



**Timeline of American Sporting Arms, view from rear.**

## INTRODUCTION

by Rick Starbuck

**N**ow I bet you are wondering about my involvement in the museum. To satisfy you, we must turn the clock back again. Several years ago, a friend asked me about loaning my collection to the NRA for use in their new museum. Well, that's something I had to think about. The next day, I told him yes. It turned out to be one of my best decisions. After all, isn't it better to have your collection on a secure, public display than locked up in a dark locker?

Some time later, the collection was packed up, inventories, insured and taken to Springfield. After its arrival, the collection was unpacked, photographed, catalogued, inventoried and put on display. All done in a professional manner.

The reward for all of this is not monetary, but it comes from watching people as they view the display. Some of the comments are priceless: Like the wife to her husband, "Can we go now?" His reply, "If the guy that has this collection had a feather and I had this collection, we

would both be tickled." Or the little boy that yelled at his dad, "Look Dad at the pirate pistols. Can we go see them?" How about the two hunters, one telling the other, "I would love to borrow some of those and take them out and shoot them." Well, that's plenty of public comment. It does make you proud that other people enjoy them as much as you do. Who knows, out of the half million people that have gone through this museum, just maybe some will become collectors. I think we all agree that's something we want.

As some of the best collections in our country are owned by members of A.S.A.C., I ask you to think about loaning to the NRA Museums. If people like Phil Schreier and Jim Supica have access to great collections, then they can display them for the public's education. With help from folks like Johnny Morris (Bass Pro), we all can benefit. Let's do it again.

## THE NRA NATIONAL SPORTING ARMS MUSEUM

by Rick Starbuck & Jim Supica

The NRA National Sporting Arms Museum opened its doors in August of 2013, and rapidly became America's most visited firearms museum with over 375,000 guests in its first year of operation.

Located in the Bass Pro Shops original first facility in Springfield, MO, the Museum was the brainchild of Bass Pro founder Johnny Morris in consultation with NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre, and NRA Board Member and NASCAR champion Richard Childress. On visiting the original NRA National Firearms Museum at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, VA, Morris was inspired to establish a Museum in the heart of the country dedicated to the themes of Hunting, Conservation and Freedom.

The Hunting theme is apparent on entering the Museum. On their left, visitors find a 150 foot long Timeline of American Sporting Arms featuring five large display cases and five dioramas. The exhibit traces hunting firearms in

America from the earliest explorers, conquistadors, and settlers through modern day hunters.

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Room on the second floor of the Museum carries the Conservation theme, focusing on Roosevelt's role as the grandfather of the American conservation movement. It tracks his accomplishments and includes four of his guns, along with firearms owned by TR's friends and family including Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, and Gen. Leonard Wood.

The Freedom theme is represented throughout but especially in two exhibits dedicated to the firearms of America's Armed Forces. In the center of the Museum's Second Amendment Gallery, a 21 Gun Salute to America's Armed Forces begins with a Charleville musket attributed to Revolutionary War soldier Edward Cox and continues through modern day weapons.



St. Louis made long arms, from Timeline of American Sporting Arms, loaned by Cletus Klein.



**Dioramas, left to right: America's first hunters with Indian trade musket; Lewis and Clark; buffalo hunter. Shown below the diorama is a Girardoni style air rifle of the type carried by Lewis and Clark. Donated by Michael Carrick.**



**Theodore Roosevelt's Frederick Adolph double rifle, ca. 1910, 500-450 Nitro Express. Donated by Owen Albert, courtesy of Ron Petersen.**



**A young visitor looks down the stairs towards the flag-mural-backed  
“21 Gun Salute to America’s Armed Forces” exhibit.**

The other major Freedom theme exhibit is the first display on the right greeting visitors to the Museum – a 25 foot long case showcasing over 130 U.S. Martial Pistols. The vast majority of these are a comprehensive collection of military handguns from 1797 through 1898 on loan from Rick Starbuck.

**U.S. Martial Pistols exhibit.**

The Starbuck collection includes all standard issue handguns from that century, with variations, along with a large number of rare and experimental military handguns, including:

Two North and Cheney Model 1799s  
Martin Fry 1807-1808 contract pistol  
Simeon North Model 1813/1816 Navy  
with extended forestock  
Elgin Cutlass Pistol  
Gedney self-priming hammer model 1836  
Maynard tape primer Model 1836  
Experimental Maynard tape primer Model 1842  
prototype  
Experimental automatic pellet primed Model 1842  
Experimental Rupertus Model 1842 automatic  
priming system  
Savage North field trials percussion revolver  
Model 1869 breech-loading trapdoor pistol  
Hopkins & Allen test/trials .44 rimfire revolver  
S&W Schofield with Kelton thumb safety



U.S. Martial Pistols exhibit.



**Simeon North pistols,  
loaned by F.L. Starbuck**



**Colt Paterson and Walker revolvers,  
loaned by F.L. Starbuck**



**North & Cheney and Elgin Cutlass pistols,  
loaned by F.L. Starbuck**



**Springfield Model 1869 & S&W Schofield  
Kelton Safety pistols, loaned by F.L. Starbuck**



**Stocked U.S. martial pistols,  
loaned by F.L. Starbuck**

This exhibit continues beyond 1898, with examples of U.S. pistols up through today's M9. The most significant among these are a group of four pistols associated with the U.S. Pistol Trials, donated by Bailey and Taz Brower.

