

# GLOSSARY

## 1989 BUSH BAN

Refers to the U.S. Federal executive branch study and resulting regulations which banned the importation of firearms which did not meet “sporting criteria”, i.e. certain paramilitary semi-auto only rifles and shotguns. The study was undertaken in response to the Stockton, CA tragedy in which an AK-47 type rifle was criminally used by a so-called “mass murderer.” The Federal regulation, U.S.C. Title 18, Section 922r, applies to imported firearms and to firearms assembled in the U.S. using imported components. It is important to note that even though the Assault Weapon Ban (which applied to U.S. manufactured firearms, not imports) has expired, Section 922r remains in effect, and has the force of U.S. Federal law, regardless of its presidential origin as opposed to U.S. Senate and House of Representatives legislation. Also see Section 922r.

## A1 STYLE

Refers to an AR style rifle in A1 configuration, or A1 specific components (triangular handguard, short fixed buttstock, receiver with integral carry handle, four slot bird cage flash hider, smooth pistol grip, rear flip sight with short and long range apertures, lighter weight 1:14 twist barrel).

## A2 STYLE

Refers to an AR style rifle in A2 configuration, or A2 specific components (circular bi-lateral handguard, longer fixed buttstock, receiver with integral carry handle and spent case deflector, five slot bird cage flash hider, finger rib pistol grip, windage and elevation adjustable rear flip sight with small day and large low light apertures, heavier weight 1:7 twist barrel).

## A3 STYLE

Refers to an AR style rifle in A3 configuration, or A3 specific components (circular bi-lateral handguard, collapsible buttstock, receiver with flat top Picatinny rail and detachable carry handle, A2 flash hider/pistol grip/rear sight/barrel).

## A4 STYLE

Refers to an AR style rifle in A4 configuration, or A4 specific components (same as A2 except for Modular Weapons System handguard).

## ACCOUTREMENT

All equipment carried by soldiers on the outside of their uniform, such as buckles, belts, or canteens, but not weapons.

## ACTION

An assembly consisting of the receiver or frame and the mechanism by which a firearm is loaded, fired, and unloaded. See Boxlock, Rolling Block, or Sidelock.

## ACTION TYPES

Actions are broadly classified as either manual or self-loading. Manual actions may be single shot or repeater. Single shot actions include dropping block (tilting, falling, and rolling), break, hinged, and bolt. Repeater actions include revolver, bolt, lever, pump, and dropping block. Self-loading actions may be semiautomatic or automatic. Semi-auto and automatic actions by sub-type are:

- a. blowback: simple, lever delayed, roller delayed, gas delayed, toggle delayed, hesitation locked, and chamber-ring delayed.
- b. blow-forward.
- c. recoil: short, long, and inertia.
- d. gas: short stroke piston, long stroke piston, direct impingement, and gas trap.

## ADJUSTABLE CHOKE

A device built into the muzzle of a shotgun enabling changes from one choke to another.

## AIRGUN

A gun that utilizes compressed air or gas to launch the projectile.

## AK/AKM STYLE ACTION

A gas operated rifle action with a long-stroke gas piston, a tilting breechblock locking design, and a heavy milled (early versions) or lighter sheet metal (later versions) receiver. No regulator is used; the overall design, machining, tolerances, ease of maintenance, and component durability assure reliable function in all circumstances.

## ANY OTHER WEAPON

Any other firearm which is not an NFA defined machine gun, short barrel rifle, short barrel shotgun, modern shoulder stocked pistol, suppressor (BATFE uses the term “silencer”), or destructive device. An AOW is: a device capable of being concealed on a person from which a shot can be discharged

through the energy of an explosive; a smooth bore barrel pistol or revolver designed or redesigned to fire a fixed shotgun shell; a weapon with combination shotgun and rifle barrels twelve inches or more but less than eighteen inches in length, from which only a single discharge can be made from either barrel without manual reloading; and any such weapon which may be readily restored to fire. AOW examples: H&R Handyguns, Ithaca Auto-Burglar guns, cane guns, and guns modified/disguised so as to be unrecognizable as firearms.

**APERTURE SIGHT**

A rear sight consisting of a hole or aperture located in an adjustable assembly through which the front sight and target are aligned.

**AR15 STYLE ACTION**

A gas operated rifle action with a direct gas impingement system (i.e. no gas piston, no regulator, no moving parts), a bolt carrier enclosing a multi-lugged rotating bolt locking design, and a two-part light-weight receiver. Propellant gas flows through a gas tube, acts directly upon the bolt carrier to cycle the action, and vents into the receiver. AR15 style actions have fewer parts, are more adaptable/modifiable, and are significantly lighter than AK, FAL, or HK91 style actions. However, more maintenance, cleaning, and lubrication are absolutely required for reliability, in contrast to other gas operated actions.

**ASSAULT RIFLE**

Definition usually depends on if you're pro-gun or anti-gun. If you're pro-gun, it generally refers to a military styled, short to immediate range battle rifle capable of selective fire (semi-auto or full auto). If you're anti-gun, it can include almost anything, including sporter rifles from the turn of the 20th century.

**ASSAULT SHOTGUN**

Refers to a shotgun manufactured by contract for the military or law enforcement with a barrel shorter than 18 inches, usually a semi-auto or slide action configuration.

**ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN**

Popular title for the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322. See Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322.

**AUTO LOADING/LOADER**

See Semi-automatic.

**AUTOMATIC ACTION**

An action design which continuously fires and performs all steps in the operating cycle if the trigger remains fully depressed and ammunition is present in the firearm's magazine or feeding system. Also known as "full auto" or "fully automatic". Machine guns utilize automatic actions, which may be recoil, gas, or externally powered.

**BACK BORE/BACK-BORED**

A shotgun barrel which has been bored to a diameter greater than normal for its gauge, but not greater than SAAMI specs for that gauge. The advantages of this are: higher shot velocity, more uniform and denser patterns and fewer deformed pellets.

**BACKSTRAP**

Those parts of the revolver or pistol frame which are exposed at the rear of the grip.

**BARREL**

The steel tube (may be wrapped in a sleeve of synthetic material) which a projectile travels through. May or may not be rifled.

**BARREL BAND**

A metal band, either fixed or adjustable, around the forend of a gun that holds the barrel to the stock.

**BARREL THROAT**

The breech end of a barrel that is chambered and somewhat funneled for the passage of a bullet from cartridge case mouth into the barrel. Also known as a forcing cone.

**BATFE 922r COMPLIANT**

A semi-auto paramilitary rifle (assembled with U.S. and foreign manufactured parts) which meets the statutory requirements of Section 922r of the United States code. Also refers to U.S. made parts which bring the rifle into compliance.

**BATTUE**

A ramped fixed rear sight assembly located on the back of the barrel, allowing quick target acquisition.

**BEAVERTAIL FOREND**

A wider than normal forend.

**BESPOKE**

A British term for a firearm custom-made to the purchaser's specifications. From the verb "bespeak", which means "to give order for it to be made".

**BIRD'S HEAD**

Refers to curved grip configuration on revolvers which resembles the outline of a bird's head, usually with 3 1/2 - 5 1/2 in. barrel lengths. Patterned after the grips on Colt's 1877 Thunderer revolver.

**BLIND MAGAZINE**

A box magazine which is completely concealed within the action and is not accessible or protrudes from the bottom of the action.

