

# ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

*The political voice of the SSAA*

**Reflections  
on the  
Golden Age  
of guns**

# UN Breakthrough

Jan/Feb 2002 Vol. 4 Issue 1  
Members-only insert to the *Australian Shooter*



**Gun facts**

# In this issue

# ASJ

The political voice of the SSAA

PO Box 2066, KENT TOWN, SA 5071  
PHONE: 08 8272 7100  
FAX: 08 8272 2945  
Internet: www.ssa.org.au  
E-mail:  
AS - as@ssaa.org.au  
SSAA - ssaa@ssaa.org.au

A MEMBER OF THE CIRCULATIONS AUDIT BOARD



96,048

This Journal is owned and published by the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Association.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Freelance contributions are welcome. We do, however, recommend that potential authors contact sub-editor Jennifer Martens prior to story drafting. Color slides and manuscripts may be sent to the address shown above.

CONTRIBUTORS: Bill Shelton, Paul Peake, Gary Fleetwood, Colin Greenwood, Keith Tidswell, Col Allison, John Robinson

No responsibility can be accepted for errors and/or omissions.

No text or photographs within the Journal may be republished, either electronically or in print, without the express written permission of the managing editor Tim Bannister. Copyright 2002.

THE AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL is published bi-monthly and is printed by PMP Print, Watson Ave, Netley, SA.

3



## A word from the president

4



## Breakthrough at UN conference

6



## Reflections on the Golden Age of Guns

10

### The Swiss Approach

A lesson in level-headedness in the face of tragedy



11

### Antecedents and Cadetship

Memories of a school army cadet



12

### Gun Facts

The facts tell the story - tighter gun laws do not reduce crime



13

### Animal Cruelty

- shifting the goal posts

### Letters



14

### In the Media

Snippets of media attention relating to guns



15

### Parting Shots





## A word from the President

### The Silly Season

**T**he Tasmanian Liberal Party has recently announced that it will make two changes to the State's firearm laws if elected at the next election. The announcement has produced a parade of interviews with gun prohibitionists and women's rights activists.

A concerned Roland Browne, from the Coalition for Gun Control, has rejected the proposal to allow 12-year-olds to use firearms in the company of a licensed firearm owner. The media reported this as 'Children as young as 12 given access to firearms'<sup>1</sup>, which implies the child would have unrestricted access (eg, he or she could come home from school, unlock the gun safe and remove the firearm and use it). There was no mention of the requirement to have a licensed shooter accompanying the child and taking responsibility for his or her actions while in possession of a firearm.

Browne also said that, "children had a very bad record in terms of firearms safety"<sup>2</sup> - an unsubstantiated statement that suggests that Browne has rejected the idea of safety training for children in an area that, by his own admission, requires it. The National Firearms Agreement rejects Browne's stance by requiring approved training in the safety procedures and personal responsibilities of firearm use for those who legally wish to participate in the shooting sports, no

matter what the age is of the applicant.

The benefits of safety training are highlighted by an Australian Institute of Criminology report on firearm injuries. In the report author Jenny Mouzos said, "Research suggested that properly trained shooters not only had lower accident rates but may also be less likely to resort to the use of firearms in crime."<sup>3</sup>

Browne also forgot to mention in his media interviews the detailed study by the US Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention entitled 'Urban Delinquency and Substance Abuse'. The study was conducted from 1993 to 1995 and came to the conclusion that, "children who get guns from their parents don't commit gun crimes (0 per cent), while children who get illegal guns are very likely to do so (21 per cent)." It also said that "boys who own legal firearms have much lower rates of delinquency and drug use (than boys who own illegal guns) and are even slightly less delinquent than non-owners of guns."

Laurine Kelly from the Hobart Women's Shelter was concerned about the proposed scrapping of the 28-day waiting period for the purchase of second or subsequent firearms. She said, "Women feel safer when they know that the guns have been confiscated. To think that the perpetrator can go again and get another gun instantly, particularly given that they will be in a

rage, whatever, is very frightening."<sup>4</sup>

Ms Kelly obviously has not heard of Crimtrac, the \$53 million police computer network system paid for by the Australian taxpayer. The system links, in real-time, the criminal and firearm records of all jurisdictions, including details of those individuals, including firearm owners, who have had restraining orders placed upon them. No permit to acquire a firearm will be processed by any state police service while such an order is in place. In fact, the Australasian Police Ministers Council (APMC) documentation makes it quite clear that the reviewing officer shall "check for interstate criminal history and restraining orders."<sup>5</sup>

The fact is that no person who has had a restraining order placed upon them can "get another gun instantly", as Ms Kelly told her television audience.

At times I wonder why it is so hard for the facts and not the fiction to be reported.

Bill Shelton

1. ABC 666 2CN 6.42pm 10/12/2001
2. The Advocate 'Firearms furore ignited' 12/12/2001
3. Daily Barrier 'Truth 'Gun injuries fall' 3/4/2001
4. Southern Cross Television News 1806 hrs 11/12/2001
5. Approval of APP - copy held SSAA



# *Breakthrough* at UN Conference

by Keith Tidswell

The US seemed happy with the outcome of the final document, despite the anger and frustration of anti-gun NGOs and some conference participants.

**T**he 'United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects', held in New York July 9-21, 2001, produced a Program of Action. The 16-page document, approved by more than 160 countries, is believed to be the first global agreement covering small arms and light weapons.

