

# What's for Sale

# 4

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the types of guns and other products that are available at gun shows. Details on the properties, use in crime, and lethality of particular firearms are available from many other sources.

## The Prominence of Assault Weapons

All types of guns are available at gun shows in large numbers. There are vendors who sell nothing but conventional hunting rifles, and others who sell only (or largely) conventional handguns. But while there are no systematic sales data, it is difficult to escape the impression that assault weapons, particularly civilian versions of AR and AK rifles, figure more prominently at gun shows than in gun commerce generally. Promoter Victor Bean of Southern Classic comments: “It used to be you might have had two AK-47s in the whole show and everybody considered them junk. You didn’t see many AR-15 rifles. The shows were really cool. You would see old World War II collectibles. Now it’s all gone to high-capacity handguns and military-style rifles.”<sup>1</sup> Bob Templeton of Crossroads has also noted a decline in guns of interest to true collectors.<sup>2</sup>

Table 4-1 presents details on the types of guns sold by two samples of gun sellers who have rented table space. Table 4-2 lists typical asking prices.



*This Las Vegas-area licensed retailer specializes in AR rifles.*

Table 4-1. Percentage of 272 gun sellers (licensed retailers and unlicensed vendors) who have specific types of firearms for sale at gun shows in California and in Arizona, Nevada, Texas, or Florida

Firearm Type	California (N=60)	Other States (N=212)
Antique or replica guns	35.0	18.9
Assault weapons	13.3	34.9
Automatic weapons	0.0	4.7
Handguns	75.0	85.9
Inexpensive handguns*	8.3	9.9
Assault pistols*	0.0	11.0
Long guns	95.0	93.4
Assault rifles†	14.0	36.9
AR rifles†	5.3	25.3
AK rifles†	0.0	13.1
SKS rifles†	8.8	9.6
.50 BMG rifles†	3.5	5.6

\* Percentages are of 227 handgun vendors. Inexpensive handguns were defined as those selling for \$200 or less. Assault pistols include, among others, MAC-type and TEC-type pistols and pistols based on AR and AK rifle designs.

† Percentages are of 255 long gun vendors. All assault weapons observed in California were of designs that are legal in that state.

From Wintemute GJ. Gun shows across a multistate American gun market: observational evidence of the effects of regulatory policies. *Injury Prevention* 2007;13:150-156.

The AR rifle was designed in the United States, and the great majority of those sold at gun shows are made here. AK rifles, which at one time were all imported, are increasingly manufactured in this country as well. One online sales site, AK-47.us, lists 16 separate American manufacturers. At gun shows, Joeken Firearms (pages 86-87), for example, sells AK rifles whose key components have been manufactured by Armory USA or its successor company, Elk River Tool and Die. (Web sites for both companies list the same Houston, Texas address and phone numbers.) Other licensed retailers also sell US-made AKs.

Manufacture in the United States of 9mm and .45-caliber assault pistols based on older Military Armament Company MAC 10 and MAC 11 designs has resumed. Joeken Firearms and

*It doesn't matter what body armor you wear. That round is going through the door, through the vest and right out the other side...It's just like a hot knife through butter.*

—ATF Special Agent Tom Mangan of Phoenix, Arizona, on the ammunition fired by an AK-47 rifle.<sup>3</sup>

*On the afternoon of Friday, June 5, 2009, police officer Sean Fleming of Chesapeake, Virginia, was shot four times by an assailant using an AK-47 rifle. Police believe that two of the bullets passed through the door of his Jeep and his body armor. He survived.<sup>4</sup>*

others sell MAC clones manufactured by Masterpiece Arms of Brazelton, Georgia.

Semiautomatic pistols based on the AR rifle began appearing in the late 1990s, and pistols based on the AK rifle are now made as well. They are legal in the United States. AR pistols are manufactured by companies such as Olympic Arms (Olympia, Washington) and Bushmaster Firearms (Wyndham, Maine). AK pistols are available from Horn's Custom Rifles (Flagstaff, Arizona; the company also sells as a retailer at gun shows), Joeken Firearms, and others. AR and AK pistols have key working parts that are very similar to those of the rifles, accept the same high-capacity magazines, and fire the same ammunition as the rifles do. They can weigh less than three pounds, unloaded, and some are just 17 inches long.

Colleagues at ATF in Southern California have indicated that these guns are now being put to use by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. A New Jersey sheriff had officers subject one such weapon to X-ray screening at Newark's Liberty International Airport. It looked like a curling iron.<sup>6</sup>

## **.50-Caliber Rifles**

Rifles in .50 BMG caliber (the initials stand for Browning machine gun) are the most powerful firearms on the civilian market. They are descendants of the heavy machine gun designed by John Browning during World War I, and the rifles are in use by the armed forces of many countries today. Guns sold in the U.S. are almost all made here. Many manufacturers produce them, the most prominent of which is Barrett Firearms of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Barrett made 4,479 rifles in 2007, the most recent year for which data are available.<sup>7</sup>

In 2002, a Canadian Forces sniper used a .50 BMG rifle to kill an enemy combatant from a distance of 2,430 meters<sup>8</sup>—just over a mile and a half, well beyond the distance from the west steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., to the base of the Washington Monument. A 1995 study for the Air Force concluded that the rifles posed a significant threat to aircraft.<sup>9</sup> They are now in use by drug trafficking organizations in Mexico.<sup>10, 11</sup>

These rifles are routinely available at large gun shows, often from several licensed retailers and occasionally from unlicensed vendors or individual attendees. Armor piercing and incendiary cartridges are available in addition to standard ball ammunition.