**BLOWBACK ACTION**

A semi-automatic or automatic firearm operating design which uses expanding propellant gases to push a heavy unlocked breech bolt open, and which relies upon the inertia of its moving parts to keep the action closed until the bullet has exited the muzzle and pressure has decreased to a safe level.

**BLUING**

The chemical process of artificial oxidation (rusting) applied to gun parts so that the metal attains a dark blue or nearly black appearance.

**BOLT (REVOLVERT)**

The removable stud that rises and falls from the frame to lock a revolver's cylinder with the firing chamber in correct alignment with the bore.

**BOLT ACTION**

A manual action with a bolt body (usually including locking, firing pin, extractor, and ejector components) enclosed by and moving within the firearm's receiver.

**BORE**

Internal dimensions of a barrel (smooth or rifled) that can be measured using the Metric system (i.e. millimeters), English system (i.e. inches), or by the Gauge system (see gauge). On a rifled barrel, the bore is measured across the lands. Also, it is a traditional English term used when referring to the diameter of a shotgun muzzle (gauge in U.S. measure).

**BOX MAGAZINE**

A boxlike feed device for a firearm, which allows cartridges to be stacked one on top of the other. Most box magazines are removable for reloading.

**BOXLOCK ACTION**

Typified by Parker shotguns in U.S. and Westley Richards in England. Generally considered inferior in strength to the sidelock. Developed by Anson & Deeley, the boxlock is hammerless. It has two disadvantages. First, the hammer pin must be placed directly below knee of action, which is its weakest spot. Second, action walls must be thinned out to receive locks. These are inserted from below into large slots in the action body, which is then closed with a plate. Greener crossbolt, when made correctly, overcomes many of the boxlock weaknesses.

**BRADY ACT/BILL**

See Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act.

**BRADY HANDGUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT**

1998 Federal legislation which established the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Also commonly known as the Brady Bill, or the Brady Act. See National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

**BREAK BARREL/BREAK OPEN ACTION**

A type of action where the barrels pivot on a hinge pin, allowing access to the chamber(s) in the breech. Configurations include: single shot, SxS, O/U, combination guns, drillings, and vierlings.

**BREECH**

The rear end of a barrel where a cartridge is chambered. Also commonly used in reference to the entire chamber, breech, and receiver of long guns.

**BREVETTE**

French word which, in gun terminology, refers to a European copy (usually English, French, or Belgian) or patterned after a more famous design (i.e., Brevette Remington O/U derringer refers to a copy of the Remington O/U .41 cal. derringer).

**BUCKHORN SIGHT**

Open metallic rear sight with sides that curl upward and inward.

**BULL BARREL**

A heavier, thicker than normal barrel with little or no taper.

**BUTTPLATE**

A protective plate, usually steel, attached to the back of the buttstock.

**BUTTSTOCK**

The portion of a stock which is positioned against the user's shoulder; also known as the butt. On AR-15/M16 style or similar long guns, the separate component which is attached to the rear of the receiver. Also see STOCK.

**CALIBER**

The diameter of the bore (measured from land to land), usually measured in either inches or millimeters/centimeters. It does not designate bullet diameter.

**CAMO (CAMOUFLAGE)**

Refers to a patterned treatment using a variety of different colors/patterns that enables a gun to blend into a particular outdoors environment. In most cases, this involves a film or additional finish applied on top of a gun's wood and/or metal parts (i.e. Mossy Oak Break-Up, Advantage Timber, Realtree Hardwoods, etc.).

**CARTOUCHE**

Generally refers to a manufacturer's inspector marking impressed into the wood of a military gun, usually in the form of initials inside a circle or oval.

**CASE COLORS**

See Color Case Hardening.

**CAST OFF**

The distance that a buttplate is offset to the right of the line of sight for a right-handed shooter. Especially important in shotgun stocks.

**CAST ON**

The same as Cast Off, except that the buttplate is offset to the left of the line of sight for a left-handed shooter.

**CENTERFIRE**

Self-contained cartridge where the detonating primer is located, in the center of the case head.

**CERAKOTE**

A ceramic based firearms coating with improved performance and reliability compared to traditional firearms finishes. Offers abrasion, corrosion, and solvent protection, in many colors and designs.

**CHAMBER**

Rear part of the barrel which has been reamed out so that it will contain a cartridge. When the breech is closed, the cartridge is supported in the chamber, and the chamber must align the primer with the firing pin, and the bullet with the bore.

**CHAMBER THROAT**

The area in the barrel that is directly forward of the chamber which tapers to bore diameter. Also called throat.

**CHARGING HANDLE**

A semi-auto firearm component which is manipulated to cycle the action, but which does not fire the cartridge. Also called cocking handle, cocking knob, or operating handle.

**CHECKERING**

A functional decoration consisting of pointed pyramids cut into the wood or metal surfaces of a firearm. Generally applied to the pistol grip and forend/forearm areas, affording better handling and control.

**CHOKE**

The muzzle constriction on a shotgun which controls the spread of the shot.

**CHOKE TUBES**

Interchangeable screw-in devices allowing different choke configurations (i.e., cylinder, improved cylinder, improved modified, modified, full). While most choke tubes fit flush with the end of the barrel, some choke tubes now also protrude from the end of the barrel. Most recently made shotguns usually include three to five choke tubes with the shotgun.

**CHOPPER LUMP**

A method of construction of barrels for double barreled, SxS shotguns in which the "lump" extending beneath the breech of the barrel is forged as an integral part of the barrel. When the barrels are assembled, the two lumps are carefully fitted on their mating surfaces and brazed solidly together into a single unit, into which locking and other functional recesses are cut. Also known as demi-bloc.

**CLIP**

A metal or synthetic material formed/shaped to hold cartridges in readiness to be loaded into a magazine or chamber. A clip is NOT a magazine (i.e., stripper clips for most variations of the Mauser Broomhandle). Also known as a stripper or cartridge clip.

**COCKING INDICATOR**

Any device for which the act of cocking a gun moves it into a position where it may be seen or felt, in order to notify the shooter that the gun is cocked. Typical examples are the pins found on some high-grade hammerless shotguns, which protrude slightly when they are cocked, and also the exposed cocking knobs on bolt-action rifles. Exposed hammers found on some rifles and pistols are also considered cocking indicators.

**COIN FINISH**

Older definition referring to a metal finish, typically on a rifle or shotgun, which resembles the finish of an old silver coin. Most coin finishes are based on nickel plating (not chrome) and are generally high polish.

**COLLAPSIBLE STOCK**

Mostly used in reference to a buttstock which can be shortened or lengthened along its fore to aft axis. Also applies in theory to top-folding, under-folding, and side folding buttstocks; all of which when folded reduce the weapon's length.

**COLOR CASE HARDENING**

A method of hardening steel and iron while imparting colorful swirls as well as surface figure. Traditional color case hardening using charcoal and bone meal is achieved by putting the desired metal parts in a crucible packed with a mixture of charcoal and finely ground animal bone to temperatures in the 800°C - 900°C range, after which they are slowly cooled. Then they are submerged into cold water, leaving a thin, colorful protective finish. See pages 86, 93, and 94 in the PPGS for examples. Can also be achieved by treating the necessary metal parts with a cyanide liquid, which helps harden the metal surface, and can be denoted from charcoal color case hardening by a more layered color appearance.

