the .270 Winchester is still chugging along well about 1800 fps out at 500 yards.

The choice of a magazine for the 6.8 mm Remington actually turns out to be more important than one might otherwise assume. Given that the 6.8 mm Remington was designed to shoot in rifles that were developed around the .223 Remington, the overall length must conform to the length of the .223 Remington magazine. Overall



The author with a very nice bobcat taken in February 2012 in Catahoula Parish using an AR-15 in .223 Remington.



length for the .223 Remington is set at 2.26". Manufactures have developed magazines for the 6.8 mm Remington with this same overall length in mind. However, one manufacturers of 6.8 mm Remington magazines, Precision Reflex, Inc, makes magazines that will fit into any AR-15 lower receiver, but allows an overall length of 2.315".

	6.8 mm	Rem, 95 Gi	r , 2800 fps	6.8 mm R	Rem, 110 G	ir , 2530 fps	.270 W	in, 130 Gr,	, 2912 fps
Range (Yds)	Velocity (fps)	Energy (ft-lbs)	Trajectory (Inches)	Velocity (fps)	Energy (ft-lbs)	Trajectory (Inches)	Velocity (fps)	Energy (ft-lbs)	Trajectory (Inches)
0	2800	1654	-1.5	2530	1563	-1.5	2912	2448	-1.5
50	2641	1471	-0.13	2391	1396	0.01	2797	2258	-0.19
100	2487	1305	0	2256	1243	0	2685	2080	0
150	2339	1154	-1.28	2125	1103	-1.72	2575	1914	-1.01
200	2196	1017	-4.15	1999	976	-5.37	2468	1759	-3.33
250	2058	893	-8.83	1877	861	-11.19	2364	1613	-7.08
300	1925	781	-15.56	1761	757	-19.49	2263	1478	-12.39
350	1798	682	-24.64	1650	665	-30.59	2163	1351	-19.39
400	1676	593	-36.41	1545	583	-44.88	2067	1233	-28.25
450	1562	515	-51.28	1446	511	-62.83	1973	1123	-39.15
500	1455	447	-69.72	1356	449	-84.93	1881	1022	-52.28

When building my rifle, I had several requirements. I wanted a rifle-length gas system (as opposed to a carbine- or M4-length gas system), a 1 in 11" twist stainless steel barrel with an 6.8 SPC II chamber, an aftermarket single-stage trigger, and walnut furniture. The barrel actually turned out to be the most difficult item to find, as the vast majority of barrels on the market in 6.8 Remington SPC are fast twist (for using heavier bullets) with M4-length gas systems. Since the cartridge was designed for the M4 platform, the additional length of the rifle-length barrel over an M4-length barrel gives very little additional performance (estimated at about 25 additional fps per inch of additional barrel).

I found my barrel at Bison Armory, and it was exactly what I desired. The 20" stainless steel barrel had the 6.8 SPC II chamber, a 1 in 11" twist, M4 feed ramp cuts (not needed for my purposes, but nice to have), button rifling, and was threaded for a muzzle brake. The barrel is fluted under the hand guard to reduce weight and increase cooling capacity, and was finished with a black Cerakote finish.

For the gas system, I chose to use a Low Pro gas block produced by Yankee Hill Manufacturing (YHM). Low profile gas blocks are extremely simple devices. They are intentionally minimized for weight and to fit under a free float forearm. The gas block was attached via two set screws and could have been pinned to the barrel as an option,



for instance, if I ever planned to take the rifle into a combat situation (I do

The SPC II designation refers to the updated chamber specification for the 6.8 SPC. The freebore in the chamber was increased by 0.1", which reduced the chamber pressure of the 6.8 SPC and allowed higher power ammunition to be used safely. With the new chamber specification, the 6.8 SPC is able to realize its full potential as a hunting/combat round. Other updated chamber specs exist, including the 6.8 x 43 mm and Noveske 6.8mm SPC MOD 1, which are similar to the SPC II.

not!). The rifle-length gas system can be problematic, and this is something to consider when choosing your barrel. This gas length can exhibit short stroking when used with light bullets (85 and 90 Gr.) in conjunction with very fast powders. Cycling is fine with 110 Gr. and heavier bullets. Through my limited testing to date, I have fired 10 different loads with the 95 Gr. Barnes TTSX bullet, and 5 different loads with the 110 Gr. Sierra GameKing bullet with no malfunctions at all.

There are a number of high quality aftermarket triggers for the AR-15, from 2-stage match triggers to single stage hunting triggers. For this rifle, I chose the Timney Triggers single stage competition trigger. The trigger is factory preset with a pull weight of 3 pounds. Installation was quick and no adjustments were necessary. It was a true drop-in trigger. The trigger module installed using my rifle's original hammer and trigger pins and the proprietary design eliminates pin rotation and walkout.

The beautiful walnut furniture clearly fell into the "I want" category and not into the "I need" category. In fact, I surely

category and not into the "I need" category. In fact, I surely increased the weight (10.7 pounds overall weight) and lost the benefits of a free floated hand guard by choosing to

go with walnut. But, dang, it looks so good!

6.8 mm Remington Loads Developed for Hunting Hogs and Deer

Bullet	Powder	Charge Weight (Gr)	Muzzle Velocity (FPS)	Group Size (in)	No. Shots in Group
95 Gr Barnes TTSX	RL-10X	28.5	2693 ± 22	2.65	5
	A2230	31.0	2831 ± 13	3.24	5
	H322	29.5	2745 ± 5	3.14	5
	H322	30.0	2805 ± 23	2.79	5
	A2200	28.6	NR	2.1	5
	A2200	30.5	NR	5.54	5
	RL-7	26.0	NR	1.03	3
	IMR4198	25.3	NR	2.72	5
	X-Terminator	30.0	NR	3.26	5
	X-Terminator	31.0	2811 ± 8	1.35	5
110 Gr Sierra GameKing	H335	29.5	2530 ± 16	0.97	8
	H322	29.0	2600 ± 18	3.1	10
	A2200	28.6	2654 ± 15	0.97	8
	X-Terminator	30.0	2627 ± 15	1.22	5
	RL-10X	26.5	2362 ± 11	2.47	10

I topped the **Rock River Arms** (RRA) flattop upper receiver with a high profile RRA scope mount, which by the way looks like it could stand recoil from a .500 Nitro Express, and a Leupold Rifleman 3-9X40 mm scope with a "Rifleman Ballistic Reticle." The ballistic reticle is nothing more than additional aiming dots underneath the crosshair, which allows the shooter to develop additional aiming points for longer shots. I have not shot the new rifle enough to know

how those aiming dots will be used.

With only 100 rounds downrange out of the rifle I have made two observations of note: (1) my rifle hates (so far) the 95 Gr. Barnes TTSX bullet and (2) my rifle loves the 110 Gr. Sierra GameKing bullet. The Barnes Tipped TSX features a lead-free 100% copper body with multiple rings circumferential cuts into the shank. Because the bullet is lead-free, it is long for its weight, which increases bearing surface. Dan Zelenka has used this bullet in his recently built 6.8 mm Remington carbine with excellent results, so it is not clear why my rifle will not shoot the bullet very well. The best group that I was able to generate was slightly over 1", but was only a 3-shot group. The Sierra GameKing, on the other hand, is a standard soft-point flat-base spitzer with an exposed lead nose. The bullet turned in some fine groups, including two loads that grouped under an inch.

The testing has only begun and you can expect a complete update, along with a description of a hunting carbine built by Dan Zelenka in Part 2 of this article in the next issue of *LSA Quarterly*.

I am a Jeffersonian Radical?

By Jay D. Hunt, Ph.D.

History, in general, and American History, specifically, is taught so poorly in American schools that it is not surprising how many misconceptions and downright incorrect impressions there are as to how the US Constitution was drafted and how the word "militia" ended up in the 2nd Amendment. The American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) began as a war between the Kingdom of Great Britain and the new United States of America, but gradually expanded to a global war between Britain on one side and the United States, France, the Netherlands and Spain on the other.