*Daddy, why do they make all the rifles black?*

*—A boy of about 10, contemplating a long row of AR rifles in West Palm Beach, Florida.*

*It looks cool. Why do people buy flashy cars? Because they look cool.*

*—Joe Cox, owner of Joeken Firearms, on the AK-47 rifle. His company manufactures these rifles and sells them at gun shows.<sup>5</sup>*

*Make it black and call it tactical. They'll buy it.*

*—Anonymous.*



*Attendee: Well, what do you hunt with it?*

*Licensed Retailer: People. To be perfectly honest, that's what it's made for. There's nothing else it's good for. It's for killing people.*

*—Conversation regarding this retailer's .50 BMG rifle (on display, but not for sale), Ventura, California.*

Table 4-2. Typical asking prices for guns available at gun shows

City	Gun Description	Price
Automatic Weapons		
Phoenix, AZ	Twin Colt .50 BMG machine guns, water cooled, mounted	\$155,000
Richmond, VA	AK-47, 7.62x39 mm, selective fire	\$14,500
Phoenix, AZ	Uzi carbine, 9mm, selective fire	\$10,500
Indianapolis, IN	MAC 10 .45 ACP machine pistol	\$4,700
Tucson, AZ	MAC 11 .380 machine pistol	\$3,500
Long Guns		
Atlanta, GA	Barrett .50 BMG, semiauto, new	\$6,995
Las Vegas, NV	Barrett .50 BMG, single shot, new	\$3,200
Cleveland, OH	Vulcan .50 BMG, bolt action	\$1,499
Phoenix, AZ	Uzi .45 carbine	\$2,495
Denver, CO	Colt AR-15, "pre ban"	\$1,500
Denver, CO	AK, "pre ban"	\$1,095
Jacksonville, FL	DPMS AR-15, 3 mags	\$975
Houston, TX	Olympic Arms AR	\$589
Jackson, MS	Kel-Tec .223 AR, 3 mags	\$499
Las Vegas, NV	Masterpiece Arms MAC 9mm carbine, new	\$475
Jacksonville, FL	AK-74	\$449.95
Phoenix, AZ	AK with bayonet, new	\$329
Reno, NV	SKS with bayonet, new	\$229
Dallas, TX	SKS, Yugoslavian	\$110
Phoenix, AZ	SKS, Yugoslavian	\$99.95; \$89.95 for 2 or more
Dayton, OH	Hi-Point .40 S&W carbine	\$170
Tucson, AZ	Hi-Point 9mm carbine	\$154
Dayton, OH	Mossberg 500 12 g shotgun, pistol grip	\$229.95; 219.95 for 2 or more

Table 4-2, continued.

City	Gun Description	Price
Handguns		
Waukesha, WI	Magnum Research Desert Eagle, .44 Mag	\$1,695
Reno, NV	FN Five-seveN, 5.7mm, 3 magazines	\$875
Las Vegas, NV	Vector Uzi, new	\$799 (9mm); \$849 (.45 ACP)
Cleveland, OH	Olympic Arms .223 AR pistol	\$799
Orlando, FL	AK-47 pistol	\$719.95
Kankakee, IL	AK-47 pistol	\$589
Phoenix, AZ	Heckler & Koch USP, .40 S&W	\$700
Dallas, TX	Beretta 92FS, 9mm, new	\$538.99
Jackson, MS	Springfield Armory XD, .40 S&W, new	\$529
Dallas, TX	Glock 30, .45 ACP, new	\$499.95
Harrisburg, PA	TEC 9, 9mm	\$499
Akron, OH	Kel-Tec .223 AR	\$470
Tampa, FL	Smith & Wesson 638, .38 Spc, new	\$369
Houston, TX	MAC 11, .380, new	\$365
Phoenix, AZ	Vulcan MAC 9, 9mm, new	\$269
Las Vegas, NV	TEC 22, .22 LR, pre-ban, new	\$250
Houston, TX	Taurus PT-22, .22 LR, new	\$184.99
Dallas, TX	Hi-Point .45 ACP, new	\$149.95
San Antonio, TX	Cobra 9mm, new	\$139.90
Phoenix, AZ	Jimenez 9mm, new	\$139
Phoenix, AZ	Hi-Point 9mm, new	\$139
Atlanta, GA	Jimenez .380, new	\$100
Atlanta, GA	Hi-Point .380, new	\$99
San Diego, CA	Jennings .22	\$60
Tucson, AZ	Raven .25 ACP	\$59.95

*Full auto machine guns made to order.*

*—Sign posted by Ironwood Manufacturing, Phoenix, Arizona.*

## Weapons Regulated by the National Firearms Act

In 1934, Congress imposed restrictions on commerce in machine guns, short-barreled shotguns and rifles, silencers, and other weapons and devices that were believed to pose an extreme risk to the public's safety. The National Firearms Act was in part a direct response to escalating gang violence and the prominence in that violence of the Thompson submachine gun, the assault weapon of its day.<sup>12</sup> A key provision of the Act was a \$200 tax on the transfer of regulated weapons and devices—a great deal of money in 1934. The intent “was to curtail, if not prohibit, transactions in NFA firearms.”<sup>13</sup> The tax was not indexed to inflation and has never been increased; adjusting for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index,<sup>14</sup> it would be about \$3,200 today.

These weapons and devices cannot legally be sold by unlicensed persons or ordinary licensed retailers; a special Class III license is required. Large gun shows will frequently have one or more Class III licensees on hand, and a Crossroads show held in Phoenix every December features these weapons. The displays draw a great deal of interest, but sales appear to be uncommon.

## Partially Finished Guns

Federal law allows unlicensed individuals to manufacture firearms that are not otherwise prohibited. These guns cannot legally be manufactured for resale, but there appears to be no statutory limit on the number that can be produced for personal use.