**COMB**

The portion of the stock on which the shooter's cheek rests.

**COMBINATION GUN**

Generally, a break-open shotgun-type configuration that is fitted with at least one shotgun barrel and one rifle barrel. Such guns may be encountered with either two or three barrels, and less frequently with as many as four or five, and have been known to chamber as many as four different calibers.

**COMPENSATOR**

Slots, vents, or ports machined into a firearm's barrel near its muzzle, or a muzzle device, which allow propellant gasses to escape upwards and partially reduce muzzle jump.

**CONTROLLED ROUND FEEDING**

A bolt action rifle design in which the cartridge is mechanically secured by the extractor and bolt during all parts of the operating cycle.

**CRANE**

In a modern solid-frame, swing-out cylinder revolver, the U-shaped yoke on which the cylinder rotates, and which holds the cylinder in the frame. The crane/yoke is the weakest part of a revolver's mechanism.

**CRIME BILL**

Popular title for the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322. See Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322.

**CRIMP**

A turning in of the case mouth to affect a closure or to prevent the projectile(s) from slipping out of the case mouth. Various crimps include: roll, pie, star or folded, rose, stab, and taper.

**CROSSBOLT**

A transverse locking rod/bar used in many SxS boxlock shotguns and a few rifles, which locks the standing breech and barrels to each other. Originally designed by W.W. Greener, this term is also referred to as the Greener crossbolt. Also a transverse metal bolt which reinforces and prevents damage to the stock from recoil or abusive handling.

**CROWNING**

The rounding or chamfering normally done to a barrel muzzle to ensure that the mouth of the bore is square with the bore axis and that its edges are countersunk below the surface to protect it from impact damage. Traditionally, crowning was accomplished by spinning an abrasive-coated brass ball against the muzzle while moving it in a figure-eight pattern, until the abrasive had cut away any irregularities and produced a uniform and square mouth.

**CRYOGENIC TEMPERING**

Computer controlled cooling process that relieves barrel stress by subjecting the barrel to a temperature of -310 degrees F for 22 hours.

**CURIO/RELIC**

Firearms which are of special interest to collectors by reason of some quality other than that which is normally associated with firearms intended for sporting use or as offensive or defensive weapons. Must be older than 50 years.

**CYLINDER**

A rotating cartridge holder in a revolver. The cartridges are held in chambers and the cylinder turns, either to the left or the right, depending on the gun maker's design, as the hammer is cocked.

**CYLINDER ARM**

See Crane.

**DAMASCENE**

The decorating of metal with another metal, either by inlaying or attaching in some fashion.

**DAMASCUS BARREL**

A barrel made by twisting, forming, and welding thin strips of steel around a mandrel.

**DELAYED IMPINGEMENT GAS SYSTEM**

A trademarked gas operating system for AR15 style carbines, designed by Allan Zitta. Similar to a gas piston action in concept, it has instead an operating rod and recoil spring which run through the receiver, over the barrel, and sleeve the gas tube at the gas block. The gas tube does not enter the receiver, and the recoil spring replaces the buffer and spring in the AR15 buttstock.

**DEMI-BLOCK/BLOC**

See Chopper Lump.

**DERRINGER**

Usually refers to a small, concealable pistol with one or two short barrels.

**DETACHABLE MILITARY STYLE BIPOD**

A bipod designed for severe/heavy use and greater durability, with a Picatinny rail or other type of quick attach/detach mounting system.

**DIRECT IMPINGEMENT GAS SYSTEM**

A gas operating system in which high pressure and temperature propellant gas is routed into the firearm receiver to make contact with and move action components. There are no "moving parts" (e.g. piston, return spring, operating rod, tappet) in a direct impingement gas system. A typical direct impingement gas system has a gas block surrounding the barrel and covering the gas port, and a gas tube.

**DOUBLE ACTION**

The principle in a revolver or auto-loading pistol wherein the hammer can be cocked and dropped by a single pull of the trigger. Most of these actions also provide capability for single action fire. In auto loading pistols, double action normally applies only to the first shot of any series, the hammer being cocked by the slide for subsequent shots.

**DOUBLE ACTION ONLY**

Hammer no longer cocks in single action stage (many new DAO models are hammerless).

**DOUBLE-BARRELED**

A gun consisting of two barrels joined either side-by-side or one over the other.

**DOUBLE-SET TRIGGER**

A device that consists of two triggers - one to cock the mechanism that spring-assists the other trigger, substantially lightening the other trigger's pull weight.

**DOVETAIL**

A flaring machined or hand-cut slot that is also slightly tapered toward one end. Cut into the upper surface of barrels and sometimes actions, the dovetail accepts a corresponding part on which a sight is mounted. Dovetail slot blanks are used to cover the dovetail when the original sight has been removed or lost; this gives the barrel a more pleasing appearance and configuration.

**DRILLED & TAPPED**

Refers to holes drilled into the top of a receiver/frame and threaded, which allow scope bases, blocks, rings, or other sighting devices to be rigidly attached to the gun.

**DRILLING**

German for triple, which is their designation for a three-barrel gun, usually two shotgun barrels and one rifle barrel.

**EJECTOR, AUTOMATIC**

One or more components which propel extracted cartridges or fired cases completely out of the firearm. May also perform both as an extractor and an ejector.

**ELASTOMER**

A synthetic elastic polymer, soft and compressible like natural rubber, used for seals, grip and stock inlays, and other molded firearm components.

**ELECTROCIBLE**

Unique reusable target designed like an aircraft propeller that causes it to spin and go in different directions. In competition, electrocibles come out of one of five boxes located 25 meters from the shooter, who must hit it before it crosses over the ring at 21 meters.

**ELECTRO-OPTICAL SIGHT**

An optical sight (see definition) with the addition of electronic battery powered components which illuminate a reticle (least complex), or which generate a reticle/optional reticles. Electro optical sights may be: magnifying, non-magnifying, full-tube convention optical, or reflex types (see REFLEX SIGHT).

**ENGINE TURNING**

Machined circular polishing on metal, creating a unique overlapping pattern.

**ENGLISH STOCK**

A straight, slender-gripped stock.

**ENGRAVING**

The art of engraving metal in decorative patterns. Scroll engraving is the most common type of hand engraving encountered. Much of today's factory engraving is rolled on which is done mechanically. Hand engraving requires artistry and knowledge of metals and related materials.

**ERGO SUREGRIP**

A Falcon Industries Inc. right hand or ambidextrous replacement pistol grip for AR15/M16 style rifles. The grip has finger grooves, upper rear extension to support the web of the shooter's hand, is oil and solvent resistant, and a non-slip textured overmolded rubber surface.

**ETCHING**

A method of decorating metal gun parts, usually done by acid etching or photo engraving.

**EXTRACTOR**

A device which partially pulls a cartridge or fired hull/case/casing(s) from the chamber, allowing it to be removed manually.

**FALLING BLOCK**

A single shot action where the breechblock drops straight down when a lever is actuated.

**FARQUHARSON ACTION**

A single shot hammerless falling block rifle action patented in 1872 by John Farquharson.

**FIBER OPTIC SIGHT**

An iron sight with fiber optic light gathering rods or cylinders; the rod ends are perceived as glowing dots and enhance sight visibility and contrast.