The draft document had been put together during six years and included many provisions that were clearly not acceptable to all countries. However, given that there was no likelihood of another document and that resources were not available to exhaustively reduce the document to a more achievable and realistic set of objectives, most countries agreed to use the prepared document as a basis for discussion.

On the first day of the meeting, John Bolton, US Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security and Chairman of the US delegation, set the tone of the meeting. He made it clear that the US would not negotiate on issues of

legal private ownership of firearms that would clash with the second amendment of their constitution, which gives their citizens the right to keep and bear arms.

During the two-week conference, the US managed to win most of the concessions, which had come to be known as the US 'red lines'. These 'red lines' did not endear the US to those who could not understand the country's tolerance of gun ownership.

The US seemed happy with the outcome of the final document, despite the anger and frustration of anti-gun NGOs and some conference participants. The US believed that if other countries would adopt regulations controlling trafficking that were as tough as those it had in place, then the world would be a more peaceful place.

The final night session ended at 6am on July 21 and the Program of Action was officially approved several hours later. Late-night sessions are a debatable tactic in forcing agreement, whether conducted at the UN or in any parliamentary legislative sessions anywhere in the world.

A collection of firearms turned into a piece of 'art' by members of the anti-firearms lobby.

**An example of the type  
of art firearm owners hope  
never to see in their city.**



Some delegates accused the Bush Administration of pandering to the US gun lobby, but said it was clear to them that there would be no agreement unless they yielded to the US.

Former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard, Chairman of The Eminent Persons Group said, "By no means can I consider this conference a failure. We knew it would be extremely difficult, that national interests would be completely contradictory. So it is a good beginning."

Hard-line anti-gun groups made the most of their opportunities with the media to exaggerate the role played by pro-firearm groups. The anti-firearm group agenda had been to appeal to delegates and the meeting to widen its field of view to include all firearms, both legal and illicit.

In their opening remarks, a number of countries said that they clearly understood the hunting, collecting and sports shooting needs and that there was no intention to impinge upon the lawful use of firearms.

The Program of Action set out broad

guidelines for national, regional and international trade in small arms and light weapons. None of the measures are enforceable under international law. Instead, they are considered 'politically binding', meaning it will be up to member states to institute any action within their own constitutional and legislative frameworks.

"The conference has squandered a golden opportunity to commit itself to proactive measures needed to tackle gun violence around the world," said Sally Joss, a co-ordinator of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). IANSA is an umbrella group of 320 organisations from 70 nations that supported a stronger global gun control agenda. The group, which represented most of the accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs) monitoring the conference, also criticised delegates' failure to commit to future legally binding treaties.

"It's unbelievably selfish that the most powerful nation in the world, which produces more than half of all the small

arms in the world, is prepared to jeopardise the safety of millions of people in other countries purely for the sake of pandering to its own domestic lobbying interests," said Rebecca Peters of The Open Society Institute, which is headquartered in New York.

There will be a follow-up session of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Conference in 2006 and anti-firearm groups are already planning action during the next five years.

On November 15, 2001, the European Parliament called on the EU Presidency to pave the way for negotiations on a legally binding instrument regulating the activities of arms broking. They also called on all states to start negotiations on a legally international instrument on arms broking. Such negotiations should be concluded before the 2006 conference.

Since September 11, the world has focused its attention on terrorism. As such, an increasing amount of attention has been given to the area of small arms, light weapons and ammunition. ●

# Reflections on the Golden Age of Guns

by John Robinson

**M**y first 'real' gun was a .22 BSA Sportsman Five bolt action, received at age 12 from my uncle who gave it to me because he did not want it any more. The year was 1955. Little did I know that baby boomers like me were at the start of what was the Golden Age of hunting, shooting and firearms ownership in Australia, which lasted for 40 years and suffered a severe blow at Port Arthur.

For much of that time, I was fortunate enough to be involved in the shooting industry as a firearms journalist. This gave me an insider's view of the gun trade here and access to almost every new firearm and accessory that came on the market.

During a recent wet weekend, I went through my photo collection, which consisted mostly of photos taken to illustrate products for articles and reviews dating back to the

early 1970s, and I realised that a large number of very fine firearms will probably never be seen here again by the next generation of Australian shooters.

That thought gave rise to this article, as woven through the fabric of this Golden Age are the bizarre machinations of the various federal and state governments that, in one form or another, sowed the seeds and dumped the fertiliser on the weeds that brought us to Port Arthur.

In the 1950s, military calibre firearms were illegal for other than rifle club members, professional shooters and pro fishermen. The .303 British was being phased out of the Australian Army in favour of the 7.62 NATO (.308 Winchester). The reason for this ban was fear of communist political radicals, as the Communist Party was very active in Australia after WWII and the governments of the day were in the

middle of the Cold War with the USSR.

More commercial cartridges started hitting the market at that time. The 1950s saw the introduction of sporting cartridges like the .222 Remington, .243 Winchester and a number of other high performance cartridges, chambered in modern sporting rifles.

In addition, a whole gunsmithing industry grew up around 'sporterising' .303 SMLE military rifles by re-chambering them to cartridges like the .303-22, .303-25 and .303-270, each made by necking the .303 cartridge down to the respective calibres.

Companies like Sportco produced commercial versions of these sporterised SMLEs and ammo was largely manufactured from recycled military brass, providing a cheap source of factory ammunition in a time when reloading was rarely done and





money was not that easy to come by.

Because most self-loaders were military surplus, very few centrefire self-loaders were seen in the field during the '60s and early '70s. Some shooters with the right credentials were able to get M1 Garands, as they became surplus when the US Army upgraded to the M14.