The hurdle to be overcome by a person who does not have access to manufacturing equipment is the production of the receiver—the central frame that houses many of the gun's moving parts. All the other parts for a complete gun can be purchased on the open market, at gun shows as elsewhere, and can be added to the receiver with simple tools. For that reason, finished receivers produced for sale have serial numbers, are regulated as if they were complete guns, and are bought and sold following the same procedures. At gun shows, finished receivers for AR rifles and pistols and AK rifles are most common. They generally sell for \$100 or a little more.

But partially finished receivers, known as “80% receivers” or “40% receivers” depending on their state of completion, are regulated no more strictly than are the raw blocks of metal from which they are made. They are sold for a wide variety of guns.



*Finished receivers for AR rifles, West Palm Beach, Florida.*



AR and AK rifle receivers are probably most in demand, but receivers for AR pistols and other handguns such as the Model 1911 pistol are also available. On the Internet, 80% AR receivers sell for \$100-\$150 and AK models for less than \$100. A licensed retailer at a show in Indianapolis had AR receivers available for \$75.

Partially finished receivers are not common at gun shows, but are discussed here as they may be attractive for buyers with criminal intent, especially drug trafficking and other criminal organizations that have the resources to employ gunsmiths. These partially-finished receivers can be used to produce finished firearms with only moderate expertise and relatively simple tools, and they carry no serial numbers. Guns made from them cannot be traced.

## Beyond Guns

Guns are consumer products, but they themselves are durable. Much of what is available at gun shows consists of the consumables that attend gun use. Ammunition, for example, is available at nearly every show from several vendors. It comes packaged in everything from 25-round boxes to 1000-round cases. Bulk sales are common, and vendors bring barrel trucks and carts so that customers can easily wheel several thousand rounds at a time to their vehicles. Some types of ammunition, such as antique or rare types and .50 BMG cartridges, can be bought as single rounds. The same is true for armor piercing and incendiary ammunition, which is available for both rifles and handguns in multiple calibers, including .50 BMG, for as little as \$2 per round.

Manufactured ammunition may cost more than cartridges that are produced at home from components purchased individually, and it is only available in the specifications that manufacturers choose to adopt. Shooters who have the time and expertise may choose to hand-load, as production at home is called. Many different gunpowders, cartridge cases, bullets, primers, and other components are usually sold at gun shows.

Gun parts, ammunition magazines, and accessories are ubiquitous. Much more is involved with them than replacing worn-out hardware, however. Upgrading factory components can improve a gun's performance, and gunsmiths who can install the upgrades are often on site. This seems to be particularly the case

*Build an AR-15 and save \$\$\$\$\$\$*

*—Sign posted by licensed retailer  
MAD DAWG Global Marketing,  
Tucson, Arizona.*

*Sometimes it's done in garage workshops. It's a fairly simple procedure if you know what you're doing.*

*—California Department of Justice source on converting assault weapons from semiautomatic to fully automatic.<sup>15</sup>*

for makes that are both popular and have cachet. One itinerant gunsmith at shows in the West calls himself the “Glock Doctor.”

Accessorizing reaches its extreme with assault rifles, and probably the AR rifle most of all. Replacement barrels, stocks, internal components, custom coatings, and a remarkable array of add-ons allow owners to trick out their rifles just as street-racers customize their cars. Launchers for 37mm smoke grenades and flares are common.

As a rough guide, ammunition magazines sell at prices starting around 50¢ per round of capacity or a little more; 30-round magazines for many weapons are sold for \$15 to \$20, for example. It is not uncommon to see purchases of many magazines at a time, and sellers offer volume discounts. There are exceptions to the price guideline: very high capacity magazines, particularly if well made, can sell for \$2 per round or more. The same is true for exotic items, such as drum magazines for the still-manufactured semiautomatic version of the Thompson submachine gun.

Body armor is widely available—at larger shows, in any case. Its sale is not regulated, although it is a felony for a person already convicted of a violent felony to possess body armor.<sup>16</sup> The buyers are almost entirely young men. Level II armor, designed to protect against 9mm and standard .357 handgun rounds,<sup>17</sup> sells for \$249 to \$399. Level IIIa armor, protective against .357 SIG and .44 Magnum rounds, sells for about \$400. One vendor who sells throughout the West routinely posts signs claiming, incorrectly, that sales will soon be banned.

A wide array of other merchandise is for sale. There are always knives, some of which have practical utility in hunting or for general use. Air guns, which are quite realistic, are popular with adults and children alike. Books on shooting technique, gun maintenance, military history, survival techniques, and similar subjects are sold by vendors who sometimes have hundreds of volumes on display. Some of these books detail the methods for converting conventional weapons, such as AR rifles and Glock pistols, into submachine guns. The weapons would be illegal, but the how-to books are not.

There are gun cases, clothing, binoculars and sighting scopes, collectible coins, toys, jewelry, and dolls. The last three are perhaps an inducement to bring the family and sometimes provide a *quid pro quo* for a Saturday at the gun show. Occasional vendors offer insurance, classes on shooting technique, or,

**SPECIAL NOTICE: BODY ARMOR  
WILL SOON BE BANNED.  
FEDERAL BAN ON SALE.**

*—Sign posted by a body armor  
vendor who was active at shows  
from San Francisco, California to  
Dallas, Texas.*

**CARRY A GUN, YOU NEED  
PREPAID LEGAL SERVICES.  
CARRY A GUN OUT OF STATE,  
YOU REALLY NEED PREPAID  
LEGAL SERVICES.**

*—Sign posted by a seller of  
insurance, Las Vegas, Nevada.*



in one California case, “24 hours of real world military training.” Classes to obtain concealed weapon permits are very popular; it is not uncommon to see more than 100 students in attendance. In more than 10 states, holders of concealed weapon permits are not required to undergo background checks when purchasing guns, even from licensed retailers.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Displays of conventional handguns (pages 172-173), both semiautomatic pistols and revolvers, range from hundreds of weapons at an anchor retailer to just a few at a small licensed retailer or unlicensed vendor. Many—probably most—of the guns are brand new, and they are often displayed with their boxes to prove it.

