



SAGA SNIPPETS

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Firearm Amnesty

Following the SAGA media statement of 13 November regarding the government's proposed amnesty to surrender firearms (including unlawfully possessed firearms), we can now report that the Portfolio Committee did not discuss the matter on the 22 November 2017.

Parliament goes into recess on 30 November 2017 and unless the police convince the committee to approve the amnesty this week, chances are that the matter will be postponed until February 2018. This might then be after the hearing of the SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association (with SAGA as a friend of the court) v Minister of Police in the Constitutional Court on 8 February 2018.

The indications are that parliament probably will approve the application for amnesty provided undertakings are given that the police officials receiving and dealing with the surrendered firearms are vetted (most of whom currently are not) and that effective security arrangements are made to ensure that surrendered firearms will not be stolen or otherwise disappear from police storage facilities.

SAGA is not convinced that SAPS can give any such undertakings and nor is SAGA satisfied that the objective of the amnesty will be achieved – that is to get criminals to surrender their firearms. We believe only those people who failed to renew licenses, and those who may have inherited firearms but failed to apply for licenses, and those who no longer wish to possess their firearms, will probably surrender them. And since the police have admitted

that no crimes were solved as a result of firearms surrendered during previous amnesties (in fact SAPS did not even have statistics in this regard), chances are good that the amnesty, if approved, will do nothing towards the reduction of crime.

We shall keep you informed, but don't think for one moment that our violent crime rate will suddenly be reduced because of the amnesty. SAGA rather urges you to stay alert and be safe. You are the first responder to crime and it is your duty to take all lawful measures to prevent crime and if necessary and as a last resort, to combat crime.



SAGA Office Holiday Closing

Please note that the SAGA office will close for a holiday break on Wednesday 20 December at 13:00 and will re-open on Thursday 11 January 2018.



Stakeholders Meeting Feedback

At the conclusion of the meeting of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Police on 1 September, the chairman of the Portfolio Committee urged SAPS to reconvene stakeholder engagement meetings with a view to resolving matters rather than continually causing stakeholders to seek resolutions in court or in parliament.

SAPS took heed and the first stakeholders meeting in almost two years took place at the SAPS training facility in Pretoria on 24 November 2017. The meeting chaired by Lt Gen Masemola, was attended by all provincial DFOs, representatives of SAPS Legal, the CFR and FLASH; and representatives of many stakeholders, among others SAGA (represented by John Welch and Stef Grobler), NAACCSA, the Hunters Forum, Sport Shooting Forum, GOSA, SAAADA, Gunsmiths, PFTC and GFSA.

Since the object of this relationship is to ensure effective communication between SAPS and the stakeholders, proper terms of reference have to be agreed upon. It was decided that the former draft (prepared more than two years ago) needs to be dusted off, checked by SAPS legal services and then distributed to the stakeholders, where after a follow-up meeting will be convened under the auspices of the Civilian Secretariat of Police. It was significant that, despite having been invited, the Secretariat did not attend the meeting, nor did they tender an apology.

When the attendance register was circulated both Martin Hood and John Welch raised an objection as the attendance register contained a provision that the discussions were subject to the Official Secrets Act and since all representatives needed to report back to their respective members, all

representatives were urged to refuse to sign the register. The chairman ruled in favour of the objectors and as a result an ordinary (non-restrictive) attendance register was circulated, which was signed.

Various speakers, including John Welch, mentioned that the stakeholders engagement meetings ought not to be mere talk-shops, but must rather lead to results. The object should be the smooth and lawful operation of the Firearms Control Act. Great emphasis was also placed on the fact that despite promises, the Firearms Control Amendment Bill is yet to appear. Since neither the police nor the stakeholders seem to know anything about the content of the Bill, it may, once again, happen that the parliamentary process will inevitably be delayed.

Both Martin Hood and John Welch reiterated the fact that often reasons for the refusal of license applications are illogical and do not make sense – in some cases even referring to provisions of the repealed Arms and Ammunition Act of 1969. Carvel Webb (representing NAACCSA) and John Welch emphasised the inconsistent application of the provisions regarding the renewal of competency certificates – such that often law abiding citizens are targeted rather than criminals who steal, rob, rape and murder.

The single contribution by GFSA was to draw attention to the fact that more stakeholder should be invited. Their agenda is obvious – they wish to have as many victims of crime (or groups representing victims) present to try and convince SAPS and government how they were prejudiced by firearms. Fortunately John Welch mentioned that we all are either victims or potential victims of crime and that the emphasis ought

to be on illicit possession of firearms and not on licensed firearm owners.

