Violence Policy Center

Time Bomb

How the NRA Blocked the Regulation of Black and Smokeless Powder to the Benefit of Its Gun Industry "Corporate Partners" Today

April 2013

The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national non-profit educational organization that conducts research and public education on violence in America and provides information and analysis to policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the general public. This study was authored by VPC Legislative Director Kristen Rand and VPC Executive Director Josh Sugarmann. This study was funded with the support of the David Bohnett Foundation, The Herb Block Foundation, and The Joyce Foundation. A list highlighting select past VPC studies is listed below. For a complete list of VPC publications with document links, please visit http://www.vpc.org/studyndx.htm.

- *Firearm Justifiable Homicides and Non-Fatal Self-Defense Gun Use: An Analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation and National Crime Victimization Survey Data* (April 2013)
- *Lost Youth: A County-by-County Analysis of 2011 California Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24* (March 2013, annual study)
- *States With Higher Gun Ownership and Weak Gun Laws Lead Nation in Gun Death* (February 2013, annual study)
- *Black Homicide Victimization in the United States: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data (*January 2013, annual study)
- *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data* (September 2012, annual study)
- *Understanding the Smith & Wesson M&P15 Semiautomatic Assault Rifle Used in the Aurora, Colorado Mass Murder* (July 2012)
- *Gun Deaths Outpace Motor Vehicle Deaths in 10 States in 2009* (May 2012)
- *Bullet Buttons: The Gun Industry's Attack on California's Assault Weapons Ban* (May 2012)
- *American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States* (May 2012)
- *"Never Walk Alone"—How Concealed Carry Laws Boost Gun Industry Sales* (April 2012)
- *More Guns, More Shootings* (January 2012)
- *The Militarization of the U.S. Civilian Firearms Market* (June 2011)
- *A Shrinking Minority: The Continuing Decline of Gun Ownership in America* (April 2011)
- *Blood Money: How the Gun Industry Bankrolls the NRA* (April 2011)
- *Lessons Unlearned—The Gun Lobby and the Siren Song of Anti-Government Rhetoric* (April 2010)
- *Target: Law Enforcement—Assault Weapons in the News* (February 2010)
- *Indicted: Types of Firearms and Methods of Gun Trafficking from the United States to Mexico as Revealed in U.S. Court Documents* (April 2009)
- *Iron River: Gun Violence and Illegal Firearms Trafficking on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (March 2009)
- *Youth Gang Violence and Guns: Data Collection in California* (February 2009)
- *"Big Boomers"—Rifle Power Designed Into Handguns* (December 2008)
- *Clear and Present Danger: National Security Experts Warn About the Danger of Unrestricted Sales of 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles to Civilians* (July 2005)
- *The Threat Posed to Helicopters by 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles* (August 2004)
- *United States of Assault Weapons: Gunmakers Evading the Federal Assault Weapons Ban* (July 2004)
- *Vest Buster: The .500 Smith & Wesson Magnum—The Gun Industry's Latest Challenge to Law Enforcement Body Armor* (June 2004)
- *Bullet Hoses—Semiautomatic Assault Weapons: What Are They? What's So Bad About Them?* (May 2003)
- *"Officer Down"—Assault Weapons and the War on Law Enforcement* (May 2003)
- *License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime* (June 2002)
- *"A .22 for Christmas"—How the Gun Industry Designs and Markets Firearms for Children and Youth* (December 2001)
- *Unintended Consequences: Pro-Handgun Experts Prove That Handguns Are a Dangerous Choice For Self-Defense* (November 2001)
- *Voting from the Rooftops: How the Gun Industry Armed Osama bin Laden, Other Foreign and Domestic Terrorists, and Common Criminals with 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles* (October 2001)
- *Hispanics and Firearms Violence* (May 2001)
- *Where'd They Get Their Guns?—An Analysis of the Firearms Used in High-Profile Shootings, 1963 to 2001* (April 2001)
- *A Deadly Myth: Women, Handguns, and Self-Defense* (January 2001)
- *Handgun Licensing and Registration: What it Can and Cannot Do* (September 2000
- *Pocket Rockets: The Gun Industry's Sale of Increased Killing Power* (July 2000)
- *Guns For Felons: How the NRA Works to Rearm Criminals* (March 2000)
- *Cease Fire: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Firearms Violence* (Revised, October 1997)