**FIT AND FINISH**

Terms used to describe over-all firearm workmanship.

**FIRE CONTROL GROUP**

All components necessary to cause a cartridge to be fired; may be a self-contained assembly, easily disassembled or not user-serviceable, detachable, modular/interchangeable, and may or may not include a safety, bolt release, or other parts.

**FIRING PIN**

That part of a firearm which strikes the cartridge primer, causing detonation.

**FLASH SUPPRESSOR/HIDER**

A muzzle attachment which mechanically disrupts and reduces muzzle flash. It does not reduce muzzle blast or recoil.

**FLAT-TOP UPPER**

An AR-15/M16 style or other tactical semi-auto rifle with a literally flat receiver top. The majority of flat-top uppers have an extended Picatinny rail for mounting iron sights, optical sights, and other accessories, which provides much more versatility than the original "carry handle" receiver design.

**FLOATING BARREL**

A barrel bedded to avoid contact with any point on the stock.

**FLOOR PLATE**

Usually, a removable/hinged plate at the bottom of the receiver covering the magazine well.

**FN FAL STYLE ACTION**

A gas operated rifle action with a short-stroke spring-loaded gas piston, a tilting breechblock locking design, and a heavy receiver. A regulator valve allows the user to increase the volume of gas entering the system in order to ensure reliable operation in adverse conditions. Unlike direct gas impingement or delayed blowback operating systems, propellant gas does not vent into the receiver and fire control components.

**FORCING CONE**

Forward part of the chamber in a shotgun where the chamber diameter is reduced to bore diameter. The forcing cone aids the passage of shot into the barrel.

**FOREARM**

In this text, a separate piece of wood in front of the receiver and under the barrel used for hand placement when shooting.

**FOREND/FORE-END**

Usually the forward portion of a one-piece rifle or shotgun stock (in this text), but can also refer to a separate piece of wood.

**FORWARD BOLT ASSIST**

A button, usually found on AR-15 type rifles, which may be pushed or struck to move the bolt carrier fully forward so that the extractor has completely engaged the cartridge rim and the bolt has locked. Mainly used to close/lock the bolt when the rifle's chamber and receiver are excessively fouled or dirty.

**FRAME**

The part of a firearm to which the action (lock work), barrel, and stock/grip are connected. Most of the time used when referring to a handgun or hinged frame long gun.

**FREE FLOATING FOREARM**

A forearm which does not contact the barrel at any point, as it attaches and places mechanical stress only on the receiver. An accuracy enhancement for AR-15/M16 style rifles, which by their modular design, are not able to have a conventionally free floated barrel in a one-piece stock.

**FREE RIFLE**

A rifle designed for international-type target shooting. The only restriction on design is a weight maximum 8 kilograms (17.6 lbs.).

**FRONT STRAP**

That part of the revolver or pistol grip frame which faces forward and often joins with the trigger guard. In target guns, notably the .45 ACP, the front strap is often stippled to give shooter's hand a slip-proof surface.

**FULL AUTO**

See AUTOMATIC ACTION

**GAS ACTION/OPERATION**

An action in which high pressure propellant gas is diverted from the barrel to supply the energy required to unlock the breech, extract/eject the fired case, load a cartridge, and lock the breech.

**GAS PISTON SYSTEM**

A gas operation design in which a piston is used to transfer propellant gas energy to the action components. No gas enters the receiver or makes contact with other action components. Consequently, less heat is absorbed by, and less fouling accumulates in, the receiver.

**GAS PORT**

A small opening in the barrel of a gas operated firearm which allows high pressure gas to flow into the gas system's components. Also an escape vent in a firearm's receiver, a safety feature.

**GAUGE/GA.**

A unit of measure used to determine a shotgun's bore. Determined by the amount of pure lead balls equaling the bore diameter needed to equal one pound (i.e., a 12 ga. means that 12 lead balls exactly the diameter of the bore weigh one pound). In this text, .410 is referenced as a bore (if it was a gauge, it would be a 68 ga.).

**GAUGE VS. BORE DIAMETER**

- 10-Gauge = Bore Diameter of .775 inches or 19.3mm
- 12-Gauge = Bore Diameter of .729 inches or 18.2mm
- 16-Gauge = Bore Diameter of .662 inches or 16.8mm
- 20-Gauge = Bore Diameter of .615 inches or 15.7mm
- 28-Gauge = Bore Diameter of .550 inches or 13.8mm
- 68-Gauge = Bore Diameter of .410 inches or 12.6mm

**GCA**

The Gun Control Act of 1968, 18 USC Chapter 44.

**GLACIERGUARDS**

AR15/M16 carbine length replacement handguard (two-piece) which has fifteen internal heat dispersing fins rather than the standard heat shield. The fins provide greater strength and rigidity; fiber-reinforced polymer shells resist heat and reduce weight. A DPMS product.

**GRIP**

The handle used to hold a handgun, or the area of a stock directly behind and attached to the frame/receiver of a long gun.

**GRIPS**

Can be part of the frame or components attached to the frame used to assist in accuracy, handling, control, and safety of a handgun. Many currently manufactured semi-auto handguns have grips that are molded w/checkering as part of the synthetic frame.

**GRIPSTRAP(S)**

Typically refers to the front and back metal attached to a handgun frame which supports the grips/stocks. Also known as the front strap and back strap.

**GROOVES**

The spiral depressions of the rifling in a barrel bore; created by cutting, swaging, broaching, hammering, cation action, or other methods. Also see LANDS and RIFLING.

**HALF COCK**

A position of the hammer in a hammer activated firing mechanism that serves as a manual safety.

**HAMMER**

A part of a gun's mechanism which applies force to the firing pin or other components, which in turn fires the gun.

**HAMMERLESS**

Some "hammerless" firearms do in fact have hidden hammers, which are located in the action housing. Truly hammerless guns, such as the Savage M99, have a firing mechanism based on a spring-powered striker.

**HANDGUARD**

A wooden, synthetic, or ventilated metal part attached above the barrel and ahead of the receiver to protect the shooter's hand from the heat generated during semi-auto rapid firing.

**HEEL**

Back end of the upper edge of the butt stock at the upper edge of the buttplate or recoil pad.

**HK91/G3 STYLE ACTION**

A roller locked delayed blowback rifle action. There is no gas system per se; gas pressure in the cartridge case pushes the case against the bolt and bolt carrier. Spring-loaded rollers in the bolt resist unlocking and carrier/bolt movement until chamber pressure has dropped to a safe level. Components are heavier, recoil (actual and perceived) is greater, chambers must be fluted to assure extraction, and cocking effort is much greater than direct gas or gas piston weapons.

**ILAFLOX**

Industrielack AG trademarked ceramic reinforced enamel firearms finish coating; highly resistant to abrasion, corrosion, and chemicals/solvent.

**INTEGRAL LOCKING SYSTEM**

A North American Arms safety system; a key allows the user to internally lock the hammer in place, which prevents discharging the firearm.

**INTRAFUSE**

A trademarked system of synthetic stocks and accessories designed for tactical firearms.

**IN-THE-WHITE**

Refers to a gun's finish w/o bluing, nickel, case colors, gold, etc. Since all metal surfaces are normally polished, the steel appears white, hence, "in-the-white" terminology.