Inexpensive handguns (defined here as guns selling new for less than \$200; pages 174-175) are easy to find but are outnumbered by more expensive weapons. Many of them are pistols from the “Ring of Fire” manufacturers in Southern California, such as Bryco Arms, Lorcin Engineering, Davis Industries, and Raven Arms.<sup>18</sup> Their low cost makes them particularly accessible to young people; at a show in Tampa, Florida, a young man referred to the Bryco pistols on display as “starter guns.” Some of these guns are new, even though their manufacturers have been out of business for a decade. Nearly identical guns are now made by descendants of those companies, including Cobra Enterprises of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Jimenez Arms of Las Vegas, Nevada. The single largest producer of inexpensive handguns today is Hi-Point Firearms of Dayton, Ohio.

Some semiautomatic pistols based on the Colt 1911 design appear to have been manufactured with the Mexican market in mind (page 176). These guns are engraved with the Mexican flag or similar illustrations. Pistols in .38 caliber, one of the largest handgun calibers legally available to civilians in Mexico,<sup>19</sup> are most common.

The Fabrique Nationale FN Five-seveN pistol (page 177) has received increasing attention because of its use by drug trafficking organizations. The handgun and its ammunition are both new designs, developed specifically to penetrate body armor and helmets. This gun was seen only occasionally at gun shows, and only for sale by licensed retailers. One such retailer in Las Vegas, trying to sell the gun to two young male customers,

*I used to be a dealer, had an FFL and all that, and I'd get calls from people wanting to know if I'd sell them a Jennings and I'd say, "Well, what do you want it for?" "Well, I want to buy it for protection." And I'd say to them, "You know, if you want to buy it to just go to the range to shoot and have fun, I'll sell you ten of 'em. But if you're buying it for protection, you want to bet your life on 50 bucks? I wouldn't do that."*

*—An unlicensed vendor, Orlando, Florida.*

praised it as “a cop killer.” The gun is known as the *mata policia*—cop killer—in Mexico.

Conventional rifles and shotguns for traditional hunting and sporting purposes (pages 178-179) are always available, but this is never where the crowds gather. The buzz surrounds assault weapons and their accessories. An individual licensed retailer may have dozens of conventional long guns on display, and there will be hundreds spread across larger shows.

AR rifles (pages 180-181) are sold in many different configurations. Most AK rifles (pages 182-183) are military surplus weapons, typically from former Soviet bloc nations, but new U.S.-made guns are increasingly available. SKS rifles (pages 184-185), also generally military surplus and of an older design, can be bought for less than \$100.

Semiautomatic pistols based on AR and AK rifle designs (pages 186-189) became more common over the course of the field work for this report. They are now found at shows all over the country.

Assault pistols that fire handgun ammunition (pages 190-191) are frequently new guns manufactured on variants of the Military Armament Corporation (MAC) designs of the 1960s and 1970s; a wide variety of used guns can be found as well. The imported Uzi (page 192), whether configured as a pistol or as a carbine, is becoming hard to find. Whether manufactured in Israel (its country of origin) or elsewhere, it is more expensive than the domestic competition and may already have become principally a collector’s gun.

A relatively new and so far uncommon assault pistol, the Kel-Tec .223 (page 193) resembles the AR pistols in that it fires the same ammunition that AR rifles do. It costs half as much, however.

At larger shows, several vendors have .50-caliber rifles (pages 194-195) for sale. In most cases these are .50 BMG weapons. In California, where that caliber is banned by name, rifles in the ballistically identical .50 DTC caliber are sold instead. There were two instances, one each in Arizona and Indiana, of these rifles being sold by individual attendees. As the biggest, most powerful guns at the show in most cases, they generate lots of interest. They are expensive.

Guns subject to the provisions of the National Firearms Act are not uncommon, and a few retailers specialize in them. Selective fire and fully automatic weapons are available, as are

*My paint brush is an AK-47.*

*—License plate frame on a pickup truck in a gun show parking lot, Reno, Nevada.*

finished receivers for these guns and parts kits for converting semiautomatic weapons to “full auto” (pages 196-197). A few shows offer functional crew-served military weapons including heavy machine guns and antitank guns (page 198). For those not wishing to grapple with the requirements of the Act, there are semiautomatic versions of military machine guns to be found, along with Gatling guns and other exotica for aficionados (page 199).

Partially finished receivers (pages 200-201) may simply be flat pieces of steel, as for AK rifles or pistols, or unfinished castings or milled block, as for ARs. Plans to complete the receivers come with them, and plans to produce fully automatic guns are sometimes available from the same sellers (page 200, photo 4). Inexpensive military surplus “parts kits” (page 202)—actually selective-fire guns whose receivers have been destroyed—are often nearby. No license is required to sell or buy these items, and they are all available on the Internet.

Suppressors, also known as silencers (page 203), are sold both separately and together with the guns for which they are designed. One licensed retailer in Wisconsin (Chapter 2, page 89) offered two MAC-type submachine guns equipped with suppressors, as a “Full Auto Quiet Party Pack.”

Ammunition (pages 204-205) is sold both by specialty vendors and generalists, often in large quantities. Magazines to hold that ammunition (pages 206-207) are sold by specialists and others as well. The largest specialty vendors may display stacks of magazines holding 50 or more each and extending over several tables.

