



The Illustrated History of Firearms: In Association with the National Firearms Museum

Jim Supica, Doug Wicklund, Philip Schreier

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This significant tome, with over 1500 photographs, covers the subject of portable firearms from muskets to machineguns; from dueling pistols to Glocks; from derringers to elephant guns. Compiled by the expert staff of the NRA National Firearms Museum, whose hands-on knowledge and skill comes over in text and captions, The Illustrated History of Firearms provides a visual reference book to grace any aficionado's library. It is easy to forget just how long humans have used firearms: early cannons were first used in Europe in the 13th century and by around 1350, "hand cannons" or "hand gonnies" had been developed. From then on, handguns and firearms have steadily developed: by the early 1400s, matchlocks were introduced; in the early 1500s, the wheellock; flintlocks came in the late 16th century, then rifling, the percussion cap, repeaters, smokeless powders, auto-loaders, automatic firearms.

Today, firearms development continues apace. Handguns, and revolvers in particular, have seen the development of more and more powerful ammunition. New materials other than traditional blue steel and wood have seen the development of "plastic guns" like the Glock making use of synthetic materials which are more lightweight and less affected by environmental extremes. Options for aiming firearms have also expanded dramatically over the past 50 years. Electronic red dot sights, glow in-the-dark night sights, ultra-compact laser aiming systems, and even night vision scopes--systems that were hitherto the preserve of the police or armed forces--have been incorporated on firearms available to the public.

The main use of firearms has also changed over the years. While hunting, self-defense and military use still predominate, the sporting and recreational use of firearms is a significant worldwide factor in firearms ownership--in particular in the United States where the National Rifle Association has ensured that "...the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

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