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Introduction

On April 15, 2013, two bombs exploded at the finish line of the Boston Marathon killing three and injuring more than 200, many grievously. Within days, it was reported that the bombs were constructed of common kitchen pressure cookers containing shrapnel and explosive filler, most likely black or smokeless powder. The threat posed by black and smokeless powder in bomb-making is long known and well documented. A 1998 study by the National Research Council found that black and smokeless powder were the most common substances used in criminal bombings. The study stated, "Bombs that use black or smokeless powder cause a relatively small number of deaths and injuries, but their potential use in terrorist activity is important....[W]hen bombing incidents are acts of terrorism, the target is larger than the physical location of the explosion, since a goal is to induce panic or fear among the general population."[1]

In the weeks and months to come, elected officials will likely raise questions regarding the virtually unregulated sale of black and smokeless powder in the United States. The questions asked will not be new. Nor, unfortunately, is the grim context. In the early 1970s, the U.S. Congress recognized the need to more effectively regulate explosives in response to domestic terror bombings that had occurred across the nation. Efforts to fully address the issue by including the threat posed by black and smokeless powder were stymied, and subsequently federal regulation of black powder was even rolled back. This was primarily the result of the actions of an all-too-familiar lobbying organization: the National Rifle Association (NRA), which is largely responsible for exempting from federal explosives regulation the sale of quantities of black powder under 50 pounds and all smokeless powder for small arms ammunition. As detailed in *Section One* of this report, the NRA mounted two successful lobbying efforts in the 1970s to ensure that these common explosive materials are not subject to the federal regulations–including background checks–that apply to other explosives such as dynamite and plastic explosives.[2] Today, as detailed in *Section Two* of this report, many of the gun industry "corporate partners" that help fund the NRA, including its single largest corporate funder, benefit financially from the virtually unrestricted sale of these products.

Section One: How the NRA Blocked Efforts to Regulate Smokeless and Black Powder

Exempting Smokeless Powder and Small Quantities of Black Powder from Federal Explosives Law

In response to a wave of bombings throughout the country, in 1970 a White House Task Force on Explosives was formed that included representatives from the Departments of Justice and Treasury as well as other relevant agencies. Its primary purpose was to develop a bill to establish increased regulatory authority over the explosives industry and enhanced criminal

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[1] *Black and Smokeless Powders: Technologies for Finding Bombs and the Bomb Makers*, Committee on Smokeless and Black Powder, National Research Council (1998), p. 6.

[2] Federal law imposes licensing, permitting, storage, and inspection standards on persons who manufacture, transport, deal in, and receive explosives, 18 USC § 841 et seq.

penalties for the criminal use of explosives.[3] The original proposals resulting from the Task Force included smokeless powder and black powder within the purview of the proposed legislation.

Throughout this period, the NRA's *American Rifleman* magazine updated NRA members on the proposals. An article in the May 1970 issue questioned whether Congress was moving to "Register Smokeless Powder Buyers?," explaining: "New moves that would require handloaders who buy smokeless rifle and shotgun powders to register their purchases under Federal law were made in Congress in late March and April in explosives control bills introduced because of the wave of radical bombings and bomb threats."[4]

An accompanying article pondered "Is Smokeless Powder Really an 'Explosive'?," and observed: "Although smokeless powder can be provoked into exploding under extreme conditions, it is designed for use as a propellant in a limited way and not as an explosive." In a now-familiar exercise in false comparisons, the article stated:

> As a matter of fact and record, ordinary bread flour or coal dust suspended in particles in the air can cause a worse blast than slow-burning smokeless powder. In one eastern State recently, a man was killed by a blast when he threw fine particles of saw dust from a floor sander into an incinerator. A flash explosion ensued and caused the fatality.

By the next month, the magazine was warning its readers "Anti-Bomb Bills Pile Up in Congress," but assured members that Nixon Administration officials "indicated to the *American Rifleman* that they favored exempting small arms cartridges and shotgun shells from whatever explosives law may be enacted."

