

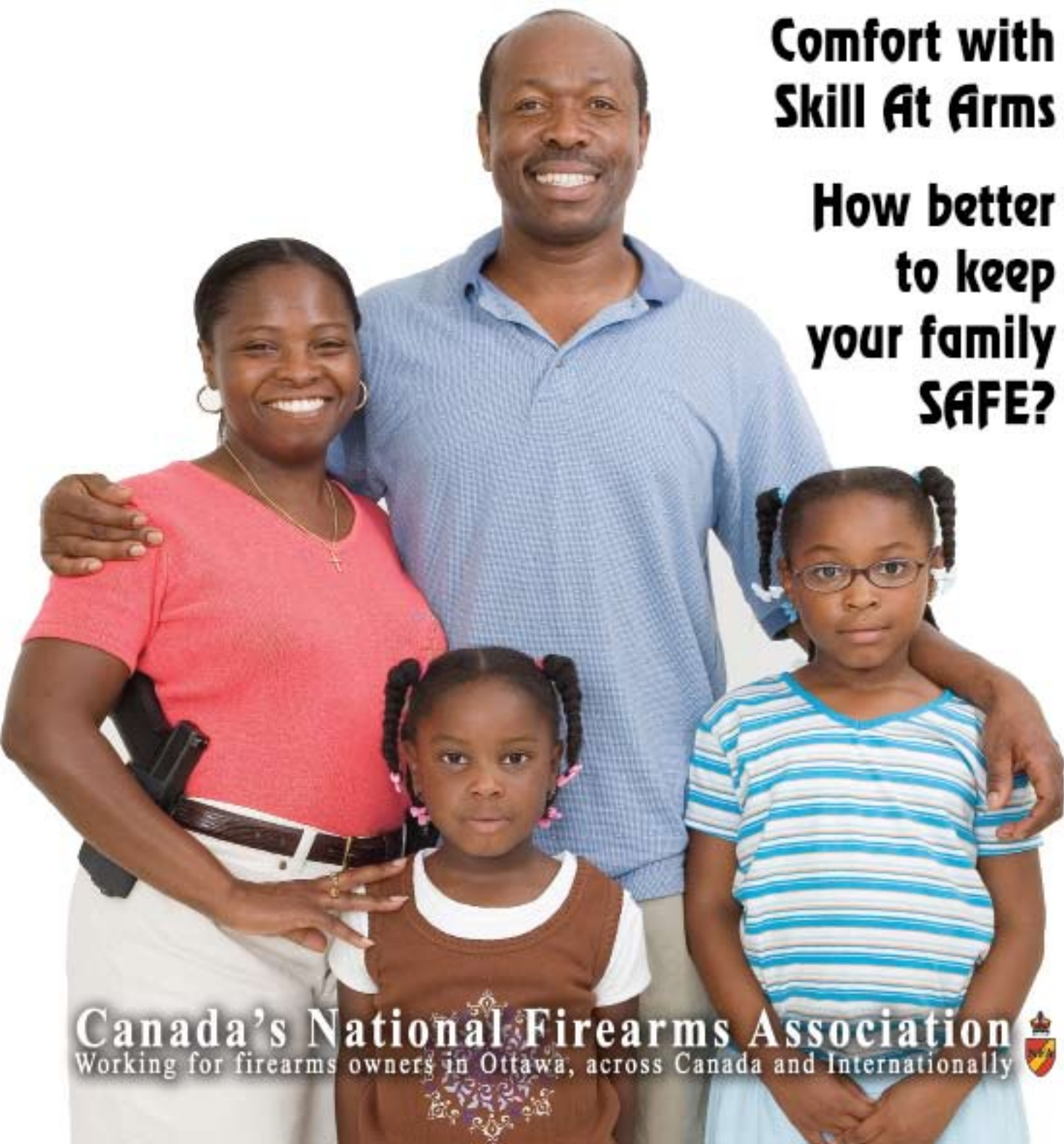
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CANADIAN FIREARMS JOURNAL

**Comfort with
Skill At Arms**

**How better
to keep
your family
SAFE?**



Canada's National Firearms Association 

Working for firearms owners in Ottawa, across Canada and Internationally



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

REGULARS



ON THE COVER

If this family was a role model, instead of gang-bangers from broken homes, Toronto would be a better and much safer city.

