

# Fusillade

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Newsletter of the Ballarat Arms &  
Militaria Collectors Society Inc.  
Issue 192: March - April 2024



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The Society has formal meetings on the last Wednesday of the month, except December, January and February.

Special meetings are held in November and February, refer newsletters.

**VENUE** - Scout Hall, 26 Orion St, Sebastopol

**Meetings** - Doors open at **7.00pm**, meetings start at **7.30pm**.

Visitors and potential new members are always welcome.

**Membership inquiries: 0419566490 or email: [baamcs@ballaratarms.com.au](mailto:baamcs@ballaratarms.com.au)**

**Website - [www.ballaratarms.com.au](http://www.ballaratarms.com.au)**

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**Our collecting interests include:** - Military & Sporting Long-arms; Black powder Firearms; Collectable Handguns; All Edged Weapons & Knives; Ammunition and Ordnance; Badges; Medals; Uniforms; Maps; Books and Documents, General history. We are also an **Approved Shooting Organisation** (Hunting and Target) under the 1996 Victorian Firearms Act

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**"Fusillade"** is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Society

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Next newsletter closing date is **5th May 2024**

***Opinions within these pages are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Society .***

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**Society Upcoming Meeting Details**

**VENUE - 7th Ballarat Scout Hall**

**26 Orion St, Sebastopol**

**Wednesday 27th March - 7.30pm regular monthly meeting. Show & tell**

**Wednesday 24th April - 7.30pm regular monthly meeting. Show & tell**

# President's Despatch

Welcome Members,

Firstly I would like to apologise to everyone for the late cancellation of our annual shoot at the Ballarat Pistol Club. This was out of our control as was the weather on the day, which contributed greatly to the unfortunate cancellation.

Once again we wholeheartedly thank the Country Fire Authority Volunteers who came from all over the State to help with the fires that threatened the region to the West of Ballarat and the Grampians area. Firefighters from Forest Fire Management worked tirelessly throughout the days of the fires and at the time of writing are still out at Mt Lonarch ensuring the fires are "blacked out". Support also came from Fire Rescue Victoria and even from NSW RFS and NSW Fire and Rescue. Our thoughts are with all who have lost property, livestock or croplands.

Late January the Victorian Government announced that there would be a duck season for 2024. The season will commence on Wednesday 10 April 2024 and end on Wednesday 5 June 2024. The Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos is quoted as saying, "Duck hunting is a legitimate activity - but more than that, it supports regional communities and economies." This recognition of a shooting sport as a legitimate activity is great news for us all. Hopefully one day this recognition will be applied to all forms of firearms ownership.

The state of Tasmania is the butt of many jokes however the current situation for antique firearms owners is no laughing matter. Without consultation the Tasmanian Police Commissioner, (not the Police Minister) has revoked the exemption to own pre 1900 firearms without a licence. This could potentially have significant ramifications to many antique and heirloom firearms worth many thousands of dollars, not to mention the risk of destruction of historically significant pieces. To further confuse the issue, major political parties have pledged to revoke the revocation if they are elected in the upcoming Tasmanian elections. If a true consultative process had been followed from the beginning, rather than the dictatorship approach it is likely firearms owners in Tasmania wouldn't be in the situation they find themselves.

Recently I received an email from an American firearm magazine that brought back some fond memories, and some sad ones. Like many firearm owners (pre 1996) I owned a Ruger 10/22. This was one of my most favourite rifles I have ever owned. It was a great fun little plinker, especially when combined with an aftermarket stock and banana magazine. The Ruger 10/22 has been in production since 1964, currently with 7 models and over 20 versions it is one of the most recognisable rimfire rifles around. I must admit it almost brought me to tears watching my Ruger 10/22 carbine get crushed.

Some great news for the Society, we now have a new home. After some great work done by our Secretary Graeme, lodgings have been secured at the Ballarat Scout Hall - 26 Orion St, Sebastopol. Fantastic work by Graeme finding our new venue. Our next meeting is on Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm. I hope to see many of you there.