In concluding the meeting, the chairman stated that the draft terms of reference would be resuscitated and circulated where after the stakeholders would have time to comment and that the Secretariat would then be requested to convene a follow-up meeting.

SAGA is cautiously optimistic that the stakeholders engagement meetings will bear fruit, provided all parties have the desire and will to engage constructively with a view to resolve disputes. We believe, for instance, that the court application by SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association v Minister of Police (which is to be argued in the Constitutional Court on 8 February 2018) could have been avoided had the police been serious about assisting those firearm owners who had failed, for whatever reason, to timeously renew their licenses, rather than to merely threaten them with arrest and prosecution unless they surrendered their firearms to the police. Since the matter is pending adjudication by the Constitutional Court we do not express an opinion, save to say that the police ought to have agreed that the current law does not provide for a mechanism to renew late, and rather than fighting the matter, come forward with a solution that would be in the interest of justice and all lawful firearm owners.

Because specific issues could not be discussed at the stakeholders meeting John Welch has arranged a special meeting with Maj Gen Bothma to discuss matters pertaining to a variety of matters on 27 November 2017.

Hunting and Shooting Sports: Safer Than Ever

by Brad Fitzpatrick
November 1, 2017

On a cold morning in December of 2002 I headed to the trap and skeet range to break clays with my college shooting team, and immediately noticed that one of the regular members of our squad was missing.

“Isn’t Mike shooting today?” I asked. Another teammate, Eric, who was piecing together his over/under, shook his head.

“Won’t be here. He broke his leg snow skiing.”

“That sounds awful,” I said.

“Yeah,” said Eric, closing his shotgun case and dumping a box of Winchester AAs into his shell pouch. “I’m glad I don’t do anything dangerous like that.”

To some, Eric’s comment may seem ironic since he was heading out to the shooting range, an activity that many would consider highly dangerous. But Eric wasn’t being ironic, and we both knew it. Our team had fired more than 100,000 shells that year, we spent two days of every week on the clays range while school was in session, and none of us had ever been hurt. Poor Mike tried snow skiing just once and ended up wrapped in plaster from his ankle to his hip.

One of the precepts of the anti-gun agenda is that firearms are inherently dangerous, and that the ignorant souls who own them are, either unwittingly or by sheer malice, putting themselves, their families, and everyone else around them in danger, but statistics don’t back up any of these claims.

In fact, shooting and hunting are some of the least dangerous sports. Tennis, water skiing, mountain biking and even bowling are all more dangerous than



hunting with a firearm. I’d add snow skiing to that list, and I think Mike would agree.

So, in an effort to dispel the myths regarding gun ownership and shed light on how dangerous guns really aren’t, let’s take a look at some facts gathered by organizations such as the National Safety Council, CDC, and others:

- Unintentional firearms deaths are down 65 percent since 1993.

- Since the beginning of record keeping in 1903, accidental firearm fatalities are down 94 percent.

- You are 56 times more likely to be involved in a fatal automobile accident than an accidental shooting.

- Firearms are involved in .4 percent of all accidental fatalities, far less than poisoning (29.8 percent), falls (23.1 percent), and suffocation (5.1 percent).

- Firearms account for just 1.7 percent of unintentional fatalities in children under 14 years of age.

- Over the last two decades unintentional firearm fatalities among children under 14 has declined 66 percent, even with a 7 percent increase in the population within this age group.

- Last year, there were .03 injuries per 100 hunters, making hunting less dangerous than swimming, volleyball and lacrosse—and only slightly more dangerous than billiards.

- You are 43 times more likely to be injured riding a bicycle than you are hunting with a firearm.

- Cheerleading results in 30 times as many injuries as hunting.

- Your odds of being injured while hunting deer are substantially lower than being injured by a deer while driving; last year there were an estimated 1.2 million auto-deer collisions resulting in almost 20,000 human injuries and roughly four billion dollars in auto repairs.

Sources: National Shooting Sports Foundation, International Hunter Education Association, Consumer Products Safety Commission, National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, National Sporting Goods Association, Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, and The National Safety Council.