In July 1970, the NRA—joined by gun industry trade association the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF)—objected in Congressional testimony to including smokeless and black powder within the scope of proposed legislation. At a hearing before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, NRA President Woodson Scott argued that regulation of explosives exceeded the federal government's constitutional authority. In addition, Scott asserted that the proposed legislation "would be detrimental to a large number of the members of the National Rifle Association and many other persons in the United States who own and use firearms for lawful purposes." Scott pointed to difficulties the bill would place on NRA members who liked to reload their own ammunition in that it would "place unnecessary burdens on obtaining the necessary components for reloading ammunition for use in recreational purposes, security, and hunting. The restrictions and procedural requirements which would be imposed by this bill would serve no useful purpose." Presaging arguments that the NRA makes today against

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[3] Reynold Hoover, *National Issues: Learning from Oklahoma City: Federal and State Explosives Laws in the United States*, 5 Kan. J.L. & Pub. Pol'y 35 (1995).

[4] "Reloading" or "handloading" is the process of loading firearm cartridges or shotgun shells by assembling the individual components rather than purchasing pre-assembled, factory-loaded ammunition.

extending firearm background checks as well as other gun violence prevention measures, Scott asserted:

> The criminals would not comply with it and consequently the bill would accomplish nothing in the prevention or detection of crime. This is typical of all restrictive laws relating to firearms and ammunition...All experience with this type of legislation indicates that a bill of this nature would serve no useful purpose but the enforcement of it would annoy, harass and burden many millions of Americans who are good citizens and should not be subjected to the restrictions and procedural requirements of such a bill.[5]

The opposition of the NRA and other gun rights organizations "may have resulted in support from the Departments of Treasury and Justice for an amendment, providing for the lawful sporting uses of black powder and other ammunition."[6] The final bill contained an exemption for "small arms ammunition and components thereof" that applied to most smokeless powder as well an exemption for "black powder in quantities not to exceed five pounds."[7]

Expanding the Black Powder Exemption

Less than three years later, the NRA had apparently decided that the new law was too onerous. In June 1973, the *American Rifleman* listed efforts to "Exempt blackpowder from the license-permit requirement of the Federal explosives law" as an item "of primary legislative interest to gun owners."[8]

That same month, the Senate Judiciary Committee began hearings on S. 1083, a bill introduced by Indiana Senator Birch Bayh to exempt black powder from federal explosives law.[9] At the hearing, NRA President C.R. Gutermuth, complaining about a shortage of black powder, asserted that the current law's exemption only for quantities of less than five pounds inconvenienced gun owners who regularly used it. In support of his argument, Gutermuth offered the rationale that potential bomb-making materials that he felt were of a far greater

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[5] *Explosives Control*, Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 5, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 91st Cong., 332-333 (1970).

[6] Reynold Hoover, *National Issues: Learning from Oklahoma City: Federal and State Explosives Laws in the United States*, 5 Kan. J.L. & Pub. Pol'y 35 (1995).

[7] Pub. Law 91-452, 18 USC § 845 (a)(4), (5) (1970). Importers, manufacturers, and dealers engaged in the business of importing, manufacturing, or selling black powder or smokeless powder must possess an ATF explosives license. To be entitled to the smokeless powder exemption, the product must be designed for use with small arms ammunition. One must be 21 years of age to purchase black powder or smokeless powder.

[8] Also listed were: "Repeal of the Gun Control Act of 1968...Eliminate ammunition sales record keeping requirements from the Gun Control Act of 1968...Crack down on gun-carrying criminals."