Sellers of new parts for upgrading, customizing, and repairing guns (pages 208-209) seem to do a particularly brisk business, as do sellers of body armor (pages 210-211) and relatively inexpensive items such as knives and swords (pages 212-213), airguns (pages 214-215), and books (pages 216-217).

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*Volume discount on Hi-Point 9mm carbines with extra magazines, Waukesha, Wisconsin.*





## Conventional Handguns

Semiautomatic pistols, revolvers, and derringers, both new and used, are widely available. Large licensed retailers may have hundreds on display; small unlicensed vendors may have just a few. The photographs were taken in Dallas, TX (1,2); Phoenix, AZ (3); Indianapolis, IN (4); Houston, TX (5); Reno, NV (6); Akron, OH (7,9); San Antonio, TX (8); Jackson, MS (10); and Richmond, VA (11).









## Inexpensive Handguns

Handguns selling for less than \$200 (sometimes less than \$100) are common. Most are made by California's "Ring of Fire" manufacturers or their descendants, such as Jimenez Arms and Cobra Enterprises. Ohio's Hi-Point Firearms is now the largest single producer of these guns. The photographs were taken in Jackson, MS (1,11); Phoenix, AZ (2); Tampa, FL (3); Dallas, TX (4); Denver, CO (5); Las Vegas, NV (6) (Note the discount for purchasing multiple guns.); Dayton, OH (7); Tucson, AZ (8); Indianapolis, IN (9); and Milwaukee, WI (10).









## Pistols for Mexico?

At shows near the border with Mexico, licensed retailers carry pistols based on the Colt 1911 design that are extensively tooled, gold plated, and decorated with matadors, eagles, and the flag of Mexico. Individual designs carry names such as La Mexicana, El Presidente, and El Jefe Supremo. Guns in .38 caliber are particularly popular. The guns sell for as much as \$2,000. The photographs were taken in Tucson, AZ (1,3) and Phoenix, AZ (2,4).



## The FN Herstal Five-seveN

This new Belgian handgun (1) fires 5.7x28mm ammunition designed to penetrate battlefield body armor and helmets. It has earned the nickname “mata policia” (cop killer) in Mexico. Both the gun (about \$1,000) and the ammunition (about 50¢ per round) are expensive. In Dallas, TX, a retailer displayed posters advertising a manufacturer’s incentive program: buy the gun, and the first 100 rounds are free.

In Las Vegas, NV, the licensed retailer in Photo 2 (the photo is from a different show) attempted to sell a Five-seveN to a young man who, as the retailer knew, had a criminal record; the background check posed a problem. The man appeared to have a bodyguard. The seller described himself as “one of the partners” in the business and as “an ex-cop.” The gun came with three 20-round magazines. Emphasizing its ability to shoot through body armor, the seller described the gun as “an assault weapon” and “a cop killer.”

The photographs were taken in Cleveland, OH (1) and Las Vegas, NV (2).





## Conventional Rifles and Shotguns

Traditional hunting rifles and shotguns are also widely available, and some sellers—including an occasional licensed retailer—display nothing else. These guns do not generate the attention or sales that handguns and assault weapons do. The photographs were taken in Atlanta, GA (1,4,8); Del Mar, CA (2,9); Reno, NV (3,7); and Denver, CO (5,6).









## AR Rifles

The semiautomatic, civilian version of the military's M-16 assault rifle may be the single most widely available firearm at gun shows. These guns are typically displayed in substantial numbers, as shown here; some vendors sell nothing else. Prices start at about \$800. There is a very active market in accessories that allow shooters to customize their guns. (The rifle in Photo 3, for example, is fitted with a scope and a 100-round magazine.) The photographs were taken in West Palm Beach, FL (1); Spokane, WA (2,3); Orlando, FL (4); Phoenix, AZ (5,9,10); Las Vegas, NV (6,11); Cleveland, OH (7); Denver, CO (8); and Kankakee, IL (12).









## AK Rifles

AK (Automat Kalashnikov) rifles, originally designed for the Russian military, are the most widely available firearms in the world. Civilian, semiautomatic versions are available at nearly all gun shows in many configurations and are often displayed in large numbers, as shown here. Most AK rifles are imported; these can sell for just over \$300. Several companies, including Joeken Firearms (pages 86-87) and Arsenal USA (3) have manufactured them in the United States. An active market in accessories resembles that for AR rifles. The photographs were taken in Denver, CO (1); Houston, TX (2); San Antonio, TX (3); Jackson, MS (4); Phoenix, AZ (5,6); Tampa, FL (7); Dayton, OH (8); and Spokane, WA (9).









## SKS Rifles

These rifles fire the same ammunition that AK-47 rifles use and can be modified to accept high-capacity ammunition magazines. They are among the least expensive firearms sold at gun shows, with prices as low as \$89 (11) and volume discounts. Most are imported military surplus weapons; many come fitted with bayonets. The rifle in Photo 6 is equipped with a grenade. The photographs were taken in Dallas, TX (1,6,8); Milwaukee, WI (2); Cleveland, OH (3,11); Ventura, CA (4); Del Mar, CA (5,7); Tampa, FL (9); and Dayton, OH (10).









1



2



3



4



5

## AR Pistols

Pistols based on the AR rifle are produced by several US manufacturers, including Bushmaster and Olympic Arms, and are available from multiple sources at most gun shows. They accept the same magazines and fire the same ammunition that the rifles do. The guns in Photos 3 and 4 and the gun at the rear in Photo 5 are fitted with 100-round magazines. The smallest in current production is 17 inches long (7,8); an earlier model of this gun was nearly 2 inches shorter. These pistols are less accurate than rifles, but they can easily be concealed (9). Prices range from \$800 to \$1,200. The photographs were taken in Indianapolis, IN (1); Tampa, FL (2); Jacksonville, FL (3,6); Atlanta, GA (4); Phoenix, AZ (5,9-11); Dallas, TX (7) (This gun comes with a “covert carry case.”); and Puyallup, WA (8).