In the 1950s, Remington introduced its 740 series self-loader - the first commercial auto chambered for modern high-powered cartridges, followed about five years later by Winchester with its Model 100 series. The military cartridge restriction also applied to these types of firearms, as they were chambered for popular military calibres like the .308 and 30-06.

Obsolete military cartridges were okay and many of us made the most of the great deals on Martini .310 Cadet rifles when they hit the market in large numbers for

\$9 each, which even a poor college student like me could afford in the early '60s.

Even in the early 1970s, I recall that the military calibre restriction was still in place, as a mate of mine had a custom hunting rifle built up by the late Jack Black, in .30 Black calibre. This was a .30-06 case with the shoulder set back slightly so that a standard .30-06 cartridge would chamber in the rifle to get around the existing regulations.

The 1950s also saw the introduction of target pistol licensing in Australia, partly to accommodate the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne. Before that, pistol ownership was almost impossible for sporting purposes, again due to the political climate that resulted in restrictions on handgun ownership following WWI.

When I obtained my first pistol licence in 1967, the licences were administered from the local police station. If the sergeant

**Author's Valmet Hunter .308 not only worked well but also had a high-grade walnut stock, which has now been burnt by the Federal Government.**

**The Valmet Hunter action is based on the famous AK 47 and this mud-covered pig hunting outing highlighted the reliability of such a design to continue working in dirty conditions. The eight-shot box magazine, great balance and handling and good accuracy made the author's .308 Hunter the pick of the semi-self-loading centrefires and a sad loss.**

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF GUNS



**Once part of the author's collection of self-loaders: Ruger .44 Magnum carbine, Remington Model 7, H&K 770 and Browning BAR.**

**I realised that a large number of very fine firearms will probably never be seen here again by the next generation of Australian shooters.**

was on duty, you could get a pistol licence on the spot, as long as your club paperwork was in order. All pistol licensing documentation was held at the local police station.

The restriction in those days was that you could only own pistols for matches that were officially sanctioned. Free pistol, rapid fire and centrefire were the only sanctioned matches when I entered the sport, so a limit of three handguns was placed on individuals. Throughout time, as more matches were added to the program, the limits were lifted and it was possible to own as many handguns as was affordable.

The restrictions on military calibres were lifted some time in the 1970s. This opened the way for large numbers of surplus military rifles to be imported and I recall the warehouse at Fuller Firearms being full of container loads of Mauser 98s and other obsolete rifles of similar vintage. Many of these surplus rifles were in mint condition and I frequently received such rifles for review that had never seen a shot fired in anger.

Some that I recall include M1 Garands, M1 Carbines, Argentinian Mausers, M17 Enfields, SMLEs of all models including Jungle Carbines, Swedish Mausers, German Mauser 98s, Ljungmans and various others.

In the meantime, sporting rifle makers added more selfloaders to the inventory, including Browning's BAR, H&K's 700 series, Valmet's Hunter, Springfield's M1A, Ruger's Mini 14 and Model 44. The only technical restriction placed on these rifles was that those with a military-style pistol-grip stock were prohibited for other than military rifle club members.

Until the late 1980s this situation prevailed, with sporting bolt actions and selfloaders finding their respective niches with Australian shooters. The commercial selfloaders were generally more expensive than equivalent quality bolt actions and the economy end of the market was satisfied by the surplus military bolt actions.

There were lots of after-market accessories available for customising surplus military rifles, particularly Model 98 Mausers, and the Swedish Model 96 Mauser was commercially customised and sold as an economy sporter in its original 6.5x55 chambering.

During the latter part of the 1980s, the Federal Government decided that trade with China was a priority and the floodgates were opened to a huge number of SKS and SKK selfloading rifles. At the time you could buy an SKS and three boxes of 7.62x39 ammo for less than \$100.

Some opportunistic dealers created problems for the rest of us, as they have subsequently done by stretching the handgun laws past breaking point leading to the current import restrictions, by selling full-auto conversion kits for certain models of SKS rifles.

In the rimfire calibres, there have never been any restrictions and the greatest tragedy to firearm ownership from the Port Arthur mass murder was the banning of .22 selfloaders. This type of rifle was by far the most popular small game outfit among Australian shooters and the current generation will never know the pleasure of a day in the field on rabbits with a good .22 selfloader.

Ruger's 10-22 was quite rightly one of the most popular .22s with Australian shooters. I had a Ruger 10-22 Sporter for many years, which not only had a pretty walnut stock, but it also shot very well for a selfloader. The flush fitting rotary ten-shot magazine was a great innovation in this rifle and I shed a tear or two when mine was handed in for scrap.

Most gun makers had .22 selfloaders in their product lines, including Browning, Unique, Winchester, Remington, Stirling, Anschutz, Brno, Marlin and Sportco.

The other irreconcilable tragedy for gun owners following Port Arthur was the banning of selfloading shotguns when there was no reason to do so. There was no history of this type of firearm being used illegally. Sawn-off selfloading shotguns do not work, as the recoil systems require the full barrel length to be available for them to function as selfloaders.

Again, a day in the field with a good selfloading 12 gauge is another of life's more pleasurable experiences and my Remington 1100 served me faithfully for nearly 20 years until Mr Howard took it off me.