[9] *Black Powder*, Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 93rd Congress (1973).

hazard than black powder—such as ammonium nitrate and fuel oil—were readily available and not covered by the law.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Department of Justice opposed S. 1083. ATF presented statistics to show that between July 1, 1971, and June 30, 1972, there were a total of 542 bombings reported to the agency and 100 of those contained black powder. During the period July 1, 1972 to May 31, 1973, there were 409 bombings reported to ATF. Of these, 79 used black powder. Based upon the frequency with which black powder was used in explosive devices, ATF Director Rex Davis concluded that enactment of S. 1083 would undermine the effective enforcement of federal explosives law by depriving the agency of the ability to take immediate action in those cases involving improper storage and possession of black powder intended for criminal purposes.[10] Director Davis also stated that exempting black powder would contravene the purpose of the federal explosives law and increase the hazard to persons and property arising from the misuse and unsafe or insecure storage of explosive materials. ATF failed "to see how black powder can be treated as an innocent substance by virtue of the intent of its possessor, which can only be known at the moment the substance itself is used."[11]

In the August 1973 *American Rifleman*, the NRA noted that at a Senate hearing two witnesses for the Nixon Administration who opposed S. 1083 were criticized by the NRA President "for taking a stand against sportsmen." The same article characterized the Bayh Bill as a "peace gesture" aimed at the NRA in anticipation of the Senator's upcoming reelection battle. Bayh had crossed the NRA by sponsoring a bill to ban "Saturday Night Special" handguns that passed the Senate in 1972 but was never acted on in the House.

The Committee passed an amendment to the bill limiting the exemption to quantities not exceeding 50 pounds. The final version was approved by Congress in December 1974 and was signed into law by President Ford on January 4, 1975.[12] A headline in the February 1975 *American Rifleman* bragged, "NRA Engineers Big Break for Blackpowder Shooters." The article stated, "In a major victory for the NRA and its supporters in Congress, both Houses passed an amended version of the Blackpowder Exemption Bill (S. 1083)...." The article noted, "The bill's passage climaxed many months of efforts by the NRA's Office of Legislative Affairs." Special praise was heaped on NRA lobbyist Richard Corrigan who, according to *Gun Week* (another pro-gun publication), "did a yeoman's job of drumming up support for S. 1083 in Congress and guiding it through to final passage."

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[10] *Black Powder*, Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 93rd Congress, 134, 135 (1973).

[11] *Black Powder*, Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 93rd Congress, 135 (1973).

[12] In April 1974, the NRA announced in the *American Rifleman* that it had registered as a lobbying organization after having taken the step of setting up a separate legislative fund.

Post 9-11 Update to Explosives Law Fails to Address Smokeless or Black Powder

Following the September 11th terror attacks, in 2002 the federal explosives law was updated by the "Safe Explosives Act" (SEA) which expanded the categories of persons prohibited from receiving or possessing explosives and extended the requirement for permits and background checks to the intrastate transfer of explosives. The SEA was part of the law creating the Department of Homeland Security which also transferred the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives from the Treasury Department to the Justice Department. It did not address the smokeless and black powder exemptions.

The danger posed by the exemptions for smokeless and black powder has been noted by experts. In a review of implementation of the "Safe Explosives Act," the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice identified "several issues related to the regulation and safeguarding of explosives in the United States that while not addressed in the SEA nonetheless are relevant to public safety." Among the issues identified was ATF's limited authority over smokeless and black powder. The report noted, "Because black powder is relatively inexpensive (between $5 and $15 per pound), it is the most common explosive used in pipe bombs. Additionally, the ATF does not regulate smokeless powder, a more expensive explosive used in the manufacturing of firearms ammunition."

ATF acknowledges the threat to public safety posed by the unregulated sale of black powder and smokeless powder. In a letter sent to Federal Firearms Licensees in July 2004, the agency wrote:

> As you may know, explosives are frequently used by terrorists to cause destruction. Some of the products you may carry in your inventory, such as black powder and smokeless powder, could be used in acts of violence. While smokeless powder and black powder generally are exempt from the Federal explosives laws, these products are often used to make illegal or "improvised explosives devices" and pipe bombs.

The letter included a flyer headlined "BE AWARE FOR AMERICA....." and set out tips to help dealers identify suspicious buyers (see next page for a copy of the flyer).

As Reynold Hoover, a former ATF agent and president of an explosives consulting firm, wrote in a 1995 article in the *Kansas Journal of Law & Public Policy* discussing smokeless and black powder, "Together, these two 'unregulated' bomb ingredients represent one of the greatest threats to the American public posed by bombers."

BE AWARE FOR AMERICA…..