The war was the result of an American political revolution, galvanized around the position that the Stamp Act of 1765, imposed by the Parliament of Great Britain, was unconstitutional. The British Parliament insisted it had the

right to tax colonists, and the colonists claimed that, as they were British subjects, taxation without representation was illegal. The American colonists formed a unifying Continental Congress, which met from 1774 to 1789 in three incarnations, and a shadow government in each colony, though at first remaining loyal to the king.

By the time the Second Continental Congress met on May 10, 1775, the Battles of Lexington and Concord had already begun in April, even while delegates were still making their way to Philadelphia. This marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War. John Hancock from Massachusetts was elected president of the assembly. Congress issued a petition entitled *The Declaration of Rights and Grievances* to King George III. The Delegates adopted a strategy where the colonies would prepare for war while the Congress continued to pursue reconciliation. On July 8, 1775 the Congress adopted a petition to the king in the hopes that

We hold these truths to be selfevident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

-Preamble , Declaration of Independence

he would intervene in Parliament on behalf of the colonies. A former governor of Pennsylvania was chosen to carry another petition, approved in July 1775, to London and present it to the king himself but the king refused to see him.

On August 23, 1775 he issued a proclamation declaring the colonies to be in a state of "open and avowed rebellion." Moderates in the Congress still hoped that the colonies could be reconciled with Great Britain, but a movement towards independence steadily gained ground. On June 17, 1775 the Battle of Bunker Hill energized the

Patriots; Congress established the Continental Army and appointed George Washington as commander-in-chief in June 1775. On July 4, 1776 Congress issued a *Declaration of Independence*, ending all American efforts at reconciliation. Congress designed a new government in the *Articles of Confederation*, which operated as the nation's constitution.

Many often assume that immediately after the war ended, the *US Constitution* miraculously appeared with unanimous approval and consent. This is far from the truth. After years of frustration, an agreement was reached in 1787 to organize a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia with the mission of writing and proposing a number of

amendments to the *Articles of Confederation* to improve the form of government. In reality, the delegates to this Constitutional Convention soon decided that they needed to start over with a blank slate to write a new Constitution of the United States to completely replace the *Articles of Confederation*. Furthermore, the delegates agreed that the new Federal Government would come into effect upon the ratification of just nine of the States, rather than requiring unanimous consent as the *Articles of Confederation* had.

As gun rights enthusiasts, we are most closely focused on the evolution and incorporation of the 2nd Amendment to the Bill of Rights. In a draft constitution for the State of Virginia in 1776, author Thomas Jefferson proposed, "No freeman shall ever be debarred the use of arms."

Virginia's Constitution and Bill of Rights were the first adopted after the *Declaration of Independence*. While records of the actual deliberations are limited, it is known that Thomas Jefferson drafted a document worthy of the Enlightenment. Thomas Jefferson, who is the darling of modern-day conservatives and often cited as the major proponent for a weak federal government and strong state's rights, was actually quite liberal for the late 18th century. Jefferson's draft would have extended the franchise to any taxpayer, divided state lands among the landless citizens, ended importation of slaves, and banned the establishment of religion. His proposal did not mention the militia or its role in a republic, but did include a clearly individual right to arms: "*No freeman shall ever be debarred the use of arms*."

Virginia's legislature chose instead a constitution and bill of rights drafted by committee, and taken predominantly from the proposals of the more conservative George Mason. The prevailing version omitted any mention of individual arms and substituted a recognition that: "A well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defence of a free State." It is unlikely that the choice was dictated in this case by a conflict of values. Jefferson, who had served on the committee to organize the Virginia militia, was an unlikely opponent of the militia concept. Mason, who was a firearms collector and George Washington's hunting partner, was an improbable supporter

[W]hen the resolution of enslaving America was formed in Great Britain, the British Parliament was advised by an artful man, who was governor of Pennsylvania, to disarm the people; that it was the best and most effectual way to enslave them; but that they should not do it openly, but weaken them, and let them sink gradually...I ask, who are the militia? They consist of now of the whole people, except a few public officers. But I cannot say who will be the militia of the future day. If that paper on the table gets no alteration, the militia of the future day may not consist of all classes, high and low, and rich and poor...

-George Mason at Virginia Convention

of individual disarmament. The difference is more one of emphasis. The Virginia Constitution as adopted looks predominantly to maintenance of the status quo. This was predictable since the members of the committee charged with the initial drafting were predominantly large land-owners. Mason's original draft contained a substantial property requirement for legislators: only citizens owning £1,000 worth of real estate could run for the lower house, while only those with twice that freehold could run for the upper (for comparison, £1,000 in 1776 would have the same economic power as £8,670,000 in 2010, which is roughly the same as \$13,637,043).

In more general terms, the primary concern of the 1776 Virginia constitution is (as it was with James Harrington and his followers) the establishment of a stable republic. Indeed, the original draft did not recognize a "right" to freedom of religion, but rather a "toleration of the exercise of religion," along the lines of the British Toleration Act, which for practical grounds exempted certain faiths from the ban on nonestablishment churches. Only the intervention of the novice legislator James Madison enabled an American president to later boast, "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights." The Virginia Declaration thus looks backward to the classical republic and concern for the state; Jefferson's unsuccessful draft, in contrast, looked forward to the form of democracy that would take his name. The gap between the Harringtonian republic and Jeffersonian democracy was clearly demonstrated in Jefferson's explanation of his draft:

"The Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home."

US Supreme Court District of Columbia v. Heller

I was extending the right of suffrage (or in other words the rights of a citizen) to all who had a permanent intention of living in the country. Take what circumstance you please as evidence of this, either the having resided a certain time, or having a family, or having property, any or all of them. Whoever intends to live in a country must wish that country well, and has a natural right of assisting in the preservation of it.

The contrast between Mason's and Jefferson's proposals highlights a correlation that will be found in later efforts by other states. Those constitutions that maintained the Classical Republican link between land ownership and electoral participation also stressed its ideal of militia institutions. Those constitutions that accepted the Radical foundation of near-universal manhood suffrage largely ignored the militia ideal but stressed individual rights to arms.

Fast forward to the 21st century and the irony of the evolving debate on the role of the militia and firearms ownership is apparent. Certainly, today's liberals would support the Jeffersonian view that all persons living in a country would wish it well and should become citizens, as well as Jefferson's proposed ban on the importation of slaves and the ban on the establishment of religion. However, they would reject absolutely the Jeffersonian view that, "No freeman shall ever be debarred the use of arms." Jefferson expanded on this view in a letter to Maj. John Cartwright in 1824, "We established however some, although not all its [self-government] important principles. The constitutions of most of our States assert, that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves, in all cases to which they think themselves competent, (as in electing their functionaries executive and legislative, and deciding by a jury of themselves, in all judiciary cases in which any fact is involved,) or they may act by representatives, freely and equally chosen; that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed." Liberals today view Jefferson's proposals for a small, weak federal government with strong state's rights as misguided, instead insisting for a large, powerful regulating federal government.

All of this debate, however, was rendered nothing but hand waving by those in our society who argue that it was never the intention of the founding fathers to place unlimited access to arms in the hands of the American public when the US Supreme Court handed down its landmark rulings in DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ET AL. v. HELLER and MCDONALD ET AL. v. CITY OF CHICAGO. The court held, "The Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home." This declared the 2nd Amendment an individual right and forever lifted the militia argument from this right. Further, the court held, "that the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment incorporates the Second Amendment right recognized in *Heller* [against the states]."

Liberals begin to gnash their teeth and call for more restrictive gun laws each time there is a terrible tragedy such as the one recently committed by an apparently deranged young man in Colorado. Liberals, however, fail to recognize that with great freedom comes great responsibility and that the disarmament of the population by past governments, both foreign and domestic, has led to catastrophic loss of life. The infamous massacres by Communist

governments on their unarmed citizens are well known, as well as those of the National Socialist Party (NAZIs), but perhaps less well known are the attacks in the US on unarmed citizens.