**JUXTAPOSED**

See Side-by-Side listing.

**LAMINATED STOCK**

A gunstock made of many layers of wood glued together under pressure. Together, the laminations become very strong, preventing damages from moisture, heat, and warping.

**LANDS**

Portions of the bore left between the grooves of the rifling in the bore of a firearm. In rifling, the grooves are usually twice the width of the land. Land diameter is measured across the bore, from land to land.

**LASER SIGHT**

An aiming system which projects a beam of laser light onto the target. Usually mounted so the beam is parallel to the barrel bore but not a "traditional" front or rear sight as the shooter does not look through the laser apparatus.

**LENS COATINGS**

Metallic coatings on optic surfaces which increase light transmission, image brightness, and color rendition. Also used to improve abrasion resistance and filter out unwanted or harmful light.

**LEVER ACTION**

A manual repeating action operated by an external lever.

**M1913 PICATINNY RAIL**

Original designation for a Picatinny rail. Also see PICATINNY RAIL.

**M4 STYLE**

Refers to an AR style rifle in M4 carbine configuration (A2 configuration but with short handguard, short barrel, and relocated gas block).

**MACHINE GUN**

National Firearms Act and Gun Control Act of 1968 definition:

Any weapon which shoots, is designed to shoot, or can be readily restored to shoot, automatically more than one shot, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger. The term shall also include the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any part designed and intended solely and exclusively, or combination of parts designed and intended, for use in converting a weapon into a machine gun, and any combination of parts from which a machine gun can be assembled if such parts are in the possession or control of a person.

**MAGAZINE (MAG.)**

The container (may be detachable) which holds cartridges under spring pressure to be fed into the gun's chamber. A clip is NOT a magazine. May be a single or double column (aka high capacity) design.

**MAGNUM (MAG.)/MAGNUM AMMUNITION**

A term first used by Holland & Holland in 1912 for their .375 H & H Magnum cartridge. The term has now been applied to rimfire, centerfire, or shotshell cartridges having a larger cartridge case, heavier shot charge, or higher muzzle velocity than standard cartridges or shotshells of a given caliber or gauge. Most magnum rifle cartridges are belted designs.

**MAINSRING**

The spring that delivers energy to the hammer or striker.

**MANNLICHER STOCK**

A full-length slender stock with slender forend extending to the muzzle (full stock) affording better barrel protection.

**MICROMETER SIGHT**

A windage and elevation adjustable sight with very precise and small increments of adjustment.

**MICRO SLICK**

A firearms finish coating which creates a permanently lubricated surface; it impedes galling and seizing of firearm components.

**MIL-DOT**

A reticle with dots spaced center-to-center one milradian apart; the distance to an object of known dimension may be calculated based upon the number of milradians which are subtended by the target's known dimension.

**MILRADIAN**

The horizontal angle subtended by one unit of measurement at 1,000 units distance. Also called a "mil".

**MINUTE OF ANGLE**

1/60 of a degree of angle; 1.047" at 100 yards. Also a unit of accuracy measurement.

**MODERN SPORTING RIFLE**

A National Shooting Sports Foundation term for civilian legal semiautomatic AR15 style rifles. The NSSF promotes its usage to counter the negative anti-gun connotations, confusion, and misunderstandings which have become associated with the term "AR15". A modern sporting rifle is

not an automatic or assault rifle, not a regulated NFA weapon, not a military/law enforcement M16 despite its similar cosmetic appearance, and no more powerful than other traditional configuration sporting/hunting/competition rifles of the same caliber. Sometimes called Sport Utility Rifle or SUR. Note: the letters "AR" stand for Armalite Rifle.

**MODULAR WEAPONS SYSTEM**

A generic term of military origin for quick attach/detach components/systems which allow flexibility and adaptability for using various sighting, illumination, and other accessories, etc. on a weapon. Also see PICATINNY RAIL.

**MONOBLOC**

A form of construction and assembly for double barreled shotguns wherein the breeching and locking surfaces are cut into a single separate housing or "bloc" into which the breeches of the barrels are brazed or threaded. See also CHOPPER LUMP.

**MONTE CARLO STOCK**

A stock with an elevated comb used primarily for scoped rifles.

**MUZZLE**

The forward end of the barrel where the projectile exits.

**MUZZLE BRAKE**

A muzzle device (permanent or removable) or barrel modification which reduces muzzle jump and recoil by diverting propellant gasses sideways or to the rear. Not to be confused with a flash hider or a flash suppressor. Also see COMPENSATOR.

**NATIONAL INSTANT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM (NICS)**

A Check System which an FFL must, with limited exceptions, contact for information on whether receipt of a firearm by a person who is not licensed under 18 U.S.C. 923 would violate Federal or state law.

**NEEDLE GUN**

Ignition system invented by Johan Nikolas von Dreyse in 1829. This ignition system using a paper cartridge became obsolete with the invention of the metallic cartridge.

**NFA**

The National Firearms Act, 26 USC Chapter 53.

**NFA FIREARM**

A firearm which must be registered in the National Firearm Registration and Transfer Record, as defined in the NFA and 27 CFR, Part 479. Included are: machine guns, frames or receivers of machine guns, any combination of parts designed and intended for use in converting weapons into machine guns, any combination of parts from which a machine gun can be assembled if the parts are in the possession or under control of a person, silencers and any part designed or intended for fabricating a silencer, short-barreled rifles, short-barreled shotguns, destructive devices, and "any other weapon".

**NICS CHECK**

See National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

**NON-DETACHABLE BOX MAGAZINE**

A rectangular magazine which is never removed during normal use or maintenance of the firearm. It may extend beyond/below the receiver or stock, may be high capacity, and generally is loaded from its top (single cartridges or stripper clips).

**NON-DETACHABLE FOLDING BAYONET**

An articulated bayonet which cannot be removed by the end user. Normally "locked" into its fully folded or extended position.

**NP3/NP3 PLUS**

An electroless plated nickel-phosphorus alloy firearms finish which offers uniform thickness, lubricity, and hardness equivalent to hard chromium plating.

**OBJECTIVE LENS**

A telescopic sights front, usually larger, lens which may be adjustable to reduce parallax error.

**OCULAR LENS**

The rear lens of a telescopic sight, normally adjustable by rotation to focus the sight image.

**OPEN SIGHT**

A simple rear iron sight with a notch - the shooter aims by looking through the notch at the front sight and the target.

**OPTICAL SIGHT**

A generic term for a sight which has one or more optical lenses through which the weapon is aimed. Optical sights usually magnify the target image, but there are many non-magnifying optical sights.

**OVER-UNDER (SUPERPOSED)**

A two-barrel gun in which the barrels are stacked one on top of the other.

**PARALLAX**

Occurs in telescopic sights when the primary image of the objective lens does not coincide with the reticle. In practice, parallax is detected in the scope when, as the viewing eye is moved laterally, the image and the reticle appear to move in relation to each other.

**PARAMILITARY**

Typically refers to a firearm configured or styled to resemble a military weapon with one or more of the military weapon's configurations or features, EXCEPT FOR automatic or selective fire capability. Paramilitary firearms may be slide action (primarily shotguns), bolt action, or semi-automatic (most handguns and rifles).

**PARKERIZING**

Matte rust-resistant oxide finish, usually dull gray or black in color, found on military guns.