Yours in collecting,

*Andrew Day.*

## Shepparton Militaria & Collectables Expo - Show report



A number of BAAMCS members attended the Shepparton show on a beautiful sunny day on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The buyer numbers were excellent and it was a very well run show - the Northern Victorian Arms Collectors Guild are to be commended.

The McIntosh Centre is a great venue with good car parking and facilities.

The variety of goods on offer was extensive and I'm sure everyone who attended picked up something for their collection.

The only slight negatives were the narrow aisles between tables causing a fair bit of overcrowding and congestion in places, and having to go outside through the security to get a coffee. At times the queue to go through security extended way back in front of the selling tables. But these are only minor issues - I'd rather have these small inconveniences and have more seller tables!

# The Most Bizarre Guns Ever Made

Article by David E. Petzal of [fieldandstream.com](http://fieldandstream.com)

## 1. The *Krummlauf* (STG-44) Assault Rifle



Fitted to a Sturmgewehr 44 assault rifle, the *Krummlauf* curved barrel and sight allowed soldiers to shoot around corners. *Rock Island Auction Company*

*Krummlauf* means “curved barrel,” and refers to a barrel-and-periscopic-sight combination with a 30-degree bend that could be fitted to a standard *Sturmgewehr 44* assault rifle. It allowed this bizarre gun to shoot around corners without exposing the shooter, and was intended for tank crews.

As World War II progressed, infantrymen were increasingly able to take out *panzers* on a regular basis if they could get right up to the tank and did not care especially about surviving.

German tanks counted on their own infantry to keep potential heroes out of range, and if this didn't work out, they hosed down each other's hulls. But sometimes that was not enough. Thus, the idea for the *Krummlauf*. A tank commander could unbutton his hatch, shoot whoever was trying to blow him up, and button up again, all without being exposed to bullets and other inconveniences.

The *Krummlauf* never really got all the bugs worked out of it. Bullets shattered inside the barrel, and barrels lasted only 300 rounds or so. I couldn't find any reference to how many were made. The answer is probably, not a lot. After 1943, life inside a *Panzer* was no bed of roses. It was also short.

## 2. The Coffee Mill Sharps



This .52-calibre Sharps New Model 1863 Carbine from the Buffalo Bill Center of the West shows an exploded view of buttstock's coffee grinder. *Buffalo Bill Center of the West*

The Union Army ran on coffee. Each soldier was issued 36 pounds of beans a year, and brewed it by the one-quart tin cupful, “strong enough to float a horseshoe” and heavily sweetened with sugar or molasses. It was issued in bean form because war profiteers were fond of mixing dirt into ground coffee, so Billy Yank got to roast and grind his own.

Most “grinding” consisted of bashing the beans between two rocks, and it occurred to Lt. Col. Walter King, detached from the 4th Missouri Cavalry to the Springfield Armory, that it might be useful to incorporate a coffee mill in the buttstock of the .52 Sharps carbine. The colonel gave the order, and so it was done. Perhaps 100 of the guns were thus modified.

The mill was a nice-looking piece of machinery, but it didn't work very well, and so the whole project was dropped. Today, it's thought that a dozen or so authentic coffee-mill Sharps survive, and they're worth a lot of money. There are a great many more fake coffee-mill Sharps around; indeed, it's a guess that this is one of the most-counterfeited firearms of the Civil War period. Which, somehow, relates nicely to adding dirt to coffee grounds.

### 3. The A-Square .577 T-Rex



The .577 Tyrannosaurus, or T-Rex, was made to stop the most dangerous African game. *Rock Island Auction Company*

A-Square was the brainchild of Lt. Col. Art Alphin (Armor/USA), who, while an instructor at West Point, began building dangerous-game rifles chambered for standard cartridges and for his own line of proprietary rounds. Alphin retired from the Army in 1997 and went into the gun biz full time. His rifles were distinguished by their massive stocks, which he claimed helped to dissipate their godless recoil.