For instance, after the US Civil War, many of the over 180,000 African-Americans who served in the Union Army returned to the States of the old Confederacy, where systematic efforts were made to disarm them and other blacks. The laws of some States formally prohibited African-Americans from possessing firearms. For example, a Mississippi law provided that "no freedman, free negro or mulatto, not in the military service of the United States government, and not licensed so to do by the board of police of his or her county, shall keep or carry fire-arms of any kind, or any ammunition, dirk or bowie knife."

Abolitionists and Republicans were not alone in believing that the right to keep and bear arms was a fundamental right. The 1864 Democratic Party Platform complained that the confiscation of firearms by Union troops occupying parts of the South constituted "the interference with and denial of the right of the people to bear arms in their defense."

Throughout the South, armed parties, often consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers serving in the state militias, forcibly took firearms from newly freed slaves. In the first session of the 39th Congress, Senator Wilson told his colleagues: "In Mississippi rebel State forces, men who were in the rebel armies, are traversing the State, visiting the freedmen, disarming them, perpetrating murders and outrages upon them; and the same things are done in other sections of the country." The Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction—which was widely reprinted in the press and distributed by Members of the 39th Congress to their constituents shortly after Congress approved the Fourteenth Amendment—contained numerous examples of such abuses. In one town, the "marshal [took] all arms from returned colored soldiers, and [was] very prompt in shooting the blacks whenever an opportunity occur[red]."

In South Carolina, prominent black citizens held a convention to address the State's black code. They drafted a memorial to Congress, in which they included a plea for protection of their constitutional right to keep and bear arms: "'We ask that, inasmuch as the Constitution of the United States explicitly declares that the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed . . . that the late efforts of the Legislature of this State to pass an act to deprive us [of] arms be forbidden, as a plain violation of the Constitution." Senator Charles Sumner relayed the memorial to the Senate and described the memorial as a request that black citizens "have the constitutional protection in keeping arms."

Disarmament by bands of former Confederate soldiers eventually gave way to attacks by the Ku Klux Klan. In debates over the later enacted Enforcement Act of 1870, Senator John Pool observed that the Klan would "order the colored men to give up their arms; saying that everybody would be Kukluxed in whose house fire-arms were found."

Union Army commanders took steps to secure the right of all citizens to keep and bear arms, but the 39th Congress concluded that legislative action was necessary. Its efforts to safeguard the right to keep and bear arms demonstrate that the right was still recognized to be fundamental. The most explicit evidence of Congress' aim appears in §14 of the Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1866, which provided that "the right . . . to have full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings concerning personal liberty, personal security, and the acquisition, enjoyment,

and disposition of estate, real and personal, including the constitutional right to bear arms, shall be secured to and enjoyed by all the citizens . . . without respect to race or color, or previous condition of slavery." Section 14 of the Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1866 thus explicitly guaranteed that "all the citizens," black and white, would have "the constitutional right to bear arms."

The Civil Rights Act of 1866, which was considered at the same time as the Freedmen's Bureau Act, similarly sought to protect the right of all citizens to keep and bear arms. There can be no doubt that the principal proponents of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 meant to end the disarmament of African-Americans in the South. In introducing the bill, Senator Trumbull described its purpose as securing to blacks the "privileges which are essential to freemen." He then pointed to the previously described Mississippi law that "prohibit[ed] any negro or mulatto from having fire-arms" and explained that the bill would "destroy" such laws. Similarly, Representative Sidney Clarke cited disarmament of freedmen in

 Alabama and Mississippi as a reason to support the Civil Rights Act and to continue to deny Alabama and Mississippi representation in Congress: "I regret, sir, that justice compels me to say, to the disgrace of the Federal Government, that the 'reconstructed' State authorities of Mississippi were allowed to rob and disarm our veteran soldiers and arm the rebels fresh from the field of treasonable strife. Sir, the disarmed loyalists of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana are powerless to-day, and oppressed by the pardoned and encouraged rebels of those States. They appeal to the American Congress for protection. In response to this appeal I shall vote for every just measure of protection, for I do not intend to be among the treacherous violators of the solemn pledge of the nation."

Southern resistance, Presidential vetoes, and the US Supreme Court's pre-Civil-War precedent persuaded Congress that a constitutional amendment was necessary to provide full protection for the rights of blacks. Today, it is generally accepted that the Fourteenth Amendment was understood to provide a constitutional basis for protecting the rights set out in the Civil Rights Act of 1866. In debating the Fourteenth Amendment, the 39th Congress referred to the right to keep and bear arms as a fundamental right deserving of protection. Senator Samuel Pomeroy described three "indispensable" "safeguards of liberty under our form of Government." One of these, he said, was the right to keep and bear arms:

Every man . . . should have the right to bear arms for the defense of himself and family and his homestead. And if the cabin door of the freedman is broken open and the intruder enters for purposes as vile as were known to slavery, then should a well-loaded musket be in the hand of the occupant to send the polluted wretch to another world, where his wretchedness will forever remain complete.

Evidence from the period immediately following the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment only confirms that the right to keep and bear arms was considered fundamental. In an 1868 speech, Representative Stevens emphasized the necessity of the right: "Disarm a community and you rob them of the means of defending life. Take away their weapons of defense and you take away the inalienable right of defending liberty."

Based on this history (and much more for which there is not room in this periodical), the US Supreme court considered in MCDONALD ET AL. v. CITY OF CHICAGO the question of whether the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms is incorporated against the states in the concept of due process. In answering that question, the court decided whether the right to keep and bear arms is fundamental to our scheme of ordered liberty. In deciding this, the court based its decision on the findings in DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ET AL. v. HELLER. The court wrote, "Our decision in Heller points unmistakably to the answer. Self-defense is a basic right, recognized by many legal systems from ancient times to the present day, and in Heller, we held that individual self-defense is 'the central component' of the Second Amendment right." Citing Jewish, Greek, and Roman law, Blackstone wrote that if a person killed an attacker, "the slayer is in no kind of fault whatsoever, not even in the minutest degree; and is therefore to be totally acquitted and discharged, with commendation rather than blame." The court also reached back to our own colonial history noting, "King George III's attempt to disarm the colonists in the 1760s and 1770s "provoked polemical reactions by Americans invoking their rights as Englishmen to keep arms." For example, an article in the Boston Evening Post stated: "For it is certainly beyond human art and sophistry, to prove the British subjects, to whom the privilege of possessing arms is expressly recognized by the Bill of Rights, and, who live in a province where the law requires them to be equip'd with arms, &c. are guilty of an illegal act, in calling upon one another to be provided with them, as the law directs."

Interestingly, during the 1788 *US Constitution* ratification debates, the fear that the federal government would disarm the people to impose rule through a standing army or select militia was pervasive in Anti-federalist rhetoric (led by Thomas Jefferson). Federalists, who wanted a strong federal government, responded, not by arguing that the right to be armed was insufficiently important to warrant protection, but by contending that the right was adequately protected by the *US Constitution*'s assignment of only limited powers to the Federal Government. But those who were fearful that the new Federal Government would infringe traditional rights, such as the right to keep and bear arms, insisted on the adoption of the Bill of Rights as a condition for ratification of the Constitution. This is surely powerful evidence that the right to keep and bear arms was regarded as fundamental. In addition to the four States that had adopted Second Amendment analogues before ratification of the US Constitution, nine more States adopted state constitutional provisions protecting an individual right to keep and bear arms between 1789 and 1820.

St. George Tucker described the right to keep and bear arms as "the true palladium of liberty" and explained that prohibitions on the right would place liberty "on the brink of destruction." "The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them."

In sum, it is clear that the Framers and ratifiers of the Fourteenth Amendment counted the right to keep and bear arms among those fundamental rights necessary to our system of ordered liberty. Although it is clear that the framers of the *US Constitution* clearly meant that individuals would have the right to be armed to protect themselves from other individuals, it is likewise clear that the forefathers saw the need for a body of citizens to be armed to resist the tyranny of a big federal government gone awry.