**PEEP SIGHT**

A rear sight consisting of a disc or blade with a hole or aperture through which the front sight and target are aligned.

**PEPPERBOX**

An early form of revolving repeating pistol, in which a number of barrels were bored in a circle in a single piece of metal resembling the cylinder of a modern revolver. Functioning was the same as a revolver, the entire cylinder being revolved to bring successive barrels under the hammer for firing. Though occurring as far back as the 16th century, the pepperbox did not become practical until the advent of the percussion cap in the early 1800s. Pepperboxes were made in a wide variety of sizes and styles, and reached their popularity peak during the percussion period. Few were made after the advent of practical metallic cartridges. Both single and double action pepperboxes were made. Single-barreled revolvers after the 1840s were more accurate and easier to handle and soon displaced the rather clumsy and muzzle-heavy pepperbox.

**PERCH BELLY**

Refers to a rifle's stock configuration where the bottom portion is curved rather than straight between the buttplate and pistol grip.

**PICATINNY RAIL**

Refers to a serrated flat rail typically located on the top of a frame/slide/receiver, but may also be located on the sides and bottom, allowing different optics/sights/accessories to be used on the gun. Developed at the U.S. Army's Picatinny Arsenal.

**PINFIRE**

An obsolete ignition system that held the primer inside the case with a small firing pin protruding from the rear sidewall of the case.

**POLYGONAL**

Rifling w/o sharp edged lands and grooves. See Rifling.

**POPE RIB**

A rib integral with the barrel. Designed by Harry M. Pope, famed barrel maker and shooter, the rib made it possible to mount a target scope low over the barrel.

**POST-BAN**

See 1989 BUSH BAN, and Section 922r.

**PRE-BAN**

See 1989 BUSH BAN, and Section 922r.

**PRIMER**

A percussion device designed to ignite the propellant charge of a centerfire cartridge or shotshell by generating flame and high temperature expanding gasses.

**PRIMER RING**

Refers to a visible dark ring around the firing pin hole in a breech or bolt face, created by the impact of centerfire ammunition primer cups when a cartridge is fired.

**PROOFMARK**

Proofmarks are usually applied to all parts actually tested, but normally appear on the barrel (and possibly frame), usually indicating the country of origin and time-frame of proof (especially on European firearms). In the U.S., there is no federalized or government proof house, only the manufacturer's in-house proofmark indicating that a firearm has passed its manufacturer's quality control standards per government specifications.

**PUMP ACTION**

See SLIDE ACTION.

**QUAD RAIL FOREARM**

A rifle forearm with upper, lower, and lateral Picatinny rails which allow attachment of multiple accessories.

**RECEIVER**

That part of a rifle or shotgun (excluding hinged frame guns) that houses the bolt, firing pin, mainspring, trigger group, and magazine or ammunition feed system. The barrel is threaded or pressed into the somewhat enlarged forward part of the receiver, called the receiver ring. At the rear of the receiver, the butt or stock is fastened. In semiautomatic pistols, the frame or housing is sometimes referred to as the receiver.

**RECOIL**

The rearward motion of a firearm when a shot is fired (i.e. the gun recoiled); the term for the energy or force transferred into the firearm as it discharges a projectile.

**RECOIL ACTION/OPERATION**

A selfloading or automatic action which uses recoil energy to unlock, extract, eject, cock the firing mechanism, and reload the chamber.

**RECOIL SPRING GUIDE ROD**

A metal or synthetic rod which positions the recoil spring within the firearm's receiver or slide, and prevents binding/dislocation of the spring during its compression or expansion.

**RED DOT SIGHT**

See REFLEX SIGHT.

**REFLEX SIGHT**

An optical sight which generates reticle image upon a partially curved objective lens; the reticle appears superimposed in the field of view and focused at infinity. Most reflex sights are non-magnifying and battery powered. Fiber optic light collectors or tritium may also be used to generate the reticle. Reflex sights are adjustable and virtually parallax free. Popularly known as "red dot" sights; they are NOT laser sights.

**RELEASE TRIGGER**

A trap shooting trigger that fires the gun when the trigger is released.

**RELIC**

See listing under Curio/Relic.

**REPEATER/REPEATING ACTION**

An manual action with a magazine or cylinder loaded with more than one cartridge; all cartridges may be fired without reloading.

**RETICLE**

The shapes, lines, marks, etc. which provide an aiming reference when using an optical sight. Reticles may be illuminated electronically, with tritium, or with fiber optics, and are available in a multitude of designs for many differing requirements.

**REVOLVER/REVOLVING ACTION**

A manual repeating action so named for its multi-chambered cylinder which rotates on an axis parallel to the barrel bore. Primarily a handgun action, but there have been long gun examples (e.g. Colt Model 1855 Revolving Rifle).

**RIB**

A raised sighting plane affixed to the top of a barrel.

**RIFLING**

The spirally cut grooves in the bore of a rifle or handgun barrel. The rifling causes the bullet to spin, stabilizing the bullet in flight. Rifling may rotate to the left or the right, the higher parts of the bore being called lands, the cuts or lower parts being called the grooves. Many types exist, such as oval, polygonal, button, Newton, Newton-Pope gain twist, parabolic, Haddan, Enfield, segmental rifling, etc. Most U.S.-made barrels have a right-hand twist, while British gun makers prefer a left-hand twist. In practice, there seems to be little difference in accuracy or barrel longevity.

**RIMFIRE**

Self contained metallic cartridge where the priming compound is evenly distributed within the cartridge head, but only on the outer circumference of the rim. Detonated by the firing pin(s) striking the outer edge of the case head.

**RINGS**

See Scope Rings.

**ROLLING BLOCK ACTION**

Single shot action, designed in the U.S. and widely used in early Remington arms. Also known as the Remington-Rider action, the breechblock, actuated by a lever, rotates down and back from the chamber. Firing pin is contained in block and is activated by hammer fall.

**SAFETY**

A mechanism(s) in/on a gun which prevents it from firing. Many different types and variations.

**SAAMI**

The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute; a branch of the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

**SAW HANDLE**

Refers to distinctive squared off type of pistol grip design which literally is shaped like a saw handle.

**SCHNABEL FOREND/FOREARM**

The curved/carved flared end of the forend/forearm that resembles the beak of a bird (Schnabel in German). This type of forend is common on Austrian and German guns; was popular in the U.S., but the popularity of the Schnabel forend/forearm comes and goes with the seasons. A Schnabel forend is often seen on custom stocks and rifles.

**SCOPE RINGS (BLOCKS/BASES)**

Metal mounts used to attach a scope to the top of a gun's frame/receiver.

**SEAR**

The pivoting part in the firing or lock mechanism of a gun. The sear is linked to the trigger, and may engage the cocking piece, striker, or the firing pin.

**SECTION 922r**

A 1989 Federal regulation which established sporting criteria for centerfire weapons, either imported, or assembled from imported and domestic components. Firearms which do not meet the criteria are "banned", i.e. non-importable as of the regulation's effective date. Also the source of the popular terms "pre-ban" and post-ban". Due to the complexity of this regulation readers are advised to refer to the actual text of the regulation and contact the BATFE. See 1989 BUSH BAN.