All of us are concerned about the intentional, criminal misuse of explosives or firearms. We also believe we can play a role in preventing such abuse in the future. So, we're joining forces to help protect these products from falling into the hands of those with criminal intent. Here are a few steps you can take to help make the effort a success.

AWARENESS AND ACTION.
OUR MOST EFFECTIVE BLEND.

The first step to take is *protect your products*. Make your own place of business or residence a secure site for storage and distribution of explosive products and firearms. If you sell black powder a Federal license is required, but generally no record of distribution is required. Consider on a voluntary basis maintaining records of transactions including the individual's driver's license information. Smokeless powder generally requires no Federal license or permit, and there are no recordkeeping requirements. However, keep in mind smokeless powder is the explosives material most often used in pipe bombs and other explosive improvised devices. A few questions as to how the powder will be used may deter someone with ill-intent. Also, if you have a personal collection of firearms, or a personal use quantity of explosive materials secure these items in a safe manner. Maintain a record including serial numbers of all firearms you possess for purposes of reporting stolen firearms to law enforcement.

Now for step two – *know your customers*.

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL.

Nobody knows your customers or other hobbyists and their needs like you do. You can use this knowledge to help protect against the criminal misuse of explosive materials including smokeless powder. In your conversations you may be able to tell if something's not quite right with someone's request to obtain explosives – be it the quantity they ask for; their lack of knowledge of the products; or their impatient, nervous, agitated manner.

If something doesn't seem quite right, wait until the person has left. Jot down as much information as possible. Then call the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) at the toll-free number indicated below. Don't doubt your instincts or second guess yourself. If something gives you pause, in even a small way, call the number. ATF and local law enforcement agencies will conduct a discreet investigation right away. Any information you give will remain confidential, including your name and address. Your swift action just might protect lives, property, and our individual freedom

BECAUSE YOU CARE. STAY AWARE.

Look for these signs that something may be amiss.

- *Stranger* - Unfamiliar to area or to you.
- *Doesn't want product suggested* - Insists on taking specific product but has no knowledge of its use.
- *Hesitates/hedges when asked for information* - Name address, signature, photo ID, etc.
- *Acts nervous* - Avoids eye contact. Seems jittery, uneasy, vague.
- *Pays in cash* - Won't write a check or use credit. Has no account with you or other businesses in the area.

If someone seems out of place, jot down some notes on a piece of paper:

- ✓ *Note their physical appearance*
- ✓ *Note the make, model, and color of their vehicle*
- ✓ *Note the license plate number*
- ✓ *Save any paper on which they may have written a name or address; minimize handling to help preserve for fingerprints.*

Then make the call. **1 800 800 3855.** Be aware for America.

Section Two: NRA Gun Industry "Corporate Partners" That Today Benefit Financially from the Sale of Smokeless or Black Powder

Today, the NRA's longstanding efforts in opposition to the regulation of smokeless and black powder have paid off in direct financial benefits to its "corporate partners," including its top donor, Larry Potterfield of MidwayUSA and board member Pete Brownell of Brownells.

In a promotional brochure, NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre promises that the "National Rifle Association's newly expanded Corporate Partners Program is an opportunity for corporations to partner with the NRA....This program is geared toward your company's corporate interests."[13] A listing of NRA "corporate partners"[14] who benefit directly from the sale of smokeless or black powder follows.[15]

MidwayUSA

Larry Potterfield is the founder of MidwayUSA, the NRA's most generous "corporate partner." MidwayUSA stocks "[j]ust about everything for shooting, reloading, gunsmithing and hunting." As in prior years, MidwayUSA will be the "official sponsor" of the NRA Annual Meetings and Exhibits being held this year in Houston, Texas, beginning on May 3, 2013. Through the

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[13] *Blood Money: How the Gun Industry Bankrolls the NRA*, Violence Policy Center, April 2011, (http://www.vpc.org/studies/bloodmoney.pdf).

[14] NRA "corporate partner" contributors and dollar amounts taken from 2012 NRA materials and *Blood Money: How the Gun Industry Bankrolls the NRA* (http://www.vpc.org/studies/bloodmoney.pdf).