1 The Second Continental Congress. Massachusetts Historical Society.

1 Draft Constitution for Virginia, 1776. Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library.

1 The Second Amendment and the Historiography of the Bill of Rights. David T. Hardy, 4 J. of Law & Pol. 1-62 (1987).

1James Harrington (1611-1677). James Harrington's *Oceana* was first published in 1656. In it he describes the governments of ancient Israel, Rome, Sparta, and Venice, and those of contemporary nations. He wrote of Oceana, a fictitious state with a Utopian government. His government, which was a thinly veiled caricature of England, consisted of a government separated into three bodies with different roles: proposing, resolving and debating, and executing. He proposed several bodies chosen by the people, including a senate and a body of the people to make the laws, and a magistracy to execute the laws. The text of *Oceana* was seized during printing, but an appeal to the daughter of Oliver Cromwell had the text released and published. *Oceana* was widely read and attacked, and seen as an attack on Cromwell. He continued to criticize the Commonwealth and was eventually arrested for his writing, and was held without charge until his health was in utter disrepair. Weak and sickly, he was finally returned to his family, said to be insane from scurvy. The Commonwealth of Oceana, James Harrington, 1656.

1 Thomas Jefferson to John Cartwright, 1824.

¹DISTRIC OF COLUMBIA ET AL. v. HELLER, US Supreme Court, October Term. 2007

1 MCDONALD ET AL. v. CITY OF CHICAGO, Illinois, US Supreme Court, October Term, 2009

1 The Distinctive Features of Repression in Communist States, Paul Hollander

- 1 Inquiry Reveals Lenin Unleashed Systematic Murder of 200,000 Clergy, Philippa Fletcher, Reuters
- 1 <u>Harvest of Bones: A Geologist Uncovers One of Stalin's Killing Fields</u> by Robert G. Kaiser, *Washington Post* Tuesday, August 14, 2001
- 1 The Jaeger Report: A Chronicle of Nazi Mass Murder
- 1 *Certain Offenses of Freedmen*, 1865 Miss. Laws p. 165, §1, in 1 Documentary History of Reconstruction 289. W. Fleming ed. (1950)
- 1 National Party Platforms 1840-1972
- 1 39th Cong. Globe 40 (1865)
- 1 S. Halbrook, Freedmen, The Fourteenth Amendment, and The Right to Bear Arms, 1866–1876, p. 9 (1998)
- 1 Proceedings of the Black State Conventions, 1840–1865, p. 302 (P. Foner & G. Walker eds. 1980)
- 1 Cong. Globe, 41st Cong., 2d Sess., 2719 (1870); see also H. R. Exec. Doc. No. 268, 42d Cong., 2d Sess., 2 (1872)
- 1 W. Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England 182 (reprint 1992).
- 1 Boston Evening Post, Feb. 6, 1769, in Boston Under Military Rule 1768–1769
- 1 Blackstone's Commentaries, Editor's App. 300 (S. Tucker ed. 1803); see also W. Rawle, A View of the Constitution of the United States of America, 125–126 (2d ed. 1829)

Heavyweight Hunting Loads for the Ruger Redhawk

By

Jay D. Hunt, Ph.D.

The loads mentioned in this article are safe in my particular handgun, but should not be used without first reducing the load in your handgun, and working up to maximum loads. Check your loading data against a reliable source before attempting to work up a load.





Traditional bullet selection for the .44 Remington Magnum vary between 180 Gr. to 240 Gr.; however, newer bullet designs allow one to take advantage of the longer cylinder length of the Ruger Redhawk: (from left to right) Sierra 180 Gr. JHC, Hornady 180 Gr. XTP, Speer 200 Gr. Magnum JHP, Missouri Bullet 200 Gr. RNFP Cowboy #5, Speer 225 Gr. JHP, Barnes 225 Gr. XPB, Keith-style 240 Gr. SWC, Hornady 240 Gr. JTC-SIL, Hornady 240 Gr. XTP, Hornady 300 Gr. XTP, Oregon Trail 310 Gr. WNFP-GC, and Beartooth Bullets 325 Gr. LCMN-GC.

The traditional gift for the 5th wedding anniversary is wood. Okay, I can see you shaking your head and thinking, "Jay's lost it." But, lucky for you, and even luckier for me, I married the right girl. In 1989, Suzie gave me a Ruger® Redhawk® in .44 Remington Magnum as a gift to celebrate our anniversary (wood grips!). Conventional wisdom in those days capped maximum bullet weight at 240 Gr. based mainly on the

work of the Dean of all things .44 caliber, Elmer Keith, who jointly designed the cartridge with Smith and Wesson. The original work done on this caliber was based on super hot hand loads that Keith had produced for his .44 S&W Special. These loads were based on a semi-wadcutter (SWC) of 240 Gr. designed by Keith, and often referred to as a Keith-style bullet. Keith encouraged Smith & Wesson and Remington to produce a commercial version of this new high pressure loading, and revolvers chambered for it. While S&W produced the first prototype revolver chambered in .44 Magnum, the famous Model 29, Ruger actually beat S&W to market by several months in 1956 with a .44 Magnum version of the single action Blackhawk revolver.

The Ruger® Redhawk® revolver, introduced in 1979, was Ruger's first double-action revolver specifically designed for the powerful .44 Magnum cartridge. The Redhawk is reinforced to handle extra pressure, making it very popular for use by hand loaders and by those who need additional power and big bullets. In addition, the cylinder itself is longer than those on most competing handguns, allowing ammunition to be loaded to a longer overall length. This allows for either increased powder capacity, heavier (and therefore longer) bullets without compromising the

Manufacturer	Description	Meplat	Nose to Cannelure	Bullet Inside Case	Bullet OAL	Cartridge OAL
Hornady	300 Gr. XTP	HP	0.485	0.375†	0.860	1.755
Oregon Trail	310 Gr. WNFP-GC	0.360	0.350	0.478	0.850	1.670
Beartooth Bullets	325 Gr. LCMN-GC	0.320	0.500	0.384	0.904	1.710

powder load, or a combination of both.

SAAMI specifications for the .44 Magnum lists an overall length (OAL) for a loaded cartridge as 1.610 inches. With this standard in mind, firearms manufacturers produced lever action rifles to function properly with cartridges that are loaded to an OAL of 1.610 inches with round nose bullets. Given the popularity of having a lever action rifle and a revolver that can fire the same load, original revolver designs were likewise manufactured with cylinders that accept cartridges that are loaded to an OAL of 1.610. Ruger sfamous single action Blackhawk and Super Blackhawk both have cylinders of this length. As the popularity of the cartridge grew in the minds of the shooting public, bullets in excess of 240 Gr. began to show up; however, the limited length of the cylinders in early revolvers resulted in a loss of case capacity as heavier bullets were pushed into the case to allow for a maximum OAL of 1.610 inches. As case capacity decreased, pressures increased along with the probability for disastrous cylinder failures. In the mid-1970s, firearms manufacturers recognized that a beefed up revolver with a longer cylinder would more fully realize the full potential of this power house cartridge. One resulting revolver, the Redhawk, with its 1.760-inch cylinder, can easily handle cartridges with an OAL of 1.755 inches.

Have you ever wonder how BHN is calculated?

$$\mathrm{BHN} = \frac{2P}{\pi D(D - \sqrt{(D^2 - d^2)})}$$
 where:

P = applied force (kilogram-force)

Every hand loader who has ever reloaded for the .44 Remington Magnum knows that Hodgdon H110 and Winchester 296 were given to us by God himself. These two powders, which, by the way, come out of the same production line and are the exact same powder marketed under two names by two companies, result in high velocities and great accuracy for .44 Magnum loads. I used this

old war horse (H110), and compared varying loads with the same bullets and different powders. I selected three bullets to test: the Hornady 300 Gr. XTP®, the Oregon Trail TrueShot® .44 Cal. 310 Gr. WNFP-GC (diameter 0.430), and the Beartooth Bullets .44 Cal. 325 Gr. LCMN-GC (diameter 0.431 and 0.432). In the .44 Magnum, I personally prefer bullets in the 240-300 Gr. range for hunting deer, as they offer penetration, flat trajectory, and reliable expansion at distances out to 150 yards. However, the most reliable bullets on big animals like moose, bear, and heavy hogs will penetrate deeply through muscle and bone, pass through the vitals, and (hopefully) exit. Bullets of 275-325 grains generally work better resulting from their higher sectional densities with concomitant greater penetration.