Many gun makers had selfloading shotguns, some of which had a generational following such as Browning's famous A5 and its variants. I know several keen shotgunners who inherited A5 Brownings

from their fathers, as these durable selfloaders were almost unbreakable. Other 12-gauge selfloaders that graced my personal gun rack at one time or another included a Breda and a Franchi. In addition, many other selfloading shotguns passed through my hands in the course of their being evaluated for magazine review.

The other factor in the Golden Age was that long arms of any kind could be purchased on the spot. If a gun took your fancy, you could buy it. There was no Permit to Purchase, no 28-day cooling-off period, no hassles. You could sell a gun to anyone with the cash and in the 40 years that I was involved in such transactions, there was never a problem of misuse.

The bad guys do not spend today's equivalent of \$1200 to buy a good quality centrefire rifle/scope outfit that requires ammo that costs \$75/100 to cut off the barrel to use it in a hold-up.

The other good aspect of the Golden Age was the abundance of game and the ease with which permission to hunt was obtained. If you could go to the trouble of driving out to western NSW to hunt pigs, then the landowners would encourage you to do it. The roads were not much good, petrol stations closed at 6pm. Where could you go today to shoot 100 pigs in a day?

Like all Golden Ages, you often don't realise you are in it until it is gone and you have something lesser to which it can be compared. I reckon that most of my adult shooting life has been spent in the 'best of times'. This has left me with a reservoir of great hunting and shooting memories of a sport that I intend to continue to pursue, up to and including my use-by date, regardless of the obstacles that are put in my way in the meantime.

The message for the next generation of hunters and shooters is to support the lobbying power of the SSAA with your membership. ●



**Author with a Ruger 10-22 - one of the best .22 selfloaders and the biggest seller for many years in Australia. Light, compact, reliable and accurate.**



# The Swiss Approach

by Paul Peake

**T**he Swiss have relied on an armed citizenry for their national defence since the country's inception in 1291. During the Renaissance they carved out a fearsome reputation as skilled mercenaries and even today responsibility for the protection of the Pope in the Vatican City still falls to a select group of Swiss Guards. Swiss males are required to undertake national service and under the country's militia system, men aged between 20 and 42 are required to keep their military issue firearms at home.

Over and beyond their obligations to national defence, the Swiss have a long tradition in the shooting sports. The country hosts some of the oldest competitions in the world, including the annual three-day 'Knabenschiessen' event for 12 to 16 year olds, which has been held since 1657. Shooting ranges abound and participation is encouraged across the whole social spectrum.

According to the anti-gun lobby's theory, the fact that the country is awash with firearms should mean that crime rates are high, but a 1997 Swiss Federal Police report found that the overall homicide rate was about 1.2 per 100,000<sup>1</sup>. Britain's homicide rate, on the other hand, is about 1.4 per 100,000, despite heavy restrictions of private firearms ownership and a complete ban on handguns.

On September 27, 2001, a man armed with a semi-automatic rifle walked into the regional assembly building in the city of Zug, south of Zurich, and killed 14 people. As the country mourned what was for Switzerland an unprecedented event, the government announced that the incident would be fully investigated and all the circumstances considered before any policy changes were put forward.

Unlike Australia, Britain and the United States, which have all experienced similar tragedies, a maniacal anti-gun lobby didn't take to the airwaves demanding a ban on

all firearms; a rapacious media didn't set to work wrenching every possible headline out of the issue and more importantly, self-serving politicians didn't look to hang the blame on legitimate shooters.

Homicide centres on a readiness to resort to violence, not the presence of guns. In a country like Switzerland, where a positive attitude towards firearms ownership prevails and participation in the shooting sports helps to promote social cohesion and reduce the generation gap, tragedies like Port Arthur, Dunblane or Columbine are the rare exception, not the rule. Perhaps it has to do with the country's long democratic history or the fact that private firearms ownership is seen as an important part of civil liberty; either way, the Swiss approach to the murders in Zug has been both measured and sensible and holds some important lessons for lawmakers in Australia. ●

<sup>1</sup> Halbrook, S. (1999, June 3). Armed to the teeth, and free. *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, p.10.



# Antecedents and Cadetship

## Memories of a school army cadet

by Col Allison

**T**he old photo of the WWI digger killed fighting for democracy in the trenches of France hung on a wall at the bottom of a dim stairwell in my great-grandparents' home all throughout my childhood. He was an enigmatic figure to a little kid - a grown man but young looking and clean-cut in his army uniform. He died all those long years ago in a faraway land, cut off in his prime so that children like me could enjoy their freedom.

His name was Johnny and he was my great-grandad's brother. We never talked about him. But I know he had his head blown off in the trenches aged just 20. I was 12 at the time and thinking of him as I donned a near-replica of his khaki uniform, including web belt, army boots and gaiters. The brass was polished and the webbing Blanccoed, clean and dry. I could see my reflection in my boots.

Later that day, at my then school Marist Brothers' College, Kogarah, in Sydney's southern suburbs, I was ushered under the tuckshop into the school's armoury, a wonderworld of firearms locked and bolted away in racks and hefty boxes. There, a Friar Tuck-like brother, with a sharp tongue and an even faster strike with a ruler for the fractious, assigned me the rest of my kit including an SMLE No 4 rifle in near-mint condition in .303 calibre. I was very conscious of the fact that my great-grand-uncle died with the same kind of firearm - the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield - in his hands. I was also aware that my father,

'Stanley from Manly', trained with one before jumping from the AIF to the Royal Australian Air Force as a navigator/bombardier. I was so proud of being an army cadet.