They include:

Luger Model 1901, one of 1,000 purchased for testing by the U.S. cavalry in 1901

Colt Model 1907 Pistol, one of 200 produced exclusively for the U.S. military trials

Savage Model 1911, s/n 4, one of four made as Savage's final variation of this design, this example is believed to be the exact gun that was used in the head-to-head shootout with the Colt 1911 that resulted in the adoption of the Colt pattern.

Grant Hammond Model 1917, s/n 1, one of 13 made, tested by the Navy in 1918 as a possible replacement for the 1911.

Subjects presented at the NRA National Sporting Arms Museum extend well beyond the core theme of Hunting, Conservation, and Freedom.

Historic guns include royal flintlock fowlers such as a Fatou flintlock double fowler attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte, presidential firearms from Dwight Eisenhower and Grover Cleveland, and guns of medal of honor recipients.

Guns of the Old West include firearms attributed to lawmen and outlaws such as Frank Hamer, Bass Reeves, John Wesley Hardin, Jesse James, Black Jack Ketchum, and Bad Bob Meldrum; along with exhibition shooters Annie Oakley and Captain Bogardus. Also exhibited are exceptional engraved revolvers from the late 19th century, and guns of 20th century Texas Rangers.

Other themed exhibits include competition firearms, guns used in Hollywood movies, and fine engraved firearms.



**U.S. Trials related pistols, donated by Bailey and Taz Brower.**



**Fatou flintlock double fowler attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte.**



**Exceptional Savage pistols, on loan from Bailey and Taz Brower.**

The NRA National Sporting Arms Museum was designed, and built and is maintained by Bass Pro Shops, who also provides docents to help visitors enjoy their Museum experience. The NRA Museums provided the themes, storylines, display layout, signage, installation, and ongoing collection supervision and promotion.

However, the heart of the Museum is the collection of firearms on display, and those have been provided by donors and lenders.

This new major facility in the NRA Museums system provided an opportunity to display some special collections that had been “in the works” for years, looking for an appropriate exhibit environment.

Probably foremost among these is the Remington Arms Company factory collection. This consists of over 70 firearms that have never been exhibited together before outside of Ilion NY. There are factory prototypes, first production guns, historic arms, milestone pieces, exceptional



**Remington military prototype and trials rifles, top to bottom: Remington Elliott Army 1872 trials rifle, prototype Remington Keene rifle for 1882 trials, prototype Remington Cook rifle for U.S. Navy tests ca. 1894, and prototype Remington Lee rifle made for U.S. military trials. Loaned by Remington Arms Company.**





### **Remington factory collection exhibit.**

examples of engraving, and factory cutaways.

In addition to firearms, Remington loaned sixteen original oil paintings, most from the early 20th century. Most of these have been used in Remington advertisements, and

many have become iconic images of hunting and outdoor adventure. The paintings are featured in the Remington exhibit and throughout the Timeline.

In total, over 160 individuals and organizations have donated or loaned firearms on exhibit at the NRA National Sporting Arms Museum. Some of these include:

**Organizations lending full exhibit collections:**

Remington Arms Company  
Exquisite custom firearms from the Frank and Nanita Pachmayr Foundation  
Trapshooting Hall of Fame

**Individuals providing large collections:**

F. L. Starbuck, U.S. Martial Pistols  
Bailey and Taz Brower, Savage pistols  
Kurt House, engraved and famous  
Colt revolvers of the Old West  
Dr. Joseph LoRubbio, Springfield 1903 rifles  
Melvin Gordon, Winchester Model 70 rifles  
Paul Chapman, Guns of the Texas Rangers  
Dr. Harold Cottle, fine cased handguns and elegant European long guns  
Al Frisch and Chris Hearn, Hollywood guns

**In addition to Starbuck and Brower, other current or former ASAC members who have donated or loaned artifacts:**

Michael Carrick	Eldon J. Owens
Cletus Klein	Harmon Leonard
C.R. Suydam	Philip Schreier
Ron Peterson	Jim Supica

**Other prominent or notable individuals who have donated firearms:**

Estate of Robert E. Petersen  
Gen. Julian Hatcher  
Jim Carmichael  
Mrs. John W. Hession  
Roy Vail  
Cornelius Van Schaack Roosevelt  
Tom Selleck  
Charlton Heston  
Estate of Col. Townsend Whelen  
Estate of Lt. Col. William McMillan  
Mrs. John D. Eisenhower  
Mrs. John W. Hession

**Firearms companies:**

Remington Arms Company  
Colt Firearms  
Mossberg Arms Company  
Savage Arms  
Smith & Wesson

**In addition, hundreds more individuals have donated firearms currently on display at the other two NRA Museums:**

**NRA National Firearms Museum at  
NRA Headquarters, Fairfax VA**

**Frank Brownell Museum of the Southwest at  
NRA Whittington Center near Raton NM**

All three NRA Museums are open every day of the week, and admission is free.

The mission of the NRA Museums Division is to educate the public about firearms history, technology, and artistry in an accurate, accessible, responsible, and entertaining manner, with special focus on the role of firearms in American history and culture.

This is only possible because of eighty years of donations and loans from individuals far-sighted enough to realize the importance of sharing America's firearms traditions with this and future generations, and because of the support of NRA members.

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