**SELECTIVE FIRE**

Describes a firearm which has more than one firing mode; which is controlled, or "selected", by the user. Most often used in reference to fully automatic firearms which can fire in semi-auto, burst, or full auto mode.

**SEMI-AUTO ACTION/SEMI-AUTOMATIC/SELFLOADING/AUTOLOADING**

A pistol, rifle, or shotgun that is loaded manually for the first round. Upon pulling the trigger, the gun fires, ejects the fired round, cocks the firing mechanism, and feeds a fresh round from the magazine. The trigger must be released after each shot and pulled again to fire the next round.

**SHELL DEFLECTOR**

A protrusion of the receiver near the ejection port which is positioned and shaped to deflect an ejected case away from the shooter's body. Especially appreciated by left handers when firing a semi-auto with right side ejection.

**SHORT ACTION**

A rifle action designed for short overall length cartridges.

**SHORT BARREL RIFLE**

Any rifle having one or more barrels less than sixteen inches in length and any weapon made from a rifle (whether by alteration, modification, or otherwise) if such weapon, as modified, has an overall length of less than twenty-six inches.

**SHORT BARREL SHOTGUN**

Any shotgun, which was originally equipped with a shoulder stock, with a barrel or barrels less than eighteen inches long and any weapon made from a shotgun (whether by alteration, modification, or otherwise) if such weapon as modified has an overall length of less than twenty-six inches.

**SHOTSHELL**

An assembly consisting of a rimmed metal head, paper or plastic base wad, 209 battery cup primer, and paper or plastic body. A shotshell cartridge is a shotshell loaded with propellant, wad column, and shot charge or a single large diameter slug.

**SIDE-BY-SIDE (JUXTAPOSED)**

A two-barrel rifle or shotgun where the barrels are horizontally arranged side-by-side.

**SIDE LEVER**

Refers to opening mechanism lever on either left or right side of receiver/frame.

**SIDELOCK**

A type of action, usually long gun, where the moving parts are located on the inside of the lock plates, which in turn are inlet in the sides of the stock. Usually found only on better quality shotguns and rifles.

**SIDEPLATES**

Ornamental metal panels normally attached to a boxlock action to simulate a sidelock.

**SIGHT(S)**

Any part or device which allows a firearm to be aimed, versus merely pointed, at a target. There are two main systems: "iron" and optical. Iron sights, also known as "open" sights, are now made of other substances than metal and in many variations. Optical sights have a lens, or lenses, which may or may not magnify the target image.

**SINGLE ACTION**

A firearms design which requires the hammer to be manually cocked for each shot. Also an auto loading pistol design which requires manual cocking of its mechanism for the first shot only.

**SINGLE SHOT ACTION**

An action which limits storing or loading only a single cartridge, and is manually operated.

**SLIDE ACTION**

A manual repeating action with a reciprocating forearm. Sliding the forearm towards the receiver opens the action and extracts/ejects the fired case; forward motion chambers a cartridge and locks the action.

**SINGLE TRIGGER**

One trigger on a double-barrel gun. It fires each barrel individually by successive pulls, or may be selective, i.e., the barrel to be fired first can be selected via a control button or lever.

**SLING SWIVELS**

Metal loops affixed to the gun to which a carrying strap is attached.

**SPECIAL IMPACT MUNITIONS**

A class or type of firearm ammunition loaded with one or more projectiles; when fired at a human target the projectiles have a low probability of causing serious injury or death. For example: bean bag, baton, tear gas, and rubber ball rounds. A sub-class of SIMs is known as SPLLAT, or special purpose less lethal anti terrorist munitions.

**SPORT UTILITY RIFLE**

See MODERN SPORTING RIFLE.

**SPUR TRIGGER**

A trigger mounting design that housed the trigger in an extension of the frame in some older guns. The trigger projected only slightly from the front of the extension or spur, and no trigger guard was used on these guns.

**SQUIB LOAD**

A cartridge with no propellant, or so little propellant, that when fired in a semi-auto the action does not cycle; and in any type of firearm a squib load most likely results in the projectile remaining in and completely obstructing the barrel's bore.

**STAMPED SHEET METAL RECEIVER**

A receiver manufactured out of sheet metal which has been cut, stamped into a three-dimensional shape, and welded. An economical alternative to milling a receiver from a solid block of metal.

**STOCK**

Usually refers to the buttstock of a long gun, or that portion of a rifle or shotgun that comes in contact with the shooter's shoulder, and is attached to the frame/receiver.

**STOCKS**

Older terminology used to describe handgun grips (see Grips).

**SUICIDE SPECIAL**

A mass-produced inexpensive single action revolver or derringer, usually with a spur trigger. Produced under a variety of trade names, these guns earned their nickname by being almost as dangerous to shoot as to be shot at.

**SUPERPOSED**

Refers to an O/U barrel configuration.

**SUPPRESSOR**

A mechanical device, usually cylindrical and detachable, which alters and decreases muzzle blast and noise. Commonly referred to, in error, as a silencer, it acts only on the sound of the firearms discharge. It does not have any effect on the sounds generated by: the firearm's moving parts, a supersonic bullet in flight, or the bullet's impact.

**TACTICAL**

An imprecise term referring to certain features on handguns, rifles, and shotguns. Before 2000, a tactical gun generally referred to a rifle or carbine designed for military or law enforcement. In today's marketplace, tactical refers to certain features of both handguns and long arms.

**TACTICAL REVOLVERS**

Tactical revolvers have at least three of the following factory/manufacturer options or features: non-glare finish (generally but there may be exceptions), Mil Std 1913 Picatinny or equivalent rail(s), combat style grips (wood or synthetic), fixed or adjustable low profile primary sights (can be tritium or illuminated night sights), auxiliary aiming/sighting/illumination equipment, compensators or barrel porting, as well as combat triggers and hammers

**TACTICAL RIFLES**

Semi-auto, bolt action, or slide action rifles that have at least two of the following factory/manufacturer options or features: magazine capacity over ten rounds, non-glare finish (generally but there may be exceptions), Mil Std 1913 Picatinny or equivalent rail(s), mostly synthetic stocks which may be fixed, folding, collapsible, adjustable, or with/without pistol grip, most have sling attachments for single, traditional two, or three point slings, tritium night sights, and some Assault Weapon Ban characteristics, such as flash suppressors, detachable magazines, bayonet lugs, etc.

**TACTICAL SEMI-AUTO PISTOLS**

Tactical semi-auto pistols have at least three of the following factory/manufacturer options or features: magazine capacity over ten rounds, non-glare finish (generally but there may be exceptions), Mil Std 1913 Picatinny or equivalent rail(s), combat style grips (wood or synthetic), fixed or adjustable low profile primary sights (can be tritium or illuminated night sights), auxiliary aiming/sighting/illumination equipment, and compensators or barrel porting.

**TACTICAL SHOTGUNS**

Semi-auto or slide action shotguns have at least two of the following factory/manufacturer options or features: higher capacity (than sporting/hunting shotguns) magazines, or magazine extensions, non-glare finish (generally but there may be exceptions), Mil Std 1913 Picatinny or equivalent rail(s), mostly synthetic stocks which may be fixed, folding, collapsible, adjustable, or with/without pistol grip, most have sling attachments for single, traditional two, or three point slings, some Assault Weapon Ban characteristics, such as bayonet lugs, or detachable "high capacity" magazines, rifle, tritium night sights, or ghost ring sights (usually adjustable), and short (18-20 inches) barrels with fixed cylinder choke.