His masterpiece was the .577 Tyrannosaur, or T-Rex, which was developed in 1993 at the request of two Zimbabwe professional hunters (never named, as far as I know) who wanted a stopping rifle that would stop anything. The T-Rex is all of that. It fires a 750-grain bullet at an honest 2,450 fps and produces 10,180 foot-pounds of muzzle energy. Recoil is 172 foot-pounds in a 13-pound rifle. To put this in perspective, a .458 Lott generates about 73 foot-pounds in the same weight gun, and is far too much for all but experienced shooters.

If you'd like to see the T-Rex in action, there are a number of YouTube videos that show various misguided people trying to shoot this bizarre gun. All but a very few are flung about like rag dolls.

A-Square closed its doors in 2012. This was a shame, because it made excellent rifles, bullets, and ammo. I had a .458 Lott A-Square in Caesar Grade, and it was a first-class buffalo basher. I sold it, and later met the man who bought it, and he and his sons were as pleased with it as I was.

## 4. The Velo Dog Revolver



This 6mm Velo Dog double-action revolver was designed to keep pooches from chasing bicyclists. *Rock Island Auction Company*

In late 19th century France, the bicycle, or velocipede as it was then called, came much in fashion, and dogs discovered that it was great sport chasing after peddlers and biting at their legs, or trousers, or God knows what. The answer to the problem was the Velo Dog revolver. The invention of one Rene Galand, it was a small double-action pocket revolver with a shrouded hammer and, in later models, a long, guardless trigger.

Also called *Revolver de Poche* (pocket revolver), it was just the answer for pesky poodles and their ilk. Velo Dog ammo was a centrefire 5.75mm round that was loaded with a conventional bullet, or cayenne pepper, or dust, or bullets made from wax, wood, or cork.

Dog plinking became so popular that Velo Dog revolvers were produced in varying configurations in Belgium, Germany, and Spain as well as France. There have been times when I have very much wanted one of these bizarre guns.



## 5. The 3-Gauge Kiln Gun



An 8-gauge Remington Arms Model 400 Industrial Kiln Gun. *Rock Island Auction Company*

In the course of my visit to the now-gone-and-much-lamented Julia Auction House, I was shown a monstrous 3-gauge shotgun and asked to identify it, which I could not. At 5 feet long and 50 pounds, the bizarre gun was too small to be a punt gun and way too big to be a conventional game gun.

It was a kiln gun, and I did not know that such a thing existed. Steel mills, after the molten metal was poured from their kilns, found the enormous vats encrusted with slag, which is the stony residue that results when metal is melted out of its ore. The mills discovered they could get rid of it by sending men into the kilns with hammers—or they could blast the slag into dust with a shotgun. Thus, the kiln gun, which fired a monstrous charge of No. 12 shot through a slot in the kiln and did the job in an instant.

Kiln guns are still made today, although they look nothing like conventional firearms, and are 8 gauge instead of 3. The modern load fires a 3-ounce slug at 1,750 fps, and develops 9,000 foot-pounds of energy. A modern kiln gun weighs around 220 pounds and has a useful life of a quarter-million rounds. They are fired parallel to the kiln walls to avoid punching holes in it.

## 6. The Gyrojet Rocket Gun



An MBA Gyrojet handgun, with 10 of the small rockets that gun is designed to fire. *Rock Island Auction Company*

In 1965, I received a phone call from a California knifemaker I knew named D.E. Henry. Was I aware, he asked, of a rocket gun made by a firm named MBAssociates. No, I was not, so Henry said I should get hold of one, and I did. It was, as they said at the time, a trip.

The MBA Gyrojet was made in handgun and carbine configurations. Rather than conventional ammunition, they fired 12mm or 13mm rockets called Microjets. These projectiles had angled ports in their bases that contained propellant, and a primer in their centre. When you pulled the trigger, a flat striker ahead of the Microjet struck the rocket on its nose, driving it rearward into a fixed firing pin. This hit the primer, which ignited the ports, and the rocket accelerated to about 1,250 fps. The angled ports caused the rocket to spin in flight, removing the need for fins.