## AK Pistols

These new pistols are more widely available than AR-based handguns and are less expensive, selling for as little as \$550. Some are produced in the United States by Joeken Firearms and Horn's Custom Rifles, among others. They fire the same ammunition and use the same magazines that AK-47 rifles do. The photographs were taken in Tucson, AZ (1); Las Vegas, NV (2); Kankakee, IL (3); Dallas, TX (4); Phoenix, AZ (5,7); Richmond, VA (6); and Spokane, WA (8-11). (The man in Photos 9-11 is trying out the gun in Photo 8.)









## Semiautomatic Assault Pistols

Pistols based on Military Armament Corporation (MAC) and TEC 9 designs are widely available. Some were manufactured before the assault weapons ban took effect, but several companies, such as MasterPiece Arms in Georgia, produce them now. Prices start at approximately \$350 for new guns, and 30-round magazines are typical. The photographs were taken in San Antonio, TX (1); Indianapolis, IN (2); Richmond, VA (3); Cleveland, OH (4,5); Jacksonville, FL (6); Phoenix, AZ (7,9); Dayton, OH (8); and Orlando, FL (10).









NOTICE:  
VECTOR ARMS HAS INFORMED  
US THAT THEY ARE NO  
LONGER TAKING ORDERS FOR  
THEIR UZI'S. THIS MEANS  
THAT AS OF NOW THEY ARE  
NO LONGER IN PRODUCTION!



## The UZI

The Uzi has largely been supplanted, but guns imported from Israel are still available, if not common. A version produced by Vector Arms of South Africa (3) was imported until approximately 2007 and sells for approximately \$850. The photographs were taken in Phoenix, AZ (1,3,4); Jacksonville, FL (2); and Tucson, AZ (5, with 2 semiautomatic Thompsons).



## Kel-Tec .223 Semiautomatic Pistol

This handgun, produced by Kel-Tec CNC Industries of Cocoa, FL, resembles the AR pistol; it fires the same ammunition and uses the same magazines that AR rifles do. Note the 100-round magazines in Photos 2 and 3. It is inexpensive, selling for just \$400. The photographs were taken in Phoenix, AZ (1); West Palm Beach, FL (2,3); and Richmond, VA (4).





## .50-Caliber Rifles

Rifles in .50 BMG caliber are sold by multiple vendors at large shows and are sometimes sold by individual attendees (4). They are extremely powerful; Photo 8 presents full-size images of .50 BMG, .22 LR, and 9mm cartridges. These guns are illegal in California, but essentially identical .50 DTC rifles (7) are not. The photographs were taken in Phoenix, AZ (1,2,4-6); Milwaukee, WI (3); Ventura, CA (7); Dayton, OH (9); and Tampa, FL (10).





.50 BMG



.22 LR



9mm







This selector switch has 3 positions: safe, semiautomatic, and automatic. The receivers in Photo 6 are similarly equipped (4 positions: safe, semiautomatic, burst, and automatic).

## Submachine Guns and Selective Fire Weapons

Automatic and selective fire weapons, finished receivers for such weapons (6) and conversion kits (7) can be purchased legally by anyone who is not prohibited from owning guns. The guns are expensive, and there is substantial paperwork. A \$200 tax was enacted in 1934 and had not increased since. The photographs were taken in Phoenix, AZ (1,2,4); Jackson, MS (3); Houston, TX (5); Tucson, AZ (6,7); and Richmond, VA (8).





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8





## Larger Military Weapons

Weapons such as .50-caliber machine guns, anti-tank guns, mortars, and flame throwers are sold each December in Phoenix, AZ, and are occasionally seen elsewhere. The Colt “twin fifties” on an anti-aircraft mount in Photo 1 were priced at \$155,000. The photographs were taken in Phoenix, AZ (1,3,4,5) and San Antonio, TX (2).





## Other Weapons

True machine guns are expensive, require paperwork, and can no longer legally be made for sale to the public. But semiautomatic versions of these weapons, such as the rifle version of the Model 1919 machine gun (1,3), can be sold like any other firearm. The same is true for modern Gatling guns, which use multiple barrels to achieve a high rate of fire (2,4,5). One of these (2) is being offered for private sale. The photographs were taken in Ventura, CA (1); Phoenix, AZ (2,4,5); and Las Vegas, NV (3).





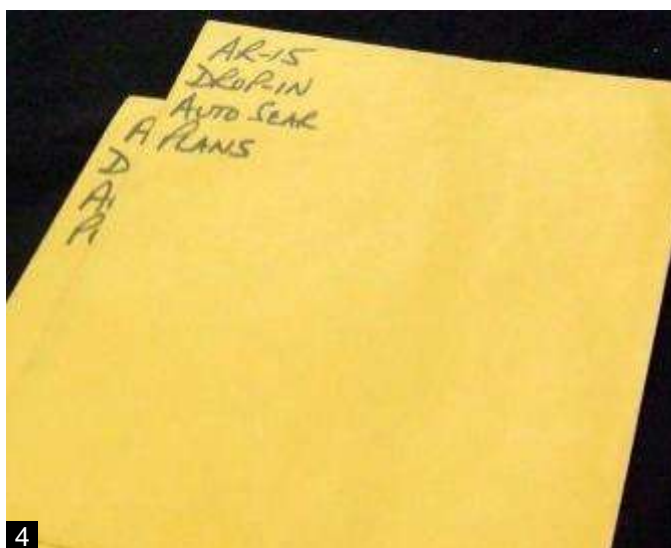
1



2



3



4

## Receivers for Assault Weapons, Indianapolis, Indiana

In Indianapolis, a vendor named Politically Incorrect “LEGAL” (for now, anyway) Shooting Supplies sells kits for partially finished receivers (described by them as 80% receivers) for AK and Sten assault weapons (1-3). At that same event, Superior Arms, which sells complete AR rifles (5), also sells both finished and partly finished AR receivers (6,7). The black receivers in Photos 6 and 7 are finished; a rifle receiver sells for \$100 and a pistol-only version for \$120. The silver receivers are 80% finished and sell for \$75. Photo 6 shows an unfinished receiver with some parts added.