It’s plain to see that, based on these statistics, guns aren’t intrinsically dangerous. In fact, shooting and hunting are some of the safest pastimes, so the next time someone calls for more gun control you now have the ammunition (pun intended) to fire back at them. And the facts don’t lie.

https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2017/11/2/hunting-and-shooting-sports-safer-than-ever/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=insider&utm_campaign=1117

UK Holds National Gun Surrender

With 'Firearm' Offenses up 27-percent, UK Holds National Gun Surrender

Friday, November 17, 2017

Anti-gun advocates like Gun Control Network Chair Gillian Marshall-Andrews tout the United Kingdom's longstanding firearms restrictions, which include a near total ban on handguns, as the "gold standard" of gun control. In recent years, UK officials have continued to implement new policies that further burden law abiding gun owners. These include surprise inspections of gun owners' firearm storage arrangements, the use of centralized firearm owner licensing data to target "terrorists," and intrusive medical monitoring of firearm certificate holders.

However, the UK's criminals appear indifferent.

According to the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) statistical bulletin "Crime in England and Wales," firearm crimes in England and Wales were up 27-percent for the year ending in June 2017. The bulletin noted, "The latest rise continues an upward trend seen in firearms offences in the last few years."

In an attempt to resolve some of the increase, ONS explained that part of the growth could be due to improvements in the crime reporting. It should also be noted that the UK's definition of "firearm," as used for statistical purposes, includes some imitation guns and other non-firearm items, like pepper spray and stun guns. However, ONS also made clear that "Evidence of some genuine increase in offences involving firearms can be seen in admissions data for NHS hospitals in England, which showed increases in all three categories of assault by firearm discharge."



An in-depth August 2017 ONS report on firearm crime statistics in England and Wales prepared for the House of Commons painted a similar picture. Using data through March 31, 2017, ONS found that non-air firearms offences had increased 23-percent over the previous year.

The document showed that the 2016/17 total number of non-air firearms offences was 31-percent higher than the total in 2013/14. The 2016/17 figure for non-air firearm offenses was the highest recorded since 2010/11. The report also noted that there was a 19-percent increase in what ONS categorizes as "violence against the person" crimes involving a firearm from the period 2014/15 to 2015/16.

In 1997 the UK enacted a total ban on handguns in England and Wales. Despite this restriction, for the year ending in March 2017, handguns were the most common type of non-air firearm used in criminal offenses. Moreover, the statistical bulletin pointed out that there was a 25-percent increase in offenses involving handguns for the year ending in June 2017. As in the United States, the use of rifles in crime is rare, accounting for about 1-percent of non-air firearm offenses each year.

This increase in the criminal misuse of firearms is being cited as justification for a two week national gun surrender period from November 13 through 26.

The effort is being spearheaded by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service, which has enlisted the Metropolitan Police and other local law enforcement in the effort. Under the program, those in illegal possession of a firearm can turn it in to specially designated police stations, no questions asked. During a similar effort in 2014 about 6,000 guns were surrendered.

The Met and local police stations have come up with various campaigns to promote the surrender. The Met's promotional materials urge London's youth to #GiveUpYourGun and include a YouTube video explaining the potential consequences of illegally carrying a firearm. A video from the Derbyshire Constabulary challenges viewers to tell the difference between a real and imitation handgun, and implores the audience to turn either type of object over to the police.

Despite this messaging, more practical public officials don't seem to be holding out much hope that the UK's criminals will comply. Much of NABIS's press release on the surrender targeted the otherwise law-abiding.

Explaining the types of guns they were targeting, NABIS Head, Detective Chief Superintendent Jo Chilton, noted, "Perhaps you have a gun that has been handed down through the family or you have found a firearm in your loft or shed which has been gathering dust and you had forgotten about."

In a video for the BBC, NABIS Head of Operational Support Clive Robinson pointed to a table full of early 20th century firearms and said, "These are the sorts of weapons families are finding from loved ones that have passed. They're finding in garages, etc.

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But when they see them they're not sure what to do with it. If you bring it into your local police station we will safely dispose of it for you." Assistant Chief Constable from Northumbria shared a similar sentiment, telling the BBC, "We are realistic enough to realize that we're not going to get hardened gang members who are in possession of weapons they intend to use."

Gun rights supporters and most gun control advocates agree that turn-ins, usually in the form of so-called "buybacks" in the U.S., are ineffective public policy.

Since 1998, the U.S. Department of Justice has recognized that turn-in programs do not work. A more recent DOJ survey into research concerning Australia's 1996 nationwide amnesty (confiscation) program noted that there is little evidence that it led to a reduction in crime and that turn-ins are generally ineffective because "The guns turned in are at low risk of ever being used in a crime."