CAUTION!

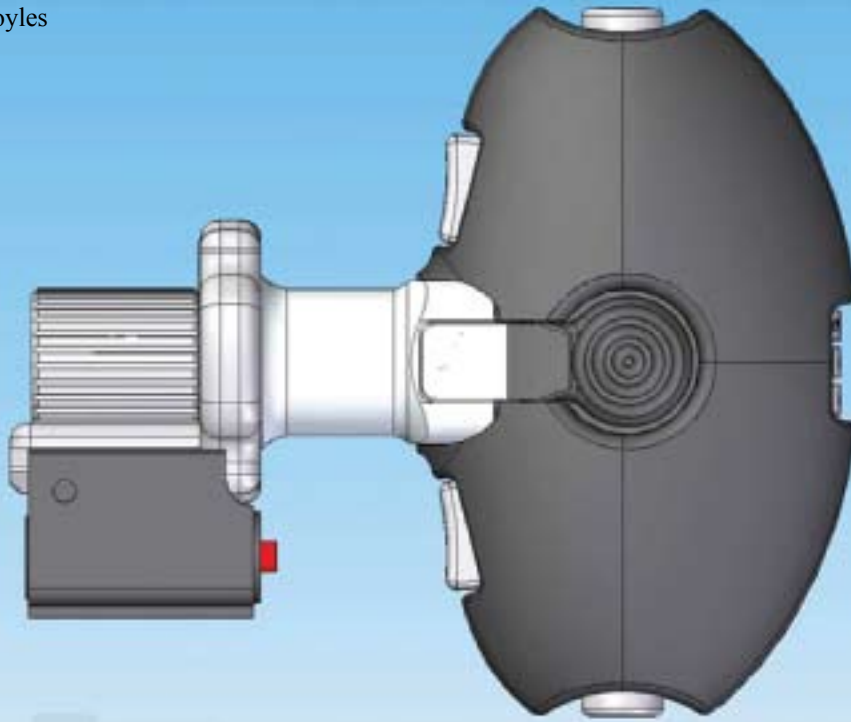
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Carolyn Boyles



“ERGONOMIC CONCEALED CARRY PISTOLS: *An Old Dog With Some New Tricks* AMERICAN PALM PISTOLS”

Smaller and smaller, that's the trend in America. First, it was transistor radios in the 1960s (for those of us old enough to remember). Then cell phones beginning in the early 1980s and into the 21st Century. Now it is ergonomic concealed carry pistols.



Right? Wrong. Ergonomic concealed carry pistols predate transistor radios and cell phones by a lot shot, if you'll pardon the pun.

This type of pistol is referred to as a squeezer pistol. It is not held in the same way as a regular pistol, which is fired by pulling a trigger with your index finger. Instead, it is held in the palm of the hand and fired by tightening the fist. It is also called a palm pistol or turret revolver.

An Iver Johnson catalog from around 1900 recommended this type of firearm for bicyclists' use. One has to wonder what type of danger these early bicyclists encountered that necessitated them to be armed other than dogs.

The first palm pistol was the Turbiaux Le Protector. It was originally patented in Paris by Jacques E. Turbiaux in 1882. Instead of the traditional revolver design as we know it today with a barrel, frame, cylinder, and grip/handle, the Turbiaux had a barrel, firing chamber, frame, and firing lever. Winant claims the Paris patent was filed in 1883.

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Instead of the barrel being above the hand as in modern pistols, the barrel sticks out from between the index and middle finger. The spring-loaded lever was fired by squeezing it with the palm of the hand. The pistol was produced



in two versions, a ten round with 6mm cartridges and a seven round with 8mm cartridges. The 8mm cartridges were the same cartridges that fit the Galois, a European manufacture squeezer.