Hornady's XTP line of bullets are designed to give controlled expansion to 1.5-times their original diameter over a wide range of velocities. These bullets have heavier jackets to stand up to the high pressures and velocities of full-power handgun loads. Oregon Trail Bullet Company introduced the TrueShot Premium Silver Gas Checked bullet

line to provide the dedicated hand loading enthusiast with high quality bullets. The TrueShot bullets are cast from an alloy that produces bullets that are harder than the average cast lead bullet, which allows hand loaders to push their rounds to a higher velocity without fear of barrel leading. The 310 Gr. wide nose flat point gas check (WNFP-GC) has a tremendous meplat of 0.360 inches (meplat, from a French term for a flat surface, is the technical term for the tip or nose of a bullet). Beartooth bullets are hand-cast then heat-treated to a Brinell hardness number (BHN) of 21+, which is the same hardness of straight linotype alloy; however, Beartooth bullets have a lower antimony content than linotype, which results in a bullet that is not as brittle, yielding a more ductile quality resulting in superior energy transfer on live targets. The 325 Gr. long conical medium nose gas check (LCMN-GC) has a cannelure (crimp groove) set for the Ruger Redhawk, Colt Anaconda, and Freedom Arms Model 93,



Modern bullet designs for the .44 Remington Magnum include (from left to right), the Barnes 225 Gr. XPB, Hornady 300 Gr. XTP, Oregon Trail 310 Gr. WNFP-GC, and Beartooth Bullets 325 Gr. LCMN-GC.

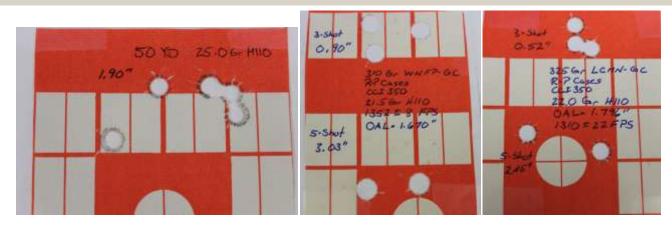
taking advantage of long cylinders and providing greater case capacity and outstanding velocities in these firearms. A bullet of a long flat nose (LFN) design is generally better for hunting, as bullets remain stable at longer distances and offer straight penetration. The gas checks are crimped on the bottom of each of the cast bullets, and protect the base from deformation upon firing. Gas checks also reduce smoking that often result from firing cast bullets.

When I began load development and research for this article, my initial intent was to develop a full power, heavy bullet load, preferably with one of the two cast bullets, and then take a Russian boar with that load. With these three bullets in hand, I produced loads using H110, IMR4227, Ramshot Enforcer, Accurate 4100 and No. 9, and Alliant 2400. Those familiar with these powders will immediately recognize that Alliant 2400 does not fit with the others, as this relatively low energy powder is not in the same class as the other five powders. My intent in using 2400 was to develop a low recoil load, but accuracy was so poor with these heavy bullets that I abandoned this idea. The procedure was the same for all loads: I fired several 5-shot groups at both 50 and 100 yards with each load over my Oehler 35P chronograph, and then measured the resulting group sizes. As expected, recoil was not light, but was not painful and never did I think, "this is silly." My stainless steel Redhawk with a Burris Elite 3200 2-6X scope unloaded weighs in at a hefty 5 lbs. 1 oz., which no doubt helps to tame the beastly recoil one might otherwise experience from these no nonsense heavy loads.



With increased bullet weights there is a potential for dangerous reductions in case volume. Note that the long Barnes 225 Gr. XPB (far left) fills much of the .44 Remington Magnum case, requiring a reduction in powder. When seated to the second cannelure, the Hornady 300 Gr. XTP (second from left) allows for much larger powder charges. Although the meplat on the Oregon Trail 310 Gr. WNFP-GC (third from left) is larger than that found on the Beartooth Bullets 325 Gr. LCMN-GC (right), the position of the cannelure allows for larger powder charges than those possible from the 310 Gr. WNFP-GC.

As the data began to accumulate, I noticed a consistent pattern in the vast majority of the groups, which was particularly noticeable in the groups with loads containing H110. In most cases, there was a tiny (for a .430 caliber



A consistent pattern appears! For many of the loads tested, a tight 3-shot group (out of 5 shots) was found within the

Bullet	Powder	Charge	Muzzle Velocity	Muzzle Energy	Velocity 100 Yards	Energy to 100 Yards	Group Size 3-Shot	Group Size 5-Shot
300 Gr. XTP	H110	25.0	1364	1239	1170	912	0.54	1.91
310 Gr. WNFP-GC	H110	21.5	1352	1258	1111	850	0.90	3.03
325 Gr. LCMN-GC	H110	22.0	1310	1238	1086	851	0.52	2.45

Bullet	Powder	Charge	Muzzle Velocity	Muzzle Energy	Velocity 100 Yards	Energy to 100 Yards	Group Size 3-Shot	Group Size 5-Shot
300 Gr. XTP	H110	25.0	1364	1239	1170	912	0.54	1.91
	H110	24.5	1316				1.20	1.31
	IMR4227	25.0	1267				NP	4.02
	IMR4227	20.0	1025				0.20	2.24
310 Gr. WNFP-GC	H110	21.5	1352	1258	1111	850	0.90	3.03
(0.431" Diameter)	IMR4227	22.0	1293				NP	5.10
	Enforcer	18.3	1281				NP	2.62
	AA No. 9	18.5	1315				NP	2.73
	2400	13.5	1001				NP	HUGE
325 Gr. LCMN-GC	H110	22.0	1310	1238	1086	851	0.52	2.45

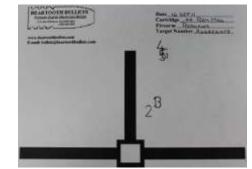
bullet) 3-shot group in which each of the shots were touching, and then a much larger 5-shot group. In some cases, the group would contain 2 shots that touched, and the remaining 3 shots would fall outside the tight group. In each case, I simply loaded 5 loaded cartridges into the 6-shot cylinder in a random fashion and fired them without consideration of which chamber was fired first.

For those of you who are not revolver aficionados, a brief description of the chamber in a revolver is in order. The SAAMI bore diameter of a .44 Remington Magnum is 0.417 inches with a groove diameter of 0.429 inches. For most cartridges, the chamber diameter is 0.004 inches larger than the groove diameter, but in the .44 Remington Magnum it is 0.0035 inches larger than the groove diameter, resulting in a chamber of 0.4325 inches. So, why is this important? In a semi-automatic pistol, the chamber is part of the barrel, so there is only a single chamber. But, in a revolver there are six chambers, and, therefore, each chamber may be of a different diameter,

Target	Group Size
Control	4.58
Chamber 1	2.80
Chamber 2	3.42
Chamber 3	3.05
Chamber 4	3.56

yielding downrange inconsistency in groups. Considering that I was consistently getting 5-shot groups in which 3 holes were touching and 2 holes were elsewhere, I considered the possibility that in my particular Redhawk, not all of the chambers were the same diameter. Using a pin gauge, I measured the diameter of each of the chambers and discovered that each were nominally 0.432", although the gauge was easier to insert into some chambers than in others, suggesting variation in chamber dimensions.