In ensuing months, we learnt respect for the rifle. We learnt to strip and clean, reassemble at speed and shoot the old .303 Lee-Enfield, with its hard-hitting 172-grain slug at about 2400fps - and its vicious recoil that stabbed a sharp-edged brass buttplate into bony shoulders and gave everyone in the unit a fat and bleeding lip. The 'Smelly's' poor stock design thrust the butt up, so that your thumb, wrapped around a hefty grip, smashed into your mouth with every shot.

After one range session with the regulars coaching us at Long Bay Army Range, most cadets developed dreaded finches. It was all I could do not to be among the afflicted. The mateship of the cadet corp was stronger than any other group at school. We were all mates in the cadets. I was a champion swimmer in the same era, always competing against Bobby Windle, who would go on to win gold medals at the Olympics. But competitive swimming was about one-upmanship, as was athletics. Cadets epitomised fellowship, camaraderie, mateship, the Anzac tradition and all that. That's how I saw it then. That's still how I see it, actually.

The cadets taught me personal respect. The cadets taught me about responsible gun handling and safety. Safe handling was drummed into you every time you were issued with your rifle. Surprisingly, for a regimented organisation, cadets also taught

me to think, especially at weeklong annual camps at Singleton Army Base in the Hunter Valley. There we learnt field survival skills like map and compass reading and route finding. I was trained in endurance. I was taught to be neat and tidy, meticulous in my personal habits, punctual - traits that still stand me in good stead today.

As a kid with a very vivid imagination, I came to understand in a minimal way the very real terror soldiers must feel when on guard duty in the dead of night in enemy territory. Guard duty at night-time was a nightmare for me. I relived horror stories of Bansai charges told by my Uncle Cliff who fought the Japs in the South Pacific. But that was the only downside I every came across. I loved the shooting competitions and was good at them. I shot against army regulars out to 500 yards - and sometimes I beat them. I learnt to judge wind and bullet drop the hard way, becoming the only kid in my unit to receive the prestigious brass cross-rifles, worn as a symbol of marksmanship on my uniform. I still have the medal and I'm still proud of it.

It's good to see that 25,000 youngsters today have the same respect for the cadets as I did in my time - before the Whitlam Government saw fit to abolish school cadets and withdraw army support for cadet units in 1975, one of the Labor Government's most shameful acts. I salute the cadet corps, which helped make this country great and helped make selfless men like my great-grand-uncle fight for what they believed in - freedom for future generations. ●

# Gun Facts

by Colin Greenwood

**(Firearms Research & Advisory Service, West Yorkshire, England, UK)**

The proposition that places with the highest rates of gun ownership and the most virulent opposition to gun control are the very places with the highest rates of gun deaths has been tested against the latest available research which covers no fewer than 33 different countries. The conclusions found here have been based on information supplied to the United Nations by the countries concerned and they were assembled by a team of researchers supplied by the Government of Canada.

The figures supplied have been placed into bands representing (a) very low levels, (b) low levels, (c) high levels and (d) very high levels under each category for gun ownership, homicide, gun homicide, suicide, gun suicide and accidents. The following table summarises the results. While the figures used are as reported and have not been corrected for many possible variables, the results are placed into broad bands with very wide differentials.

The table shows that the United States has a very high level of gun ownership and also has high or very high levels of homicide, gun homicide, gun suicide and gun accidents. But that one example does not establish an immutable rule. Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, New Zealand and Sweden all have very high levels of gun ownership, Finland's being the highest recorded in the survey. All these are matched with low or very low levels of homicide, with very low accident levels in all but one case, and with very variable suicide rates.

This survey confirms that, despite a single exception, a high level of violent deaths and particularly gun deaths can exist in countries where gun ownership levels vary from very low to very high and that very low levels of violent deaths can exist in countries with very high levels of gun ownership.

There is, in fact, no relationship between high levels of gun ownership and high levels of gun deaths or of violent deaths in general.

Country	Gun	Homicide		Suicide		Gun
	Ownership	Total	Gun	Total	Gun	Accidents
Argentina	b	b	b	*	*	*
Australia	d	b	a	c	c	a
Austria	c	b	a	*	*	*
Belarus	a	d	-	d	*	b
Brazil	a	d	d	a	a	d
Burkina Faso	a	a	*	a	a	a
Canada	d	a	a	c	c	a
Costa Rica	c	c	b	c	b	b
Czech Republic	b	b	a	c	b	a
Estonia	b	d	c	d	c	d
Finland	d	b	a	d	d	a
Germany	d	a	a	c	b	a
Greece	c	a	a	b	b	a
Guinea	d	a	*	*	*	*
Hungary	a	c	a	d	a	*
Jamaica	a	d	d	a	a	a
Japan	a	a	a	d	a	a
Malaysia	a	b	a	a	a	a
New Zealand	d	a	a	c	c	b
Peru	a	a	b	a	a	a
Philippines	a	d	c	*	*	*
Poland	a	b	a	c	a	a
Moldova	a	d	a	*	*	*
Romania	a	c	a	*	*	*
Singapore	a	a	a	c	*	*
Slovakia	b	b	a	c	a	*
South Africa	c	d	d	*	*	*
Spain	c	a	a	b	a	b
Sweden	d	a	a	c	b	a
Trinidad & Tobago	a	d	c	c	a	d
United Kingdom	b	a	a	c	a	a
Tanzania	a	c	a	a	a	a
United States	d	d	c	c	d	d

(a) - Very Low. (b) - Low (c) - High (d) - Very High \* No figure.