The U.S. patent for the Turbiaux was filed in 1883 with an additional patent being filed by Peter H. Finnegan in 1893. Schwing and Cronhelm say Finnegan bought the patents in 1892 for production in the United States.

Keeping track of the changes in companies producing the successor to the Turbiaux is like trying to keep track of a teenage girl's boyfriends, not only because changes happened in a short period of time, but also because the information available is limited.

Three versions were produced in America, one by the Minneapolis Fire-Arms (also spelled Firearms) Company, one by the Chicago Firearms Company, and one by the Ames Sword Company. The Minneapolis Firearms version was identical to the Turbiaux and was made under license from the Turbiaux's patents. Sources disagree on the exact production dates. Cronhelm says the Minneapolis version was produced about 1890. Flayderman gives the dates as 1891 to 1892. They were manufactured by James Duckworth in Springfield, Massachusetts and sold by the Minneapolis Firearms Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The next incarnation of the pistol came when Peter Finnegan, a salesman,

began to manufacture his variation. The improvements Finnegan made to the the Turbiaux design included making the pistol slightly larger, making the safety function better, and making the sideplate more secure. The new gun was sturdier and more reliable.

At this point, the information begins to become sketchy. There is no doubt that the Ames Sword Company (also called the Ames Manufacturing Company) of Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts manufactured a version of this pistol. Flayderman does not list Ames in his book. However, the details are a source of disagreement among the different sources.

Schwing claims Finnegan was working on behalf of the Minneapolis Firearms Company when he contacted Ames for production of his version of the palm pistol. Cronhelm and Tomlinson do not mention any connection between Finnegan and the Minneapolis Firearms Company.

Either way, Finnegan and Ames entered into a contract for Ames to produce Finnegan's pistol. Schwing says the contract was for 25,000 pistols. The pistols were to be completed in time for the 1892 Chicago Columbian Exposition, more commonly called the Chicago World's Fair. Ames, whether intentionally or unintentionally, did not deliver the guns until after the World's Fair had closed, and even then, only delivered approximately 1,500 of them. Flayderman estimates the quantity produced at approximately 3,000.

Finnegan refused delivery and sued Ames. Finnegan filed for bankruptcy. Whether Finnegan as an individual filed for bankruptcy or the Minneapolis Firearms Company declared bankruptcy is unclear. Finnegan sued Ames for breach of contract. Finnegan was awarded a cash settlement. Ames

won the full patent rights for the pistol. Ames also won ownership of the pistols it actually manufactured. One source quotes the number of pistols at 13,000, which is contradictory to the number Schwing and Flayderman estimate were produced. Ames sold off the inventory until approximately 1917.

The Chicago Firearms Company of Chicago, Illinois made the final version of the pistol. Approximately 12,800 copies were made. This variation is also known as the Chicago Palm Pistol.

The ergonomic concealed carry pistol idea is not a thing of the past. Matt Carmel ("car-mél") of Constitution Arms in Maplewood, New Jersey has designed a modern variation called simply, The Palm Pistol®. It will be marketed as "an ergonomically novel self-defensive firearm for disabled, seniors and others who may have manual dexterity limitations or difficulty sighting and controlling a traditional revolver or semi-automatic."

The Palm Pistol shooter uses the thumb on either hand to release the firing pin, thus reducing lateral muzzle drift. The gun has a loaded chamber indicator and a built-in combination lock. A laser sight is also available. It is a 9mm weapon compared to the Turbiaux and the Ames variation which were built in either 6mm or 8mm, the Minneapolis Palm Pistol which was .32 caliber extra short, and the Chicago Palm Pistol, which was also .32 caliber extra short.

Firearms enthusiasts have a fascination with small, readily concealable pistols, which shows no signs of letting up into the Twenty-first Century. 🍷

Photo Credits:
The Ames Protector: Ron Ruble Enterprises
The Palm Pistol: Matt Carmel, Constitution Arms