

One Year Later: Still No Firearms Laws

By LESLIE H. WHITTEN

Hearst Hearings Service Special to N. Y. Journal-American
WASHINGTON, Nov. 14.—Almost a year after President Kennedy was shot to death with a mail order rifle, there has not been a single law enacted by Federal, state, or major city governments to register or strictly control sale of firearms.

The anti-gun furore that followed the Nov. 22 assassination brought a flood of bills and proposals. There were 13 in one month in Congress, 35 in Massachusetts, others in Maryland, Virginia, Rhode Island, California and New York—and countless other jurisdictions down to townships.

The only measure even approaching importance was an ordinance by New York City's council barring transportation of rifles inside the city limits unless they are unloaded and cased. A handful of other communities required "waiting periods" to check records of gun buyers.

Hunters, collectors and other firearms fans consolidated into the powerful 650,000-member National Rifle Assn. have balked most of the proposals, and there is no doubt about the Association's claim that some of the anti-gun plans are "fantastic . . . out of this world."

But even the Association's own proposals have been ignored by the nation—severe penalties for crimes by armed men; firearm theft a felony in all cases; mandatory penalties for gun related-crimes.

STILL ADVERTISED

Mail-order gun ads such as the one that brought Lee Harvey Oswald and the fatal Manufacturer-Carcano 6.5 mm. rifle still crowd the pages of gun magazines.

"The National Rifleman" for November, ironically, has three advertisements for Manufacturer-Carcano, the one used to kill the President. All available manufacturers and factory representatives of shooting equip-

regarded magazine carries a full page advertisement for mail order guns by the firm from which Oswald bought his gun.

The major bill considered in Congress since the President's assassination is one by Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D.-Conn.) it would require a mail-order house to notify local police when a person buys a gun.

The bill—a watered down version of a previous Dodd proposal—died in the Senate Commerce Committee. Dodd will reintroduce it in January.

The bill, while short of the registration and permit requirements that some police seek, would at least let law enforcement men know who in the community is getting a gun by mail order.

THE OWNERS

At present, an estimated 30-400,000 people in the U. S. own guns.

On the state level Massachusetts—the late President's home—led the list in new proposals. But the 35 bills all failed, partially because support was disorganized and opposition was well-organized behind the National Rifle Association and related groups.

In California, the Assembly Interim Committee on Criminal Procedure is studying the gun problem and is to report back to the 1965 session.

The Rifle Assn. has circularized its members and clubs saying "this hearing could be of vital importance to you and to your right to keep guns! . . . dealers, distributors, manufacturers and factory representatives of shooting equip-

- Tolson _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- DeLoach _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Evans _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

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- The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star _____
- New York Herald Tribune _____
- New York Journal-American 177
- New York Mirror _____
- New York Daily News _____
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- People's World _____
- Date _____

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ment and accessories could be
greatly affected . . ." The as-
sociation urges a letter writing,
wiring and personal visit cam-
paign to all members of the
committee.

But the anti-gun camp—ut-
terly unorganized as it is—has
not given up. Only about 25 of
the 50 state legislatures met
this year, thus there are many
where the battle of gun laws
has not been joined. Some 47
out of the 50 meet in 1965 and

the NRA's highly efficient leg-
islative division is already as-
sembling ammunition.

Present federal laws require
registration of fully automatic
firearms and short-barreled
shotguns and rifles. They bar
interstate shipment of guns to
felons and keep pistols out of
the mails under most condi-
tions, but not out of common
carriers.

Abroad, Japan bars hand-
guns to all but police. Reg-

istration is required in Canada,
Great Britain, France, Italy,
Germany, Sweden, Belgium,
The Netherlands, Norway,
Denmark, Austria, Roumania,
Spain and Japan.

But in the U. S. Constitu-
tion—and in the constitutions
of 35 states—the peoples' right
to bear arms is guaranteed.
This has been a key argument
by the Rifle Association, and
to some extent by such groups
as the American Legion, the
National Wildlife Federation,
the Izaak Walton League and
others including weapons and
ammunition manufacturers.