To test this hypothesis, I did a very simple experiment: I fired a 6-shot group from each chamber. To accomplish this, I first numbered each of the chambers so that I could consistently load and fire them in the same order. Next, I produced 42 rounds of 22.0 Gr. H110 behind a 325 Gr. LCMN-GC bullet (0.431" diameter), and headed out to the range. I placed seven targets at 50 yards. On the first target, I fired a control group of 6 rounds into the target using a loaded cylinder (one shot from each chamber). Then, I loaded the cylinder again, but this time fired one round into each of the six targets from an individual

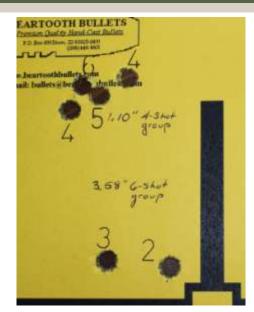




chamber,
repeating this
process six times
so that each target
had a 6-round
group in it. Not
surprisingly, each
of the groups fired
from individual
chambers were

smaller than the group fired from the entire cylinder. However, I was very surprised to find that when I mapped the center of each of the six groups and placed those centers on a target, two very distinct groups were revealed. It appears that in my revolver, chambers 1, 2 and 3 print groups lower than for chambers 4, 5, and 6. Note that the group centers are overlaying each other, and there is 2 inches between the upper group and lower group.

Given the excessive group sizes and my strong desire to work up a hunting load with the Beartooth Bullets 325 Gr. LCMN-LC bullet, I placed an order for these bullets in 0.432" diameter. In theory, matching the bullet diameter to the chamber dimensions should reduce group size. So, how did this work in practice? I took loads made using both the 0.431" and 0.432" Beartooth Bullets 325 Gr. LCMN-LC bullets out to the range. To get a baseline reading, I loaded 5 rounds of the 0.431" bullets into the cylinder using chambers 2-6, and fired a 5-round group. To make sure this whole "two separate groups" thing wasn't all in my mind, I grabbed an additional round loaded with a 0.431" bullet, and randomly placed it into the cylinder and fired at the target. After this last sixth round had been fired, I looked to see which chamber was responsible for the last shot. As can be seen in the photo, the same pattern appeared, with a very nice 1.10" 4-shot group (note that chamber 4 was responsible for two of the shots). Note that again, chambers 4-6 resulted in a high group and chambers 2 and 3 a lower group. The extreme spread on the 6-shot group was 3.58", which is not terrible,





Bullets of 0.431" (top photo) and 0.432" (bottom photo) were fired to compare group sizes.

but certainly not great. By the way, on this nice, humid Louisiana winter day, the muzzle velocity for the loads was a bit different.

Now to test my theory that 0.432" bullets would result in one group. I loaded up a full cylinder of 6 shots, and fired a group. Hmm, I didn't like what I saw through my scope. I had a single round left, so I randomly (like it mattered at this point) loaded it into the cylinder and fired the single round. Well, the good news is that the high-low

Manufacturer	Description	Bullet Dia.	Powder	Charge	Muzzle Velocity
Beartooth Bullets	325 Gr. LCMN-GC	0.431	H110	22.0	1283 ± 16
Beartooth Bullets	325 Gr. LCMN-GC	0.432	H110	22.0	1301 ± 18

Fired on a mostly sunny, humid, 70°F day

pattern disappeared. The bad news...well, just look at the photo for yourself. The 7-shot group was 4.07" and did not exactly knock my socks off with the expected extreme accuracy. I have no explanation for this, other than to say that I only tried one load with the bullets of 0.432" diameter. I may work up a different load with

this later, but not as far as this article or the upcoming hunt is concerned.

Well, at least I now have a plan. I am going to stick with the 0.431" diameter bullets, and plan on using chambers 4-6 for the first shots on game, with chambers 1-3 reserved for that "oh no" moment if the hog gets inside my comfort zone, or if I get very lucky and have a nice boar and several sows show up at the same time. The description of the hunt will be saved for a future article.

Getting Started in High Power Rifle Competition

By Jay D Hunt, Ph.D.

At least once per month I get a phone call or an e-mail from a person who is interested in competing in High Power Rifle, but has no idea how to get started. Typically, the person has a favorite hunting rifle and wants to know if he can use it in competition. The short answer to that question is, "yes, there is a type of competition that allows hunting rifles, but, no, there are no High Power Sporting Rifle competitions in Louisiana." The other concern expressed by most new competitors is that they have never competed and they are worried that they will embarrass themselves. My response is always the same: "Everyone competes in their first match once, and no one is really that good when they start." I am now classified as a Master in High Power Rifle, but at my first match I missed the target several times. Please don't let embarrassment keep you away. Everyone who competes wants more people to join the sport!

So, let's see if we can untangle High Power Rifle for you. The first thing to understand is that High Power Rifle competition is not just one discipline, but several related disciplines. Many competitors just focus on one, but most compete in more than one discipline. In short, here are the related disciplines (with much more description of each below):

- 1. High Power Rifle, Across-the-Course
- 2. High Power Rifle, Long Range
- 3. High Power Rifle, Palma
- 4. High Power Rifle, Mid-Range
- 5. High Power Sporting Rifle

Across-the-Course

Generally speaking, across-the-course (often abbreviated XTC) is the most physically demanding of all of the disciplines. The reason for this is that the shooter fires from three different distances (200, 300, and 600 yards) and from three different positions (standing, sitting, and prone). A description of the basics of XTC shooting follows.

Service Rifle

There are two types of rifles used in XTC matches: Service Rifle and NRA Match Rifle. The service rifle is defined as follows (NRA Rule 3.1). "As issued by the U.S. Armed Forces, or the same type and caliber of commercially manufactured rifle, having not less than 4 ½ pound trigger



The most often used service rifle is the AR15/M16, although the M1 Garand (in .30-06 or .308), the M14/M1A (.308), and the AR10/M110 (.308) are allowed as service rifles.

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pull, with standard type stock and standard type leather or web sling. External alterations to the assembled arm will not be allowed. The application of synthetic coatings, which includes those containing powdered metal, to the interior of the stock to improve bedding is authorized provided the coating does not interfere with the function or operation of safety features. The front and rear sights must be the standard or National Match design, but may vary in dimensions of rear sight aperture an front sight blade. The rear sight aperture may be hooded. The internal parts of the rifle may be specially fitted and include alterations that will improve the functioning and accuracy of the arm,



From top to bottom, the Caliber .30 M1 Garand, the Caliber 7.62 mm M1A, the Caliber 5.56 mm AR15, and the Caliber 7.62 mm AR10 are all legal for Service Rifle competition.

provided such alterations in no way interfere with the proper functioning of the safety devices as manufactured. The rifle must be so modified as to be incapable of automatic fire without removing, replacing, or altering parts. The gas system must be fully operational." Service Rifles include the

- 1. Caliber .30 M1 or Caliber 7.62 mm M1 (better known as the M1 Garand in either .30-06 or .308/7.62 mm NATO), the
- 2. Caliber 7.62 mm M14 (or the civilian version M1A), the
- 3. Caliber 5.56 mm M16 (or the civilian version AR15), and the
- 4. Caliber 7.62 mm M110 (or the civilian version AR10).

Note that **scopes** are <u>not</u> allowed on the rifle, and yes, you can shoot 600 yards with "iron sights" with some basic instruction and practice.

The vast majority of competitors will start with a service rifle, and most of those will choose the AR15. Why? Because the AR15 is far easier with which to compete than any of the other service rifles. The recoil is lighter, resulting in higher scores from the start. For someone wishing to purchase a service rifle for competition, all of the major manufacturers produce National Match service rifles. Armalite, Rock River Arms, Bushmaster, DPMS, Fulton Armory, and others make fine service rifles that are competition ready right out of the box. The basics are, a match grade barrel with a 1 in 8" twist (NOT a 1 in 9" twist), a two-stage match trigger set at 4.5 pounds, match grade rear sights with 1/4 minute of angle (MOA) elevation and 1/4 MOA windage adjustments, and a free float tube under the hand guard.

NRA Match Rifle

The NRA Match Rifle is defined as follows (NRA Rule 3.3). "A center fire rifle with metallic sights and a magazine capable of holding not less than 5 rounds." There are a few additional subsections of NRA Rule 3.3, but basically, any modified AR15 or bolt action rifle will compete in the NRA Match Rifle category.



NRA Match Rifles come in all shapes and sizes.