[15] NRA leaders and corporate partners also benefit from the sale of components that rely on the use of smokeless or black powder such as reloading equipment and accessories, bullets, and brass casings. For example, NRA Board Member Robert Nosler is the chairman and president of Nosler, Inc., which sells bullets for the handloading of ammunition. Nosler is also the past Vice Chairman of the NRA's Subcommittee on Corporate Outreach. "Corporate sponsorships and memberships" cited in his official NRA biography include: NRA Ring of Freedom, The NRA Foundation John A. Nosler Endowment, and the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Nosler Inc. has contributed between $250,000 and $499,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner." Hornady Manufacturing Company, headed by NRA Board Member Steve Hornady, sells a wide range of ammunition components and reloading equipment. A six-term board member as detailed in his official NRA biography, Hornady serves on the NRA's Task Force on Industry Relations Committee and The NRA Foundation Board. Hornady is also listed in the biography as the Co-Vice Chairman of the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Hornady Manufacturing Company has contributed between $25,000 and $49,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner." NRA Board Member Ronnie Barrett is the owner of Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, which manufactures primarily 50 caliber sniper rifles. In his official NRA biography, Barrett brags that he "[r]efused to sell firearms to California government agencies when the state banned the .50-caliber rifle." The "Ammunition & Reloading" section of Barrett's website sells brass casings and bullets. Barrett Firearms Manufacturing has contributed between $50,000 and $99,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner." "Corporate partner" Dillon Precision Products, Inc. sells a wide range of reloading equipment and has contributed between $500,000 and $999,000 to the NRA. "Corporate partner" Cheaper Than Dirt sells bullets, ammunition casings, and other reloading materials and has contributed between $100,000 and $249,000 to the NRA. Because they do not specifically sell smokeless or black powder, these NRA leaders and other "corporate partners," however, are not included in any of the listings detailed in the text of this study.

creation of its Round-Up Program,[16] MidwayUSA has channeled $8.4 million to the NRA as a "corporate partner." Additional Round-Up revenue from non-MidwayUSA corporate participants brings the total to $9.7 million. On its webpage MidwayUSA promises, "We send these donations to the NRA/ILA [the NRA Institute for Legislative Action, the organization's lobbying arm] National Endowment for the Protection of the 2nd Amendment. The NRA/ILA doesn't spend your money–they only spend the interest from it–so the Endowment continues to grow each year."

Brownells

NRA Board Member Pete Brownell is the owner of Brownells, the "world's largest supplier of firearms accessories and gunsmithing tools." On a campaign website developed as part of his successful effort to join the NRA's board, Brownell wrote: "Having [NRA] directors who intimately understand and work in leadership positions within the firearms industry ensures the NRA's focus is honed on the overall mission of the organization. These individuals bring a keen sense of the industry and of the bigger fight to the table." Brownells has contributed between $1 million and $4.9 million to the NRA as a "corporate partner."

The following are additional NRA gun industry "corporate partners" that sell smokeless or black powder and help fund the organization.

- **Cabela's**, which has contributed between $500,000 and $999,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."
- **Hodgdon Powder Company**, which has contributed between $250,000 and $499,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."
- **Natchez Shooters Supplies**, which has contributed between $250,000 and $499,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."
- **Graf & Sons, Inc**., which has contributed between $50,000 and $99,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."
- **Widener's Reloading and Shooting Supply**, **Inc**., which has contributed between $50,000 and $99,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."
- **Ellett Brothers**, which has contributed between $25,000 and 49,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."
- **Sinclair International**, **Inc**., which has contributed between $25,000 and 49,000 to the NRA as a "corporate partner."

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[16] The NRA Round-Up program allows buyers to "round-up" their purchase to the nearest dollar with the difference going to the NRA.

Conclusion

In the early 1970s, the National Rifle Association used its growing political influence to exempt smokeless and black powder from federal regulation despite clear evidence that these explosive materials presented a danger to public safety. These exemptions proved to be ticking time bombs that ultimately have contributed to growing concerns about terrorists accessing these substances and using them to inflict death, injury, and fear. The worst fears regarding the long-recognized destructive power of these mostly unregulated explosives was realized on April 15, 2013 at the Boston Marathon.