The advantages to the Gyrojet were several. Because it did not have to withstand the stresses of a conventional firearm, the frame was very light and very cheap. (It was, I recall, zinc alloy, plated in an attractive gold tone.) There was no recoil, and very little report. The disadvantages were unreliable ignition (the ports clogged), very slow reloading, and extreme lack of accuracy. After a couple of years, the whole project folded, although Gyrojets did make it into at least a couple of movies.

## Upcoming Events 2024:

See [www.ballaratarms.com.au/newsandevents](http://www.ballaratarms.com.au/newsandevents) for further details.

### 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Australian Fine Arms & Collectibles Auction

Live-streamed online auction with auctioneer. Further information from website: [australianfinearms.com.au](http://australianfinearms.com.au) or email: [info@australianfinearms.com.au](mailto:info@australianfinearms.com.au)

### 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024: Golden City Militaria & Collectables Show

1-3 Waterson Crt, Bendigo. **Not yet confirmed** but likely to go ahead. Keep an eye out on their website: [collectorsbendigo.com.au](http://collectorsbendigo.com.au)

### Ballarat Arms Fair

The photos below show the progress of the new Ballarat Showgrounds pavilion at Mount Rowan. This will be the venue for our next arms fair, and whilst the main structure is up and the roof is on, there is still a LOT of work to complete - especially all the external facilities such as access roads and car parks.

It's unfortunate, but it is extremely unlikely the facility will be completed in time for us to stage a show this year. So we look forward to 2025.



## Front Cover Illustration

Some of the artillery ordnance on offer at the Shepparton Militaria Expo

## Advertisements:

These ads are free, but need to be kept up to date: [ballaratarms.com.au/contact-us](http://ballaratarms.com.au/contact-us)

**R.F.Scott & Co. 910 Howitt St, Wendouree.** Sporting Guns, Rifles, Ammo, Gun Cases, Black powder & accessories. phone /fax (03) 5331 7111 bh.

**H. REHFISCH & Co P/L** Guns, Fishing, Archery, Gun safes, clothing, etc.  
**903 La Trobe St, Ballarat. 53313677**

**ANTIK, Purveyors of the old and unusual.** Militaria and Old Wares shop.  
At the roundabout and opposite the Grapes Hotel, 202 Grant St, cnr Humffray St South  
(03) 53318268

**Dave Wright Militaria and Collectables.** Buying and selling Militaria. Sheppard St, Ballarat, Vic 3350. (*rear of Dan Murphy's bottle shop, between Mair and Curtis Sts*). Ph 0353384377. Open Tues to Friday 9am to 5pm. Sat 9am to 1pm.  
Email [djwright@inet.net.au](mailto:djwright@inet.net.au). Web [www.davewrightmilitaria.com.au](http://www.davewrightmilitaria.com.au)

**For all your Private gun and parts ads, try "Universal Used Guns.com.au"**  
[www.universalusedguns.com.au](http://www.universalusedguns.com.au)

**Ozgunsales** for all your online gun purchases and sales - [www.ozgunsales.com](http://www.ozgunsales.com)

**Wanted:** WW2 Australian artillery & anti-aircraft ordnance - fuzes, shells and cartridge cases. Particularly 3.7" & 3" 20 cwt AA. Graeme Davenport, Ballarat 0438 049 880.

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Any transfer of ownership of licensable firearms advertised in this newsletter must be completed through a Licenced Gun Dealer. The 28 day cooling off period applies for a first purchase.

Please keep your Postal, Residential, e-mail addresses and phone numbers up to date, with the Society. Thank you.

Members are reminded if they change ANY of their address details, storage address, contact home / mobile number, they MUST advise LRD in writing, or Fax, within 7 days. **Not to do so is an offence!**

**ALWAYS** send documents to LRD via **REGISTERED POST**. Use **EXPRESS** or **PRIORITY MAIL** if you're unsure if your documents will arrive in time.  
And **ALWAYS** make copies of those documents for your files

**LRD - Call 1300 651 645 - Mon-Wed-Frid, 10am-2pm**

**Postal Address - GPO Box 2807AA, Melbourne 3001**

**Email - [lrd@police.vic.gov.au](mailto:lrd@police.vic.gov.au)**