**TAKE DOWN**

A gun which can be easily disassembled into two sections for carrying or shipping.

**TANG (S)**

Usually refers to the extension straps (upper and lower) of a rifle or shotgun receiver/frame to which the stock/grips are attached.

**THUMBHOLE STOCK (CRIME BILL)**

An adaptation of the sporter thumbhole stock design which removed a weapon from "semi-auto assault weapon" legal status. The thumbhole was/is very large and provides the functionality of a true pistol grip stock.

**THUMBHOLE STOCK (SPORTER)**

A sporter/hunting stock with an ergonomic hole in the grip; the thumb of the shooter's trigger hand fits into the hole which provides for a steadier hold.

**TOP BREAK**

Please refer to BREAK OPEN.

**TOP BREAK ACTION**

See BREAK BARREL ACTION.

**TOP LEVER**

Refers to the opening lever mechanism on top of the upper frame/tang.

**TOP STRAP**

The upper part of a revolver frame, which often is either slightly grooved - the groove serving as rear sight - or which carries at its rearward end a sight (which may or may not be adjustable).

**TORQUE**

The force which causes a rifled firearm to counter-rotate when a projectile travels down its bore.

**TRACER**

A type of military bullet that emits a colored flame from its base when fired allowing the gunner to adjust his fire onto a target.

**TRAJECTORY**

The curved flight path of a bullet from muzzle to target; resembling but not a true parabolic arc.

**TRAJECTORY TABLE**

A numerical table of computed data summarizing the down range trajectory of a bullet, shot pellet, or shotgun slug

**TRAP STOCK**

A shotgun stock with greater length and less comb drop (Monte Carlo, in many cases) used for trap shooting, enabling a built-in height lead when shooting.

**TRIGGER**

Refers to a release device (mechanical or electrical) in the firing system that starts the ignition process. Usually a curved, grooved, or serrated piece of metal which is pulled rearward by the shooter's finger, and which releases the sear or hammer.

**TRIGGER GUARD**

Usually a circular or oval band of metal, horn, or plastic that goes around the trigger to provide both protection and safety in shooting circumstances.

**TRIGGER SAFETY**

A trigger assembly component which must be depressed or otherwise moved before the trigger can be pulled completely through to fire the weapon. Most often a pivoting blade in the center of a trigger which protrudes from the face of the trigger when it is engaged/"on" and automatically resets itself.

**TURRETS**

Cylinders on an optical sight's main tube which hold adjustment knobs or screws. A turret is dedicated to one of several functions: windage, elevation, parallax, reticle type, reticle illumination, or ranging.

**TWIST BARRELS**

A process in which a steel rod (called a mandrel) was wrapped with skelps - ribbons of iron. The skelps were then welded in a charcoal fire to form one piece of metal, after which the rod was driven out to be used again. The interior of the resulting tube then had to be laboriously bored out by hand to remove the roughness. Once polished, the outside was smoothed on big grinding wheels, usually turned by waterpower.

**UNDER-LEVER**

Action opening lever that is usually located below or in the trigger guard, can also be side pivoting from forearm.

**UNLOAD**

To remove all ammunition/cartridges from a firearm or magazine.

**UNSERVICEABLE FIREARM**

A firearm that is damaged and cannot be made functional in a minimal amount of time.

**UPPER ASSEMBLY**

For a semi-auto pistol this includes the barrel and slide assembly, for AR style rifles it includes the barrel, bolt and receiver housing.

**VARIABLE POWER OPTICAL SIGHT**

A optical sight with a multiple magnification levels, most common are 3-9 power general purpose scopes.

**VENTILATED**

Denotes a component with holes, slots, gaps, or other voids which reduce weight, promote cooling, have a structural purpose, or are decorative.

**VENTILATED RIB**

A sighting plane affixed along the length of a shotgun barrel with gaps or slots milled for cooling and lightweight handling.

**VERNIER**

Typically used in reference to a rear aperture (peep) sight. Usually upper tang mounted, and is adj. for elevation by means of a highly accurate finely threaded screw.

**VIERLING**

A German word designating a four-barrel gun.

**VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1994,  
PUBLIC LAW 103-322**

On September 13, 1994, Congress passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-322. Title IX, Subtitle A, Section 110105 of this Act generally made it unlawful to manufacture, transfer, and possess semiautomatic assault weapons (SAWs) and to transfer and possess large capacity ammunition feeding devices (LCAFDs). The law also required importers and manufacturers to place certain markings on SAWs and LCAFDs, designating they were for export or law enforcement/government use. Significantly, the law provided that it would expire 10 years from the date of enactment. Accordingly, effective 12:01 am on September 13, 2004, the provisions of the law ceased to apply and the following provisions of the regulations in Part 478 no longer apply:

- Section 478.11- Definitions of the terms “semiautomatic assault weapon” and “large capacity ammunition feeding device”
- Section 478.40- Entire section
- Section 478.40a- Entire section
- Section 478.57- Paragraphs (b) and (c)
- Section 478.92- Paragraph (a)(3) - [NOTE: Renumbered from paragraph (a)(2) to paragraph (a)(3) by TD ATF - 461 (66 FR 40596) on August 3, 2001]
- Section 478.92- Paragraph (c)
- Section 478.119- Entire section- [NOTE: An import permit is still needed pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act- see 27 CFR 447.41(a)]
- Section 478.132- Entire section
- Section 478.153- Entire section

NOTE: The references to “ammunition feeding device” in section 478.116 are not applicable on or after September 13, 2004.

NOTE: The references to “semiautomatic assault weapons” in section 478.171 are not applicable on or after September 13, 2004.

Information from BATFE Online - Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and Explosives an official site of the U.S. Department of Justice.

**WAD**

A shotgun shell component in front of the powder charge and has a cup or flat surface that the shot charge rests on. Various types of wads exist with the most common a column of plastic.

**WADCUTTER BULLET**

A lead target bullet for revolvers having a flat nose and a sharp outer edge or shoulder which will cut clean holes in paper targets to aid in spotting and scoring.

**WILDCAT CARTRIDGE**

An experimental or non-standard cartridge, not commercially manufactured, often using a standard cartridge case which has been significantly modified.

**WINDAGE**

The deflection of a projectile from its trajectory due to wind. Also, adjustment of a firearm’s sight(s) to compensate for the deflection.

**WEAVER-STYLE RAIL**

A mounting rail system similar in dimensions and use as the Picatinny Rail. Weaver-style grooves are .180” wide and do not always have consistent center-to-center widths. Most Weaver-style accessories will fit the Picatinny system however Picatinny accessories will not fit the Weaver-style system. Also see PICATINNY RAIL.

**WUNDHAMMER GRIP/SWELL**

Originally attributed to custom gunsmith Louis Wundhammer, it consists of a bulge on the right side of the pistol grip that ergonomically fills the palm of a right-handed shooter.

**YOKE**

See CRANE.

**YOUTH DIMENSIONS**

Usually refers to shorter stock dimensions and/or lighter weight enabling youth/women to shoot and carry a lighter, shorter firearm.

**ZERO**

The procedure of adjusting a firearm’s sight(s) so that the point of aim coincides with the bullet’s point of impact at a selected range.