A MESSAGE FROM VAL J. FORGETT III REGARDING 1903A3 RECEIVERS

There has been a fair amount of conjecture regarding the Gibbs 1903A4 rifle in regards to the origins of the receivers and the safety of these guns. I would like to address both of these issues directly.

First, Gibbs 1903A4’s are built from 1903A3 drill guns, of which we were able to obtain a large quantity of, that all have had the cutoff latches welded and a small spot-weld where the barrel meets the action. That being said, there has been tons of posts in many forums (and at gun shows, clubs, etc), about the safety and reliability of drill guns. Perhaps not many people know the background of the Forgetts and drill guns.

My late father got his start in the firearms business reactivating deactivated rifles and machineguns and converted thousands, if not tens of thousands of them, all done with the guidance of my grandfather. My grandfather worked for Airco, a large welding firm in the 1930’s, then founded his welding company, Service Welding, Co., just prior to World War II. During the war, he fabricated aircraft parts and tank bodies for the United States Government, as well as hundreds of flame throwers for the United States Marine Corps. He was also a welding instructor during World War II and trained hundreds of welders, among them, my father, who was also a certified professional welder. My father understood both firearms and metal hardness. He was a student of heat treat, hardness and the effects of heat on receivers.

Since the 1950’s, my father has reactivated tens of thousands of deactivated firearms, including Mausers, Enfields and, yes, 1903A3’s. I learned from him on this subject.

The issue that is of paramount importance is the hardness of the receiver. There is a myth that by applying any sort of heat, of any kind, to a receiver, will anneal it (soften) to a point where it is unsafe. The assumption made by many (falsely), is that when a rifle is turned into a drill gun, the cutoff lever is spot-welded into place, and the underside of the receiver where it meets the barrel is also spot-welded, thus softening the steel to a degree that would make the action unsafe.

The reality, based upon the reactivation of tens of thousands of firearms over 50 years, is that there is virtually no effect to the hardness of a receiver when deactivated in the manner that the 1903A3 rifles we utilize have been. We know this both from Rockwelling receivers, as well as what it takes to drill and tap them. In sum: **The receivers we use are identical in their Rockwell hardness levels to that of 1903A3 rifles that were not deactivated.**

In addition, we do not use reactivated bolts in our firearms, we use original, unissued 1903A3 bolts that were made by the United States Government during World War II.

We understand there has been much conjecture and myth regarding this subject and are hopeful that this information is helpful in putting these myths to rest.

Sincerely,

Val J. Forgett III