Table extracted from the Report to the Secretary General of the United Nations by the Economic and Social Council, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on March 7, 1997, E/CN.15/1997/4.

# Animal Cruelty - Shifting the goal posts

Editorial taken from *Deer Sign* Vol 24 No 6

Recent publicity about hunting on game ranches focussed on RSPCA threats to use this as a test case for cruelty to animals. A similar concept has been applied by the media to the (illegal) killing of fur seals by fishermen, whose livelihood is under threat. The concern seems to equate death with cruelty, a quantum leap having no rational integrity. More sinister, however, is that this amounts to surreptitious social engineering.

It is little more than an attempt to shift the goal posts to their advantage. If death (or killing) is 'cruel', they would argue that *ipso facto* (love those legal words) hunting must be 'cruel' (therefore a crime). The only excuse (till they work around it) might be to cull population excesses by hired guns who leave the animals on the ground to rot. In such cases, it must obviously be a thoroughly joyless event or prosecution will follow. You must not take satisfaction from a complex task successfully performed to the best of your ability. More to the point, if hunting could be banned, you won't have any excuse to keep your guns (it all links together, doesn't it?).

The *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines cruelty as 'having or showing indifference to or pleasure in another's suffering, causing pain or suffering, thwart, spoil'. Death (inter alia), 'event that terminates life', makes no mention of cruelty. Although the two concepts can interrelate, they are intrinsically separate and distinct.

Attempting to create a compelling link between these separate concepts, as if recreational hunting (on or off a game ranch) is naturally cruel, constitutes an attempt to mislead the community. In a nutshell, brainwashing or indoctrination.

Ethical recreational hunting with its focus on humane death, is clearly outside the above cruelty criteria. What is happening is a try on to re-define cruelty without community input and then trying to foist this new definition on people as an accomplished fact. And they have ambitions to see criminal prosecutions launched from this?

In the past, the RSPCA was almost universally respected for its role in animal welfare. In recent times, they have occasionally attracted publicity casting a shadow over past achievements and ongoing work. Possibly, they are so desperate for new horizons that they will ignore the natural order?

Their posture on hunting raises wider questions about their legal roles. Should prosecutions be able to be launched by groups with an axe to grind or should this be the preserve of government agencies that can be held accountable?

Perhaps other than hunters should be put under the spotlight.

A little job for the public servants enjoying the good life funded by our taxes and licence fees? ●

# Letters

## Name the antis

Firstly, congratulations on an excellent magazine. It is one that I, along with my mates, thoroughly enjoy.

During the past week or so it has come to my attention that there are indeed certain businesses, companies and organisations across Australia that are anti-firearm.

As a responsible firearm owner and one who loves his sport, I felt downright cheated and somewhat guilty after buying products from a certain business, which I later discovered to be anti-firearm. I'm sure I'm not alone.

The shooting community of Australia has a right to know of those who condemn our sport as well as those who support it.

My suggestion is to compile and publish a list of businesses, companies and organisations that are indeed anti-firearm as well as a similar but consensual list of those that support the firearm owners of Australia. It is important that those supporting the firearm community do not go unrewarded or unrecognised.

In doing so, consumers are free to decide where our money is spent and in the long run who we are supporting.

Into whose pocket would you rather your hard-earned money end up in at the end of the day?

JA Borg, Redbank Plains, Qld

## Wise man

I just finished reading the book *Emperor of China* by JD Spence, which covers the life of K'ang-Hsi, who ruled China from 1661 to 1722. On page 35 of this oral history, Spence quotes this great man:

"When the Governor-General requested that the Miao be prevented from having weapons, and that Chinese merchants be forbidden to trade with them in such items as lead, saltpeter, and sulphur, I did not grant this request. It was not only that the Miao depended for their livelihood on the game they could kill by hunting with crossbow and fowling piece - it was also that effective control of them had to depend on the sensitivity of the local officials.

"Besides which, of course, there was the question of how you can get the common people to hand over their weapons to the government officials at all - as I pointed out to the Board of Works vice-president Muhelun when he presented his crazy scheme for disarming the people of Shantung province."

A wise man was this emperor.

Peter Lawson, Cairns, Qld

Mail your letters to: *Australian Shooters Journal*,  
PO Box 2066, Kent Town, SA 5071

# In the Media

26/9/2001

## NSW Police Media Unit

Two men from Glebe, aged 19 and 20, and a 24-year-old man from the Central Coast have been charged with conspiring to sell firearms, as well as a number of charges relating to the selling and possession of firearms. Police seized 25 handguns and 20 rifles with an estimated street value of \$90,000 during the operation.

26/9/2001

## NSW National Party Adrian Piccoli on extension of the NSW gun amnesty -

"I totally reject the Minister's philosophical objection and the assumption that extending the amnesty will somehow let criminals off the hook. The intention of the amnesty is to have as many firearms registered as possible. Therefore, the amnesty should be framed in a way that would let that happen. The amnesty has allowed people who wish to obey the law to do so. I can let the Minister in on a little secret: no criminal has registered his gun during this amnesty," Mr Piccoli said.

29/9/2001

## Zug Massacre Doesn't Faze Swiss Love of Guns

By Michael Shields, Zurich, Switzerland (Reuters)

There are some 3000 shooting clubs and the national marksmanship contest held every five years draws about 80,000 competitors. Zurich, the financial capital, grinds to a halt once a year for the Knabenschiessen youth shooting festival. Speculation that Swiss gun owners would have to turn in their weapons if Switzerland joined the Schengen agreement, which allows unrestricted travel between many European countries, caused an uproar until the Berne Government reassured them that was not so.