There are a few restrictions that must be noted: muzzle brakes and silencers are not allowed in NRA competitions. Note, again, that there is a requirement for metallic sights (**scopes are <u>not</u> allowed**). Most competitors begin competing in the service rifle category and eventually switch to the match rifle category as their eyes begin to decline. The short sight radius (the distance between the rear sight and the front sight) on the service rifle is far more difficult on older eyes than the longer sight

		National Match Course (50 Shots)
Distance	Position*	Course-of-Fire
200 yards	Standing	2 sighting shots, then 10 shots for record, single loaded, in 12 minutes
200 yards	Sitting	2 sighting shots in 2 minutes, then 10 shots for record fired in 60 seconds
300 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots in 2 minutes, then 10 shots for record fired in 70 seconds
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record, single loaded, in 22 minutes
		Pagional Match Course (80 Shots)
		Regional Match Course (80 Shots)
Distance	Position*	Course-of-Fire
Distance 200 yards	Position* Standing	
-		Course-of-Fire
200 yards	Standing	Course-of-Fire 2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record, single loaded, in 22 minutes
200 yards 200 yards	Standing Sitting	Course-of-Fire 2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record, single loaded, in 22 minutes 2 sighting shots in 2 minutes, then 10 shots for record fired in 60 seconds
200 yards 200 yards 200 yards	Standing Sitting Sitting	Course-of-Fire 2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record, single loaded, in 22 minutes 2 sighting shots in 2 minutes, then 10 shots for record fired in 60 seconds 10 shots for record fired in 60 seconds

radius available on match rifles.

Course-of-Fire

There are two basic courses used for XTC High Power Rifle competition: the National Match Course and the Regional Match Course. These two courses differ only by the number of shots that are fired and, therefore, the maximum aggregate score that one may fire.

Other Equipment

There are several other pieces of equipment that you will eventually need, but the lack of equipment should not deter you from competing. In most instances you will be able to borrow the necessary equipment from your fellow competitors. The following equipment are essential: a spotting scope and a scope stand, a shooting coat, a shooting mat, a shooting glove for your off hand, two 20-round magazines (for service rifle competition), and a range cart to haul all of this paraphernalia. It is best to attend a few matches before purchasing equipment to get a feel for what you like and need.

Positions

NRA Rule 5.12 defines the *Standing Position* as, "Erect on both feet, no other portion of the body touching the ground or any supporting surface. The rifle will be supported by both hands, the cheek and one shoulder and upper arm. The upper arm is defined as from the middle of the biceps toward the shoulder. The elbow or back of the forward arm may be placed against the body or rested on the hip. The sling may not be used for support and may not be wrapped around the arm or hand. The butt of the rifle must be on the outside of the coat." Rule 5.10 defines the *Sitting Position* as, "Weight of the body supported on the buttocks and the feet or ankles, no other portion of the body touching the ground. The rifle will be supported by both hands and one shoulder only.

Arms may rest on the legs at any point above the ankles." Rule 5.6 defines the Prone Position as, "Body extended on the ground, head toward the target. The rifle will be supported by both hands and one shoulder only. No portion of the arms below the elbows shall rest upon the ground or any artificial support, nor may any portion of the rifle or body rest against any artificial support. The magazine may not compress the coat to the ground so as to provide artificial support."

Long Range, Palma, and Mid-Range Long Range is defined by the NRA as 1000 yards, and,



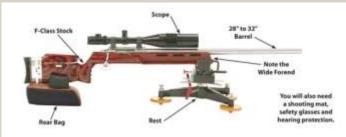
therefore, these competitions are limited to shooting ranges that have the necessary distance. Long Range shooters are often also Palma shooters, which has a course of fire that includes 800, 900, and 1000 yards. The NRA-defines Mid-Range as 300, 500, or 600 yards. All firing at these distances are done from the prone position, so a competitor may own a Palma rifle and shoot in any event: Long Range, Palma, or Mid-Range. For NRA Long Range prone, NRA Palma, and NRA Mid-Range prone, only metallic sights are allowed. The Service Rifle, Palma Rifle, or the NRA Match Rifle may be used in NRA Long Range prone, NRA Palma, or NRA Mid-Range prone matches.

Several years ago the NRA recognized that many shooters were leaving competitive rifle shooting because they either did not have the stamina or the desire to fire an entire match from the prone position. The NRA adopted F-Class rules to keep these competitors in the game. F-Class shooting was the brainchild of Canadian George Farquharson and the "F" was derived from his last name. Mr. Farquharson came up with the idea of F-Class to enable he and other older shooters to continue competing alongside "iron sight" shooters who used a sling. Basically, he replaced the iron sights with a scope and replaced the sling hold with the option of using either a front bi-pod or a rest. F-Class is shot from the prone position where the shooters lay on a mat. Unlike conditional prone where the shooters supports the rifle with his off hand and a sling, in F-Class the rifle is supported by some external means.

Typically, NRA Long Range prone and F-Class competitions are fired simultaneously, where competitors will compete in either the prone division or one of the two F-Class divisions. F-Class shooters shoot on targets that are half the size of the targets used by iron sight shooters, which raises the bar for shooters dramatically and increases the level of skill required to reach the top. This sport is enjoyed by young and old alike. The number of women shooters and family participation has also increased in F-Class shooting.

Palma Rifle

The NRA defines a Palma Rifle in Rule 3.3.1 (a) as, "A rifle with metallic sights chambered for the unmodified .308/7.62 mm NATO or .223/5.56 mm NATO cartridge case," and (b), "Any service rifle with metallic sights chambered for the unmodified .308/7.62 mm NATO or .223/5.56 mm NATO cartridge case." So, to compete in Palma competitions, or to use a Palma Rifle to fire in Long Range or Mid-Range prone matches, the rifle must be a .308 or .223.



F-Open Rifle

The NRA defines the F-Class Open rifle in Section 22 Rule 3.4 (a). The rifle must be limited to a caliber of .35 or under, must weight no more than 10 kg (22 lbs.), may use an adjustable front rest, may use a rear sand bag, may

have a 76 mm (3") wide fore end, and must be shouldered when fired. Rail guns not allowed, and tables are prohibited for support. The shooter must lay on the ground or a mat placed on the ground. Any sighting system is permitted, but it must be included in the rifle's overall weight.

F-TR (Target Rifle)

In Section 22 Rule 3.4 (b), the NRA defines the F-Class TR rifle as caliber limited to .223 or .308 (unmodified) weighing no more than 8.25 kg (18.18 lbs), a sling and/or bipod are allowed, and a rear bag is allowed for support. Any sighting system is permitted, but it must be included in the rifle's overall weight.

Course-of-Fire

The courses-of-fire vary, but there are some common courses that are used. The Palma course may be fired alone, or in combination with a Long Range match. National Records in the Palma course of fire may only be established while using a rifle that conforms to NRA Rule 3.3.1 as defined above.

Sporting Rifle

The NRA developed High Power Sporting Rifle to allow the average hunter who is interested in competing with his "deer rifle" an outlet to do just that. The rules are structured so that one does not have to spend a great deal on equipment and can compete with rifles that are not designed specifically and solely for competition. Time limits are developed for standard hunting rifles with a magazine capacity of at least 4 rounds, which includes most deer rifles. However, as with any rifle competition, one is free to spend to their heart's content to develop the most accurate rifle that money can buy. Equipment limits are also placed on the competitor who wishes to compete in High Power Sporting Rifle. The heavy coats that are worn in traditional High Power Rifle competitions are not allowed in High Power Sporting Rifle.

Sporting Rifle

In NRA Rule 3.4, the NRA lays out the basics of the sporting rifle: "A center fire rifle of any caliber, not equipped with palm rest or Schuetzen type buttplate weighing not over 9.5 pounds including detachable magazine and sights but excluding sling." This 9.5 pounds is fairly typical for

the average walnut-stocked .30-06 bolt action rifle with a hunting style scope, and is far more reasonable that the weight limits for F-TR (18 lbs.) and F-Open (22 lbs.) rifles.