As described in the text, a finished gun’s serial number goes on its frame or receiver, and “eighty-percenters” do not have serial numbers. A knowledgeable buyer with simple machine tools can produce a finished receiver from an eighty-percenter, buy the remaining parts, and produce an untraceable assault weapon. At Politically Incorrect (4), and from many other sources, he can also acquire plans to make that weapon fully automatic.







Cut-up military surplus assault weapons, often from Eastern Europe, are sold at low prices for their remaining parts. These can be used to assemble a complete weapon from a receiver. The photographs were taken in Denver, CO (1); Milwaukee, WI (2); Phoenix, AZ (3); Del Mar, CA (4); Indianapolis, IN (5); and San Francisco, CA (6).



1



2



3

## Suppressors

Suppressors, more commonly known as silencers, are uncommon. As with automatic weapons, retailers selling suppressors must have a special license and buyers must complete extra paperwork, pass a background check, and pay a \$200 tax. There are no legal private party sales. The photographs were taken in Tampa, FL (1); and Indianapolis, IN (2,3). See also the “Full Auto Quiet Party Pack” from Milwaukee, WI, on page 89.





## Ammunition

Ammunition is available in 25- to 50-round boxes and cases holding up to 1,000 rounds. Vendors supply barrel trucks and carts (2-4) for large purchases, and customers may leave with several thousand rounds at a time. Specialty ammunition, such as the Black Talon (5) and armor piercing rounds for AR and AK rifles and pistols (6) can be found. Cases of .50 BMG ammunition, from standard ball cartridges to armor piercing incendiary tracer (APIT) rounds, are common and may sell for less than \$2 a round. This ammunition is often sold linked (8,10,11) for use in machine guns and similarly fed semiautomatic weapons. The photographs were taken in Phoenix, AZ (1,5); Del Mar, CA (2,3); Reno, NV (4,9); Tampa, FL (6); Akron, OH (7,8); Indianapolis, IN (10); and Spokane, WA (11).









## Magazines

Standard and high-capacity magazines are frequently sold by specialists who have hundreds on display and sell nothing else. Prices start at about 50¢ per round but are higher for better-made models and drum magazines (8-11), which hold 50-100 rounds. The photographs were taken in Las Vegas, NV (1-3); Phoenix, AZ (4); Reno, NV (5-7,11); Jackson, MS (8); Kankakee, IL (9); and Dallas, TX (10).





4



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8



9



10



11





## Parts and Accessories for Assault Weapons

Owners of AR and AK rifles appear to be uniquely interested in customizing their guns. Upper receivers, special barrels, stocks, projectile launchers (7) and a wide array of add-ons are always available, and a few vendors specialize in these items. Persons building their own weapons around a receiver use these parts as well. The photographs were taken in Tucson, AZ (1,4,7); Las Vegas, NV (2); Phoenix, AZ (3); Indianapolis, IN (5); Dayton, OH (6); Del Mar, CA (8); and Houston, TX (9).









## Body Armor

Sales of body armor and Kevlar plates are unrestricted, vendors' signs to the contrary notwithstanding (14). One armor vendor (8-14), who sells nothing else, was observed throughout the West and as far east as Dallas, TX. The photographs were taken in Dayton, OH (1-3); Jackson, MS (4); Phoenix, AZ (5,6,9); Indianapolis, IN (7); Del Mar, CA (8,10); San Francisco, CA (11,13); Ventura, CA (12); and Las Vegas, NV (14).









## Knives and Swords

Hunting and utility knives are sold by multiple vendors at all shows; some are craftsman-made (3). Swords based on Japanese and European designs are widely available, as are inexpensive “fantasy” weapons. Throwing stars (11,12) are sometimes seen. The photographs were taken in Atlanta, GA (1,3); Tampa, FL (2,10); Dayton, OH (4); Phoenix, AZ (5); Las Vegas, NV (6); Del Mar, CA (7); Reno, NV (8); and Tucson, AZ (9,11,12).









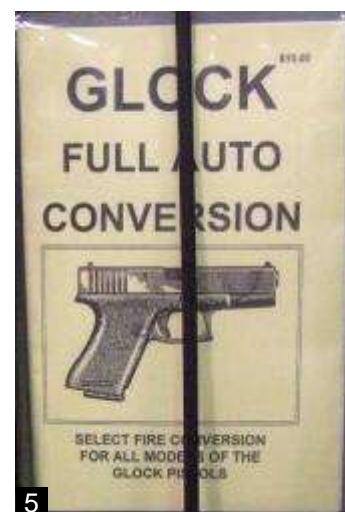
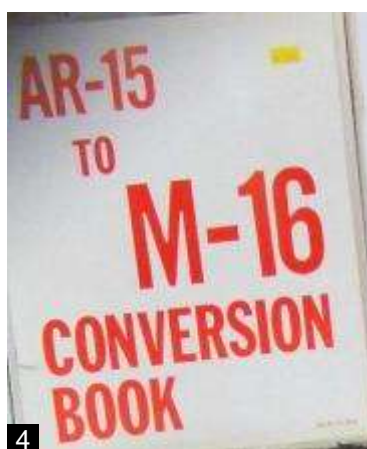
## Airguns

Airguns and airsoft guns, which fire low-velocity plastic pellets, are often realistic imitations of assault weapons. The only visible difference may be an orange barrel tip. These guns are of interest to adults as well as children. The photographs were taken in Indianapolis, IN (1); San Francisco, CA (2); Del Mar, CA (3,5); Denver, CO (4); Las Vegas, NV (6-8); Denver, CO (9,10); and Phoenix, AZ (11-13).