25/10/2001

## David Oldfield One Nation Speech to NSW Parliament

Responsible shooters master the safe handling of firearms. They are people of great mental discipline who often extend their concentration and control in positive ways that benefit other aspects of their lives. Shooters have gained national environmental recognition for their successful work in protecting endangered species by the removal of feral animals. This was most recently evidenced by the receipt of the Banksia Environmental Foundation Award. Organised shooting in Australia has an unsurpassed record of safety; injuries are almost non-existent and, with pistol shooting as the example, shooting is perhaps the only sport where insurance premiums have actually halved because of the lack of incidents. Law-abiding shooters are Australians who undertake their activities with great responsibility and care.

They are people who respect the rules of our society and rightfully expect a fair opportunity to pursue their chosen pastime without undue impediment.

3/11/2001

## NSW Police Media Unit

### Amnesty Takes Illegal Guns Off the Street

Nearly 5000 illegal guns have been taken off the streets of NSW during the state's four-month firearms amnesty. Another 60,000 firearms have been registered during the campaign, which ended at midnight last night. Detective Superintendent Helen Begg, Commander of the Firearms Trafficking Unit at Crime Agencies, said the figures had surpassed expectations.

13/11/2001

## Lies aren't lies, it they are the correct lies. Right?

David Mehegan, *The Boston Globe*

An Emory University historian, author of an award-winning and controversial book, has published a response to critics who say that he stretched the historical record to prove his thesis that gun ownership was not as common in Colonial days as is generally believed.

Bellesiles addresses only a few alleged errors - including those underscored by a *Boston Globe* examination of the case in September. And he deflects concerns about data he says he gathered in San Francisco - data other researchers say were destroyed nearly a century ago - by saying he doesn't recall where he did the research. Bellesiles's 2000 book, *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* came under attack from the National Rifle Association and other gun organizations. Gradually, the gun owners were joined by academic critics who complained that the book was riddled with statistical errors and shoddy analysis. A few alleged that Bellesiles had actually fabricated some of his data.

Much of Bellesiles's article in the OAH Newsletter ([www.oah.org/pubs/nl](http://www.oah.org/pubs/nl)) deplores the personal and partisan tone of his opponents and the "hateful, threatening, and expletive-laced" calls and e-mails he has received. He says he believes "dedicated individuals" had hacked into his web site, "altering and deleting material." He also describes the flood at Emory that, he says, destroyed all his notes on probate inventories.

15/11/2001

## Smith & Wesson Posts October Profit

Springfield, Mass. (AP) - Handgun maker Smith & Wesson, which cut 15 per cent of its workforce a year ago, reported \$7.6 million in sales during the month following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

15/11/2001

## Colombia Charges 33 in Gun Running

Bogota, Colombia (AP) - Colombian officials charged 33 people in connection with an arms smuggling ring that had alleged links to the ousted government of former Peru President Alberto Fujimori, authorities said Thursday. The Jordanian Government has insisted that they sold the arms to the Peruvian Government and they had no knowledge of how they ended up in Colombia.

16/11/2001

## USA Senate Passes Airline Safety Bill

Washington, DC - Measures authored by Senator Bob Smith allowing commercial airline pilots to be armed and requiring cockpit doors to be reinforced were included in the House-Senate compromise version of the Aviation Security Bill. The bill passed the Senate unanimously this morning.

22/11/2001

## Major Firearm Arrest NSW Police Media Unit

Officers from Organised Crime (Firearms Trafficking) have arrested a man in connection with the purchase of 42 firearms, including 22 handguns, worth an estimated \$54,000. Police mounted a major operation two months ago in which the firearms were recovered. A 23-year-old man was arrested at Bankstown yesterday and was charged with 21 offences of purchasing unauthorised firearms.

29/11/2001

## Radio Station 2SM NSW Program: Graeme Gilbert Time: 08:48 PM

### Item: Effectiveness of the Gun Buy-Back SSAA Researcher: Paul Peake

Peake: It's quite interesting that the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics & Research noted, in June of this year, that 50 per cent of all handgun shootings that take place in NSW take place in the Canterbury-Bankstown and Fairfield-Liverpool subdivisions.

Gilbert: Mmm.

Peake: Here you have a state with the better part of six and a half, seven million people in it and over half of the shootings take place in two suburbs.

3/12/2001

## Law Reform Helps Victims of Invasions

*The Advertiser* Adelaide

Victims of home invasions, who are not physically injured, can now claim financial help to improve home security.

If you would like to be added to our Internet mailing list, please visit <http://www.ssaa.org.au/maillist.html> and enter your details.

# Parting shots

## The good

Good news is on the horizon for South Australian firearms owners with the State Liberal Government floating a reduction in the 28-day waiting period for second and subsequent firearm purchases. The reduction has been pushed by the South Australian SSAA and other shooters groups for some time and time will tell if the idea becomes law. The only cloud on the horizon is that Parliament may not meet until after the next election and the proposition may disappear with the Liberal's re-election hopes.