The NRA is also very reasonable with rules concerning the sights that may be used. There are allowances for non-corrective metallic sights (iron sights), corrective metallic sights, and telescopic sights. For non-corrective metallic sights, the NRA states, "Any sighting system constructed of metal or equivalent which [sic] provides a method of aiming



Standard hunting rifles, such as the Remington Model 700, Winchester Model 70, and Ruger Model 77 fitted with a scope meet High Power Sporting Rifle standards.

by aligning 2 separate but visible sights or reference points, mounted on the rifle, including tube sights and non-magnifying filters." For corrective sights, the NRA states that for the front sight, "A single lens may be used in conjunction with the front sight." For the rear sight, the NRA states that, "Any sighting system constructed of metal or equivalent which [sic] provides a method of aiming or aligning two (2) separate but visible sights or reference points, mounted on the rifle including tube sights and non magnifying filters except that a lens or system of lenses, not containing an aiming reference or reticle at the focal plane or any side lens or system of lenses may be included in such system." Finally, the NRA also allows for the use of scopes: "Any sighting system which [sic] includes a lens or system of lenses and an aiming reference or reticle at the focal plane of a lens or system of lenses."

		Palma Course (45 Shots)
Distance	Position	Course-of-Fire
800 yards	Prone	Unlimited sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
900 yards 1000	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
		Long Range Regional Course (110 Shots)
Distance	Position	Course-of-Fire
		Day 1
800 yards	Prone	Unlimited sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
900 yards 1000	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
yards 1000	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded Day 2
800 yards	Prone	Unlimited sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
900 yards 1000	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 15 shots for record single loaded
		Mid-Range Regional Course (120 Shots)
Distance*	Position	Course-of-Fire†
		Day 1
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded
		Day 2
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded
600 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 20 shots for record single loaded
		hat any combination of 300, 500, or 600 yards may be used
	†Note that	at at least 90 shots are required. Day 2 may be reduced to 2 matches

Course-of-Fire

The NRA has recognized that the rapid reloading of a sporting rifle is not feasible. In standard High Power Rifle rapid fire stages, the shooter must reload his rifle during the stage. For a service rifle, the shooter loads one magazine with 2 round and a second magazine with 8 rounds. When the command to fire is given, the shooter will fire 2 rounds, drop the empty magazine, insert the magazine with 8 rounds, and then continue to fire. For match rifle shooters, a stripper clip

Distance*	Position	Course-of-Fire
200 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots, then 8 shots for record, single loaded, in 10 minutes
200 yards	Standing	2 sighting shots, then 8 shots for record, single loaded, in 10 minutes
200 yards	Sitting	2 sighting shots in 2 minutes, followed by 4 shots for record fired in 30 seconds
200 yards	Sitting	4 shots for record fired in 30 seconds
200 yards	Prone	2 sighting shots in 2 minutes, followed by 4 shots for record fired in 30 seconds
200 yards	Prone	4 shots for record fired in 30 seconds
-	*Matches m	nay be shot at 100 yards

guide is fitted to the rifle to allow the shooter to fire 5 rounds, and then insert a stripper clip with 5 additional rounds, and fire the remaining rounds. None of this is possible on the standard deer rifle. In High Power Sporting Rifle, the rapid fire stages are restricted to 4 rounds.

In conclusion, there is truly a rifle discipline for anyone interested in competing with a high power rifle (oh, by the way, I left out High Power Rifle Silhouette because I know nothing about it). For those that are interested in competing, the best thing to do is to come to a match and see for yourself how much fun you can have!

For more information, contact one of the Program Directors.

Louisiana High Power Rifle Program Directors

Jay Hunt (jdhunt3@louisianashooting.com) and Mark Altazin (mark.altz@gmail.com)

Louisiana Prone/F-Class Rifle Program Directors
Rick Stewart (chaser2020@yahoo.com) and Ted Torres (thetedeo25@yahoo.com)



Louisiana Shooting Association

An NRA-Affiliated State Association www.louisianashooting.com

Monday, August 13, 2012

An Open Letter to the Citizens of Louisiana

Several uninformed "authorities" have recently released false information about the upcoming Act 874 that will be on the Louisiana ballot in November.

Under our current Louisiana constitution, the legislature is not supposed to pass any laws abridging our right to keep and bear arms unless the law involves concealed carry. Note that they can pass any restriction on concealed carry that strikes their fancy, even an outright ban. That in itself should cause you to support Act 874. The legislature, however, on any number of occasions has refused to believe that constitutional limits apply to its power. Laws that restrict our gun rights do get passed.

Enter the Louisiana judicial system, the branch of government that is supposed to protect us poor citizens from the legislature when it oversteps its constitutional authority. Unfortunately, the Louisiana Supreme Court has ruled that a law that infringes on your right to keep and bear arms is constitutional if it passes the "rational basis" test. Under the rational basis test, the court asks itself whether the legislature had a rational basis for passing the law in question. If the court can discern any rational basis for the law, it will declare the law to be constitutional. This is the current state of Louisiana law under the existing Article I, Section 11 of its constitution.

The 1974 Constitution currently reads:

§11. Right to Keep and Bear Arms

"Section 11. The right of each citizen to keep and bear arms shall not be abridged, but this provision shall not prevent the passage of laws to prohibit the carrying of weapons concealed on the person."

Act 874, should it pass in November, provides NO carte blanche authority for the legislature to restrict concealed carry.

If the new amendment is passed, the Constitution will read:

§11. Right to Keep and Bear Arms

"Section 11. The right of each citizen to keep and bear arms is fundamental and shall not be infringed. Any restriction on this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny."

It states, in very clear language, the standard of review that must be applied by a Louisiana court. "Strict scrutiny" review requires that the court either find a compelling state interest for the law or declare it unconstitutional. Finding a compelling state interest is a much higher threshold than merely needing a rational basis. Further, under strict scrutiny, the restriction must be tailored narrowly to only restrict the targeted behavior, while protecting the rights of those not targeted.

To put it another way, under rational basis, the presumption is that a restriction is valid unless there is no way to support it. In stark contrast, under strict scrutiny, the presumption is that a restriction is invalid unless there is no way to avoid it. This is a HUGE difference.

Act 874 is very good for gun owners. Several key Louisianans have done us a great disservice by making disparaging statements about this potential improvement to our constitution. In some cases, the statements are made from ignorance. To believe otherwise would be to believe they are being made by anti-gun activists attempting to trick gun owners into voting against a significant pro-gun amendment.

The Ballot on Nov 6th will read:

"Do you support an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Louisiana to provide that the right to keep and bear arms is a fundamental right and any restriction of that right requires the highest standard of review by a court? (Amends Article I, Section 11)"

Hopefully we have enlightened our members and ask everyone to support Act 874 on November 6, 2012.

Please VOTE YES on November 6 and urge others to do the same!

Sincerely,

Daniel E. Zelenka, II President Attorney-at-Law

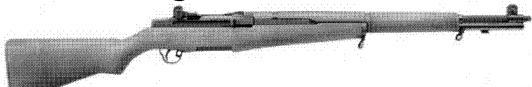
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Louisiana Shooting Association c/o Jay D. Hunt, Treasurer 350 Quill Ct. Slidell, LA 70461

Drawing to be Held on October 20, 2012 Winner need not be present at drawing to win Please \$5.00 minimum purchase for mail orders.





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The Louisiana Shooting Association

An NRA-Affiliated State Association

Membership Application

Louisiana Shooting Association

L.S.A. Louistana Shouting Association	☐ New Member	Renewal	c/o Jay D. Hunt 350 Quill Court Slidell, LA 70461		
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HAVE AN ARTICLE TO PUT IN THE NEWSLETTER?

I'd like to invite all LSA members to share any article they have written that pertains to the shooting sports or activities. With the growth of the organization over the years we have seen many experts over a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds join the association. We would like to welcome those of you to share your wealth of knowledge. If you have an article that you'd like to submit, please email it to thetedeo25@yahoo.com with "Article for LSA" as the topic.

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

If you joined LSA using a paper application form, please go to the LSA website, http://www.louisianashooting.com and create an account. By doing so, you will greatly assist the Association, secretary in getting information to you. You will also be sent automatic renewal announcements. You must have an account to join or renew online or to purchase LSA merchandise from the LSA online store.