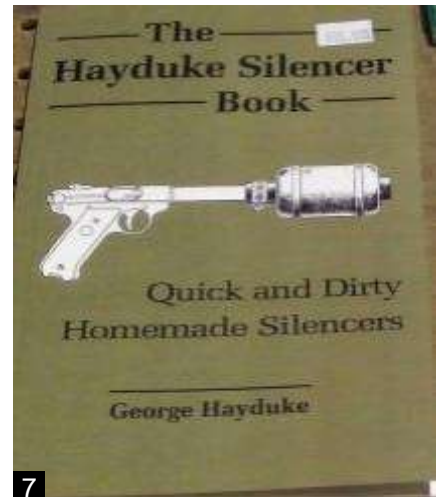
## Gun Books

Books are sold by vendors large and small. Technical books on specific guns, how-to manuals for maintenance and modification, and weapon-making references are very common. The photographs here are of manuals for converting conventional weapons into machine guns or selective fire weapons, for making silencers, for making and using explosive devices, and for shooting down an airplane. The photographs were taken in Del Mar, CA (1); Cleveland, OH (2); Akron, OH (3); Tucson, AZ (4); Tampa, FL (5); Richmond, VA (6); Phoenix, AZ (7); Spokane, WA (8); Orlando, FL (9); Milwaukee, WI (10,11,13), and Las Vegas, NV (12).

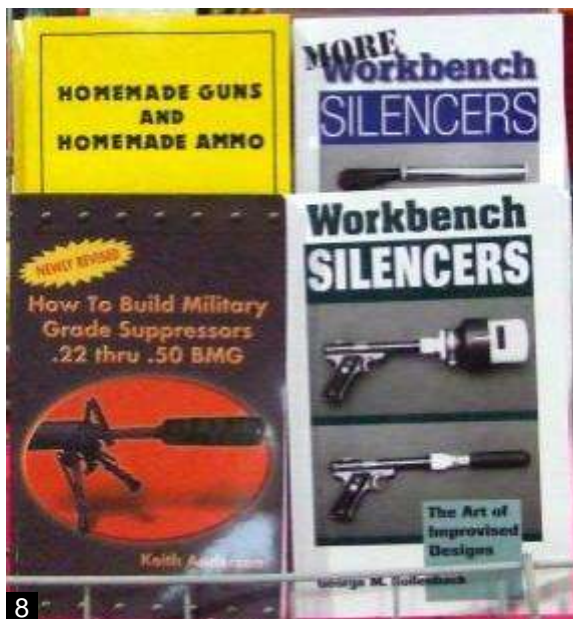




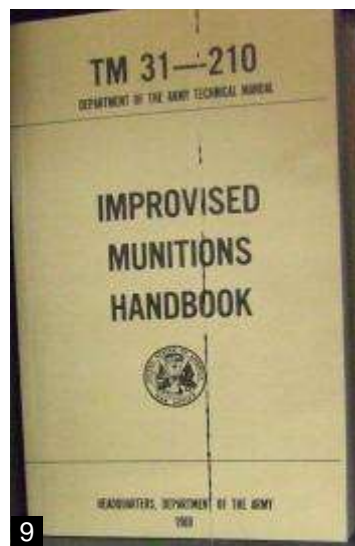
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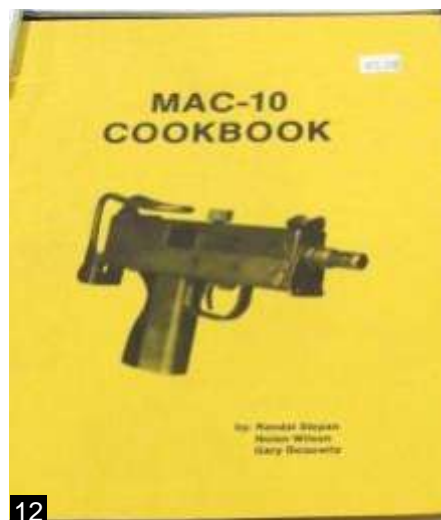
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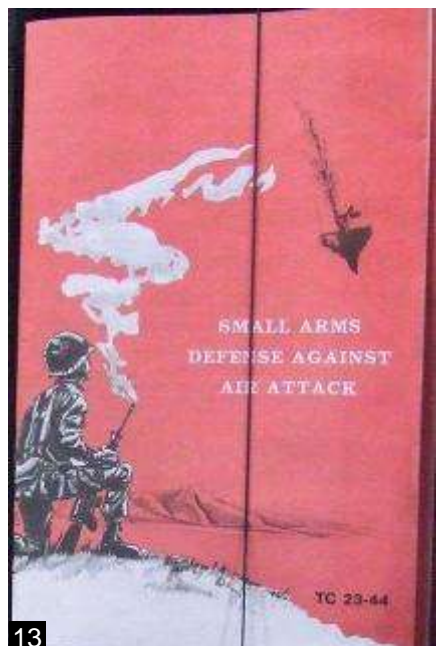
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11



12



13