## The bad

### Russian Murder Rate Soars

Paul Peake

Despite severe restrictions on civilian firearms ownership and an almost total ban on handguns, Russia is now ranked second only to South Africa as the murder capital of the world. According to deputy police chief, General Valdimir Gordiyenko, the number of murders recorded in 2001 rose by ten per cent compared to 2000, with 22,000 offences reported in the first eight months of the year.<sup>1</sup>

Under Russian gun-control laws, civilian pistol ownership is generally restricted to high-ranking retired military officers and a handful of officials. While it's possible to license hunting rifles and shotguns, there are heavy restrictions on when and where they may be used and permit holders are limited to no more than five firearms. All registered guns are ballistically fingerprinted by the authorities and they must be 'disassembled' if transported.

Russia's tight anti-gun laws, many of which mirror the sort of restrictions groups like the Coalition For Gun Control have been calling for in Australia, have done nothing to stem the rise in serious crime during the past decade. Just like crooks everywhere, it appears that criminals in the Commonwealth of Independent States, as the former Soviet Union is now known, have no trouble getting their hands on illicit firearms - while law-abiding Russians, just like law-abiding Australians, are forced to endure pointless, ineffective restrictions.

<sup>1</sup> Russia near top of murder list (2001, October 4). The West Australian, p. 32.

## The ugly

Saturday November 10, 2001 Fox News

Anne Muller of Wildlife Watch says hunting is "a wonderful opportunity for someone who would want to do a terrorist act. They don't have to report their whereabouts and can be lurking anywhere. They can lurk in groups."

On November 10, Fox News reported that Wildlife Watch, an animal and wildlife advocacy group, asked for a suspension of New York's annual hunting season as a precaution after the September 11 attacks.

Peter Constantakes, spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, said, "We take our direction from law enforcement professionals, not groups that would attempt to use the war on terrorism to advance their own agendas."

Robert Kazmierski, founder of The Wildlife Sports and Educational Museum being built in Vail Mills, 40 miles north-west of the state capital of Albany, agrees, saying Wildlife Watch is "against hunting and they'll use any means possible."

"If these people want to express their thoughts, they're welcome to express their thoughts," he said. "But they shouldn't terrorise the rest of the people by something that they're dreaming up." He accused the group of using terrorism as a threat and believes they are just trying to stir up public concern.

Wildlife Watch believes that the attacks have changed the way people see things in New York and are concerned at the possibility of armed and camouflaged individuals getting "close to chemical, agricultural, business facilities, gas pipelines, electrical power lines, substations, transformers and airports".

The group fears that "local police and environmental conservation officers will merely slough off concerns saying that the individuals are 'just hunting'."

Trying to substantiate their beliefs, the group pointed to a shooting in Alaska where a hunter apparently punctured the trans-Alaska oil pipeline, spilling 285,000 gallons of oil.

Constantakes said DEC officers are proud of the job they do and would not "slough off" any suspicious behaviour.

# SSAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NEW

RENEWAL

Membership No.

Membership Office, SSAA PO Box 906, St Marys NSW 1790 ABN 95 050 209 688

Phone 02 9623 4900 Fax 02 9623 5900 E-mail mem@ssaa.org.au



Title (PLEASE CIRCLE) Mr Ms Mrs      Branch

First name

Middle name

Last name

Address

Town/suburb

State       Postcode

Phone (bus/mob)  (priv)

Fax

Email

Date of Birth

**Adult** (over 18 years) - \$60 current family member's No.

**Family** (no magazine - available to each immediate relative of a member paying the full adult rate) - \$45

**Pensioner** (available on production or photocopy of pension concession card) \$45

**5-year Adult** - \$300

**Member for life** - \$1200

**Overseas** - \$65

**Junior** - \$18     (under 18 years)     (magazine required)

Parent's or guardian's signature .....

I also wish to donate \$..... to the SSAA

GST on recreational club subscriptions CANNOT be claimed as Input Tax. If, despite this you require a tax invoice please contact the membership office.

## Payment options

Enclosed is payment for the amount of \$.....

**Cheque**     **Money order**     **Bankcard**     **Mastercard**     **Visacard**

Card number

Expiry date       Signature.....

Cheques payable to the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia

**MAIL TO: MEMBERSHIP OFFICE ,  
PO BOX 906, St Marys, NSW 1790**

This application is made in full recognition of the Association's requirement for responsible and ethical behaviour. I undertake to do all in my power to preserve the good image of the sport and the Association. I understand that the members breaking the code of ethics and or Association regulations will be subject to suspension or expulsion. I certify that I am not a member of any organisation which may have as any part of its program the overthrow of the government by force. I certify that I have not been convicted of any crime or felony or offence or am or have I been subject to any order which would preclude me from legally owning a firearm. I certify that I do not now have and have not in the past suffered from any mental or any other disorder which would prevent me from using a firearm legally and safely.

SIGNATURE:      DATE:

## ATTENTION NSW MEMBERS

Complete this section ONLY if you wish to use your membership of the SSAA to support your "genuine reason" for having a shooters licence.

To register as an affiliate member of the SSAA (NSW) Inc or SSAA (ACT) Inc\* please register your SSAA club activities by marking one or more of the following boxes:

TARGET SHOOTING  HUNTING  COLLECTING

Note: Under NSW legislation, shooters licence holders who use club membership to support their genuine reason must fulfil the minimum attendance requirements below:

Target shooters –      pistols - 6 range attendances each year.  
   long arms - 4 range attendances each year.

Hunters –      attendances at 2 club activities each year.

Collectors –      attendance at one club meeting a year.

Once the issuing club or dealers stamp has been affixed this form may be used as proof of membership to satisfy the "genuine reason" requirements of the Firearms Act 1996.

\*SSAA (ACT) is the holder of club approval for target and hunting only