It is encouraging that some UK officials have at least a remote understanding that gun turn-ins do not work as intended. The recent increase in firearm crime

should prompt public officials to reflect on some of the UK's other gun control measures with a similar skepticism. However, employing reason isn't their strong suit. Despite the data showing that rifles are used in less than 1 percent of firearms offenses, in October the Home Office announced plans to ban ".50 calibre and certain rapid firing rifles."

<https://www.nraila.org/articles/20171117/with-firearm-offenses-up-27-percent-uk-holds-national-gun-surrender>

Top 5 Mistakes Most Riflemen Make

by Philip Massaro
November 16, 2017

As much as we riflemen pride ourselves in our shooting abilities, we've all made mistakes along the road—me especially. From developing a flinch to other innocent mistakes, I hope that identifying some of these errors may save others some time and agony. Hitting a target accurately with a large variety of calibers—be they small or large and whether the target is close or distant—is the result of countless hours of diligent practice and time spent with your firearm. Here's the top five mistakes that most rifleman make and how you can prevent them in the future.

1. Lack of Trigger Time

I have some acquaintances that shoot their rifle the day before the deer season opener and put it away once the season is over. If they can hit a pie plate at one hundred paces, it's 'good enough'; yet they're the first to

start tossing around excuses when a deer is wounded or missed. The reason is obvious: they simply don't spend enough time with their rifle in hand. I completely understand how busy life can get, and that it's not always easy to find a place to shoot year-round, but something as simple as purchasing some snap caps and doing some dry-fire practice will certainly improve your technique. Like any other hobby or devotion, firing a rifle accurately requires practice, and more than the day before season to check your zero.

2. Ignoring the Benefits of the .22 Long Rifle

The little rimfire gem is actually the key to good marksmanship. When dealing with the hard-kicking magnum centerfires, it's easy to develop a flinch. Shooting five or ten rounds of .22 Long Rifle in between groups can really bring the fundamentals of trigger control and follow-through back into line. Few people love safari rifles as much as I do, but that

level of recoil can bring out the worst in any of us. Spending some practice time with an accurate .22 lets me reaffirm that I'm doing things right so I can better use my dangerous game rifles. Rimfire rifles will sharpen your eye, and keep you honest—more often than not, you'll catch your own mistakes.

3. Buying an Ill-Fitting Rifle

The recoil of any centerfire rifle is severely magnified when the stock doesn't fit the shooter. ... When a rifle doesn't fit well, it robs you of your shooting skills. For a good test of proper length of pull, hold the unloaded rifle by the pistol grip with your finger on the trigger, pointed straight in the air, with your elbow bent. The butt end of the rifle should sit comfortably in the crook of your elbow. If it doesn't touch, it's too short. If it doesn't fit, it's too long. The same can be said for the drop at the comb. If you have to scrunch down to see the sights, it's going to slap hell out of your cheek. On

Continued...Top 5 Mistakes Most Riflemen Make

the flip side, if your scope is mounted too high and your lower jaw is sitting on the comb, it's also going to hurt. Bottom line: Find a good-fitting rifle. If you have one you love that doesn't quite fit right, have it restocked so it does. You'll be much happier for it.

4. Too Much Magnification

I've been guilty of this in the past: thinking that if a 9x scope is good, a 12x or 14x is better, and I've ended up with the Hubble telescope on the barrel of my deer rifle. Sometimes the lower magnification scopes—of better quality—are a more worthy investment than anything else. Yes, it's true that you need to be able to see something in order to hit it, but you'd be surprised how well you can see with a low-power scope of premium quality. I also understand how a tight hunting budget

can affect your purchasing power. There are affordable options for lower budgets. ...

5. Buying Too Much Gun

Robert Ruark coined the phrase "use enough gun," and it still holds water today. However, there's a huge difference between enough gun and too much gun. Hang around gun shops long enough, and you'll meet the customer who insists that his .270 Winchester was at fault for not killing the deer, so he's shopping for a .300 Weatherby. Not that the Weatherby won't kill a deer, but the gent is trying to buy his shooting skills—it simply can't be done. It can be humbling to admit that one caliber or another can be too much to handle properly, but I feel you owe it to your game animal to place the shot correctly. I routinely handle some of the big

sticks, but cartridges with the recoil level of the .378 Weatherby are too much for me. Find a suitable cartridge, pushing a bullet of sensible weight, and use your shooting skills to make things happen.

Extracted from: https://www.americanhunter.org/articles/2017/11/16/top-5-mistakes-most-riflemen-make/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=insider&utm_campaign=1117

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets