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To Whom It May Concern

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Numbers & Types of Firearms & Quantities of Ammunition

1. The Author

Target shooting has been an interest of mine since about 1948 and specifically target pistol shooting has been my major sporting activity since 1969. I have represented Jersey in pistol shooting continuously since 1979, in the British Isles, Europe and elsewhere, up to and including the Commonwealth Games.

Quite separately I have also been a student of the costs and effects of firearm laws around the world since 1979. In the course of this work I have made submissions to, and corresponded with, a great many officials and official organisations throughout the world including, for example, the Irish Ministry of Justice. I have written a substantial number of papers on the subject and given many talks to a wide range of audiences, ranging from a UK Police Conference, to Women's Institutes to an international Libertarian Conference in Krakow, Poland. My advice has been sought by, amongst others, the Minister of Justice of Lithuania.

2. Target Pistol Shooting Disciplines & Governing Bodies

Target pistol shooting encompasses a very large number of disciplines and events, involving widely different targets, distances, speeds and pistols. The rules under which these events are run are sometimes, but by no means always, established and maintained by one of the several international bodies governing one or more of these disciplines and/or events. These bodies include, but are not limited to:

- 1500 Association ("1500")
- Historical Breech-loading Shooting Association ("HBSA")
- International Long Range Pistol Shooting Association ("ILRPSA")
- International Practical Shooting Confederation ("IPSC")
- International Sport Shooting Federation ("ISSF")
- Muzzle Loading International Associations Committee ("MLAIC")
- National Pistol Association ("NPA") [*defunct, with its events now under the NRA*]
- National Rifle Association of the UK ("NRA") and
- National Smallbore Rifle Association ("NSRA")

Each of these organisations is substantially independent of the others and several have comprehensive programmes of national, international and world championship events.

3. Island Games Association ("IGA") (www.islandgames.net)

The IGA was founded in 1985 and can make a claim to be the most rapidly-growing, international, multi-sport event (or "Games") in the world. It has 25 small island communities as members and holds a Games in one of its member islands every 2 years, encompassing

14 sports picked from a list of 18 sports, of which one is shooting. Shooting has been selected as one of the sports in every single Games held to date. The 2009 Island Games were hosted by Åland and attracted some 2,600 competitors and 500 officials. The 2011 Games will be in the Isle of Wight and the 2013 Games in Bermuda.

I competed for Jersey at the first Games in 1985 and have done so at 9 subsequent Games, returning with medals in 9 out of the 10.

From a study of the IGA By-laws, which can be found on their website, it will be seen that the following pistol events are given as examples of the pistol events that might be chosen to be included in a Games:

- Bianchi Cup
- Black Powder
- ISSF - Air Pistol 10metres
- ISSF - Centre Fire
- ISSF - Free Pistol
- ISSF - Rapid Fire Pistol
- ISSF - Sport Pistol
- ISSF - Standard Pistol
- Long Range
- Man v Man
- Military Rapid
- PPC 1500
- Practical Target Pistol
- Police Pistol 1
- Police Pistol 2
- Service Pistol B

2 of the 16 events listed, Black Powder and Air Pistol, do not use cartridges. Of the 14 that use cartridges, 4 use .22 calibre pistols and 10 use a variety of centre fire calibre pistols.

4. International Sport Shooting Federation (“ISSF”)

Amongst non-shooters, the ISSF events are possibly the best-known pistol events, not because they attract the most competitors, or are the most appealing to spectators, but because the ISSF has managed to successfully maintain a “*dog-in-the-manger*” policy of preventing other more popular and visually-interesting shooting disciplines, such as the Bianchi, 1500, or Practical Target Pistol, from being included in the Olympic programme.

My personal favourite pistol discipline is the ISSF Centre Fire match, which is one of the most popular ISSF events. This event requires a pistol that falls within a very detailed specification in terms of size, weight, trigger pull and calibre, which must be not less than 7.62mm and not more than 9.65mm (Rule 8.4.6). Thus a 9mm pistol of the correct size, weight and trigger pull may be used in the ISSF Centre Fire event.

The Centre Fire event is included in every ISSF national, continental and world championships.

5. Jersey Pistol Club (www.jerseypistolclub.org.je)

My principal shooting club, the Jersey Pistol Club (“JPC”), currently runs about 22 different

“Club Trophy” events every year (please see 2010 programme attached). I say “currently” because a new event tends to be added to the programme every few years. The rules for 6 of these events are controlled by the JPC itself, 6 by the ISSF, 3 by the NPA, 2 by IPSC and 1 each by the NRA, NSRA, MLIAC, ILRPSA and 1500.

I must emphasise that, while the JPC is an active and successful club, its programme is by no means exhaustive. There are many other well-established pistol competitions, e.g. the Bianchi, governed by the NRA of the USA, Swedish Field Shooting, governed by Svenska Pistolskytteförbundet and the matches governed by the International Defensive Pistol Association, that are not currently included in the JPC programme.

6. 9mm Pistol Matches

One popular JPC match is number 13, the “NRA Service Pistol A” event. It will be seen that this event requires a very specific pistol and I quote from the rules:

“A 9mm Browning self-loading pistol, as issued to the British and Commonwealth services, or an approved 9mm Browning with fixed sights privately owned.”

This pistol has been an official Service pistol, in Britain and some 30 or so other countries, for over 70 years, so is looked on with great affection by many generations of ex-service men and women.

Another, even more popular JPC match, is number 20, the “9mm Pistol” event. This event is less restrictive, as any 9mm pistol, including a Browning Service pistol, may be used.

7. BDMP of Germany (Bund der Militar- und Polizeischützen e.V. www.bdmp.de)

The BDMP of Germany is a large federation of pistol and carbine shooting clubs with a total membership of about 20,000. They favour the Police and Service Pistol centre fire disciplines and do not use .22 pistols.

For many years there has been an annual JPC v BDMP match, held alternately in Jersey and Germany. In 2009, when it was held in Jersey, the events included in the programme were:

- 9mm
- Pocket Pistol
- Police Pistol 1
- Police Pistol 2
- PPC 1500
- Practical Target Pistol
- Service Pistol A
- Service Pistol B

8. Swiss Club & Cantonal Championships

One of the other organisations of which I am an active Member is the British Alpine Rifles (“BAR”). BAR holds 4 Championships a year, 2 each in Switzerland and the UK.

When in Switzerland for a BAR Championship, I am sometimes able to participate in Swiss club and cantonal championships as well. These are invariably fascinating and valuable

experiences because of both the very high standard of shooting and, by British standards, the very large numbers of competitors, usually many hundreds and sometimes, thousands.

9. Swiss Service Pistol

These Swiss club and cantonal championships are very varied, for example some of the bigger clubs will have their own unique target designs. But one consistent aspect of every such championship, is that the programme of events will always include several competitions that must be shot with a Swiss "Service" pistol, i.e. specific pistol models approved by the Swiss government for use by their armed forces and police. The Swiss set a very high standard of quality and accuracy and currently there is only one manufacturer, Sphinx Systems of Interlaken, producing approved Swiss Service pistols. Fortunately, SIG of Neuhausen was also an approved Swiss Service pistol manufacturer for many decades and large numbers of the relevant models of their excellent pistols are available and in use by target shooters all over the world.

Over 95% of these approved Swiss Service pistols are in 9mm Parabellum calibre.

Without a "qualifying" pistol, these popular events may not be entered.

10. BAR Championship Programme

Examination of the attached copy of the BAR Swiss Championship programme for September 2009 will disclose that it contains over 60 different pistol events (plus several rifle and aggregate events), with over 50 of these being run under BAR's own rules.

A very popular event is the **Eidgenossen**, shot according to the **Rütli** course of fire (please see page 1 of BAR programme). It will be seen that this event must be shot with a Swiss Service pistol.

11. Pistol Categories

Page 13 of the BAR programme reveals a schedule of 26 different "Weapon Entry Categories", of which 22 apply to pistols. It will be seen that Category "S" competitions require the use of:

"Fixed-sight service pistols and their commercial equivalents".

This definition allows the official Service pistols of any nation, including Switzerland, to be used. There are 9 of these competitions in the programme.

Many competitors like to test their skills with a variety of Service pistols from different countries, but if, for whatever reason, they only have one, if it is a 9mm Swiss Service pistol, it will allow them to participate in several different competitions.

I will normally take about 10 different firearms to one of these BAR Swiss Championships, but will still be unable to shoot in several events because I have not brought an appropriate firearm.

12. Specific Events & Associated Firearms

For many events, the rules will specify quite precisely the type of pistol that must be used. Clearly, without a qualifying pistol, one is unable to compete at all. As a simple example,

one cannot compete in a .45 calibre event, e.g. JPC competition number 10, without a .45 calibre pistol or, as already discussed, in a 9mm event without a 9mm pistol. For some events the rules may be less tightly written and thus allow a variety of pistols to be used. Nevertheless, over time it may well have become clear that all the leading competitors have very similar pistols with a number of common characteristics.

Thus experience has shown that virtually all successful competitors in e.g. the popular "Police Pistol 1", "Police Pistol 2", "Service B" and "1500" matches will use a .38 revolver with a very heavy 6" barrel (to minimise recoil, so as to re-acquire the sight picture rapidly), large and adjustable sights and an expertly-prepared, light, smooth, double-action trigger assembly. Anyone without such a revolver will likely be competing at a serious disadvantage in these matches.

But there are other matches for which the .38 calibre cartridge is also very well-suited, but in which the sort of .38 revolver described above would not be allowed. JPC competition number 21 "Pocket Pistol" is one such, in which the maximum barrel length is 3".

As already stated, my favourite match is the ISSF Centre Fire Pistol event. This event requires pistols of between 7.62 and 9.65mm (.30 and .38) calibre, which also comply with the very precise weight and size rules of the ISSF. The heavy-barrelled revolvers referred to above would qualify by calibre, but would be far too heavy and their single-action trigger weight would likely be too light.

Thus, if I (or anyone else) wish to compete at all seriously in the popular events described above, several different pistols, possibly some being of the same calibre, are not just desirable, but essential.

Furthermore, to anyone competing seriously at any level, it is extremely desirable to have at least one spare qualifying firearm, in order to cope with breakages or failures. By qualifying I mean a pistol that meets the rules of that particular event, or which experience has shown to be helpful in achieving good scores. Thus I have 3 heavy-barrelled revolvers for the Police, Service and 1500 events and, for the ISSF Centre Fire event, which I take especially seriously, I always have at least 3 qualifying pistols and often up to about 5.

13. Ammunition

The amount of ammunition required to achieve and maintain a high standard of proficiency will vary with the discipline and the individual. To maintain a world-class competence in an event that involves rapid shooting at multiple targets, such as Practical Pistol, or the ISSF Rapid Fire match that is shot in the Olympics, most competitors will typically need to fire at least 1,000 rounds a week, every week, for at least 9 months of the year.

Although a serious competitor, I am a long way below world-class and my personal consumption is probably usually between 10,000 and 15,000 cartridges of all calibres per year. I also use rather more than that amount in training beginners.

There are 3 aspects to consider with respect to ammunition of any particular calibre: quality; availability; and cost. Home-loading (i.e. assembling complete cartridges from their component parts of case, powder, bullet and primer) achieves a high score under each aspect and, where permitted, is the favoured approach of the vast majority of competitors using centre fire pistol cartridges. Quite apart from convenience, in order to maintain consistency, it is probably best to produce them in reasonable batches, say of a thousand or more at a time.

Good quality factory ammunition is often perfectly acceptable – providing it is available as and when required, at a reasonable cost. Unfortunately, the ready availability of factory ammunition, of the brand and type that has been found to be the most consistent and accurate in a particular firearm, can be problematical even under ideal circumstances of short supply lines and numerous stocking dealers. Where there are few stocking dealers and the controls on importation and distribution are protracted and burdensome, it is essential for a serious competitor to hold substantial stocks of every cartridge used. In my own case I need about 20 different cartridges and aim to hold at least a year's requirements of each calibre at any one time. In some calibres this may mean up to 10,000 cartridges or so and, in total, perhaps 60,000 cartridges. Despite this, I still run out occasionally because of supply difficulties.

14. Conclusion

A pistol shooter who wishes to compete in a reasonably wide spectrum of well-established events, but by no means in all of them, is likely to need about 10 different pistols. A serious pistol shooter, hoping to compete at a high level and to participate widely in multi-event programmes, should also have spare pistols for his most important events.

If a person has been judged a fit and proper person to have a Firearms Certificate, it is very difficult to understand or support any arbitrary restriction on either the number of firearms, or the amount of ammunition, that that person may hold.

Such restrictions will certainly create major, possibly insuperable, obstacles for even a modestly-serious competitor, much less someone hoping to represent their country internationally. In addition such restrictions will certainly generate inconvenience, bureaucracy and paperwork, creating in the process a multitude of opportunities for technical offences to be committed, despite the total absence of any anti-social intent, or anti-social consequences.

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Enc.:

JPC Competition Programme 2010;

British Alpine Rifles Programme, 12-19 September 2009.