

To: *Chad Workman* *Wash. 1st Academy*  
*the you are interested in*  
*The guy a Complainant*  
*about handgun on*  
*figured you better take*  
*a look at the letter I've*  
*sent some answers*

*Bob Sperling*  
*12/20/79*

The Washington Post  
1300 K STREET N.W. 205 KODG  
WASHINGTON D.C. 20005  
14 December 1979

EXHIBIT C

Dear Mr. McCawley:

To recapitulate the problems I described to you today by telephone re the Model 788 (which I am shipping separately):

1. The ejection angle is so high my cases foul the windage knob on the scope and bounce back into the action. Only by rotating the scope 180° (which makes the Bullet Drop Compensator useless) could I get satisfactory ejection, and the problem was the same with a couple of other low-power scopes. Since the point of the project was to set up a weapon for hunting at the short to medium ranges common in the East, I have no need for a long scope.
2. The bolt does not lock in the closed position, whether the safety is on or off. This cost me the best shot I have ever had on a deer; at some point something had brushed the bolt handle and opened it part-way without my noticing it. Perhaps I should have noticed it, but so far as I am aware no other modern large-caliber rifle has a nonlocking bolt.
3. By far the most serious problem—in my opinion an unforgivably deadly one—is that when the piece is held by the small of the stock and slung over the shoulder, a type of carry commonly used by myself and every other hunter I know, the fleshy part of the hand between thumb and forefinger presses against the safety and as often as not will move it to the fire position. The safety slips forward with very light pressure and little noise, and I was repeatedly dismayed to find myself unknowingly holding a piece that was ready to fire. I have unusually small hands; my ham-handed friends have found the problem even worse. And when I am wearing gloves the grip I have described will slip the safety nearly every time.

Compared to the trigger group problem on the Model 600 (which was my first choice for a piece I'm doing on a minimum-cost deer rifle) this is outrageously dangerous. I was amazed to hear you say no one else has ever complained of it. I can only hope that this is because everybody uses 788s for bench shooting. I would never take the piece into the field again, nor could I in good conscience sell it to another hunter. My good hunting buddy, who bought the same model at the same time so I could check my results against his, has put his 788

RECEIVED  
DECEMBER 1979

R. G. KIRK  
226 Sperling

[LON 0007927]

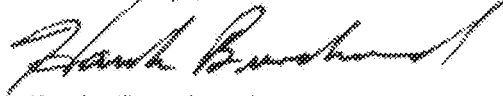
2/ 14 December 79

away for keeps. Because the load we selected is mild (2400 fps) he, like myself, cut his barrel down to improve the swing in brush; this makes the piece unattractive to bench shooters and he wouldn't sell it to anyone else.

All of the above is a damn shame, because otherwise the piece turned out to be what I had hoped: a tough weapon of moderate cost and high accuracy. It shoots  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " groups at 100 yards even though the barrel has not been glass-bedded; it handles nicely in the field (I have taken two deer with it, both one-shot kills); and it is tough. A friend of mine kicked it out of a pickup truck onto a paved road and then jumped on it without noticeably affecting its accuracy.

My kindly editor had scheduled my piece on the 788, but my field test was so disappointing—and alarming—that he now has reassigned it from the Outdoors to the Consumer section and wants me to write it yesterday. Please let me know as soon as possible what your Product Safety and R&D sections have to say about my fulminations.

Sincerely,



Hank Burchard

(202) 334-7243

N

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# The Washington Post

NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED DAILY  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20001

2 January 1980

Dear Mr. McCawley:

I haven't sent the piece because it is at a forensic lab for ballistics tests to establish that an old slug I found in a deer I killed didn't come from my weapon; the case is too complicated to summarize, but with any luck it will help nail a poacher they've been after for a long while at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Anyway, it finally occurred to me, you don't need the 788 anyway. All the problems I have described are common to mine, my friend's, and another one I borrowed from a dealer. Any short, low-power scope ought to demonstrate the ejection problem, and anyway, that is the least of my objections, since it is just an inconvenience, not a danger.

I am anxious to get Remington's response on the safety and the bolt.

Regards,

Hank Birchard

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JAN 07 1980

E. S. McCawley, JR.

1888 0035524

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*Remington.*

## REMINGTON ARMS COMPANY, INC.

SPORTING ARMS - AMMUNITION - TARGETS - TRAPS

BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06602

TELEPHONE  
203-333-1111

January 24, 1980

bcc: E. F. Barrett  
E. Hooton, Jr.  
J. G. Williams  
J. P. Glas  
R. A. Partnoy  
R. B. Sperling  
J. E. Preiser  
E. G. Larson

Mr. Hank Burchard  
THE WASHINGTON POST  
1150 15th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear Mr. Burchard:

Your letters of December 14, 1979, and January 2, 1980, described some problems you have had with one of our Model 788 rifles and asked for our comments. Our responses are listed in the order of your remarks in the December 14 letter.

- 1.) The difficulty you had with ejected cartridges hitting the windage knob does occur with some scopes. We know of no remedy for this other than to rotate the scope in the manner you described or to use a scope with which the problem does not happen. One recommendation is the Tasco 4X scope which we sell with these rifles as an option. It is described on Page 24 of the attached catalog.
- 2.) We know that the bolt does not lock in the closed position. Whether this is an advantage or a disadvantage can be argued, however. In our surveys of shooters we have found opinions divided. The main advantage is that the rifle may be unloaded without taking it off safe. The disadvantage, of course, is the problem you described.
- 3.) Your comments about the safety are essentially correct. However, we have had very few complaints about this and no reports of accidents. The low incidence of complaints may be due to the fact that the carry you described is a common one with shotguns but not that common with center fire rifles. However, as a result of your comments, our engineers are investigating ways of improving the design and location of the Model 788 safety. As a matter of information, we found that the same thing could happen on some bolt action rifles manufactured by other companies.

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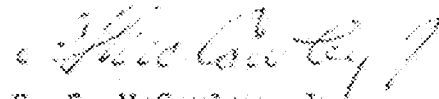
January 24, 1980

The problems you described in your letter reemphasize the need to remind hunters and shooters of the basic rules of safe gun handling. Of prime importance is to treat every gun as if it were loaded and ready to fire. Shooters should remember that the safety on any gun is a mechanical device that serves as part of a complete system of safe gun handling. It is not intended to serve, nor can it possibly serve, as a substitute for common sense or safe gun handling.

I am enclosing a copy of a new booklet on firearms safety which has just been published by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute which stresses this point along with nine other fundamental safety rules. We are now packing these booklets with all new guns we manufacture.

The booklet is the first step in a broad-based campaign being conducted by SAAMI on safe gun handling. It includes news releases, public service radio and TV spots and advertisements in major hunting, shooting and outdoor magazines.

Sincerely,



E. S. McCawley, Jr.  
Manager, Public Relations

ESM/s  
Encl.

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