

Evans and Novak

41 with Crime Records in Rifle Club Almost Bought Surplus Army Carbines

WASHINGTON—During four months last summer, 41 persons with concealed criminal records came within a hair of being permitted to buy \$20 surplus Army carbines solely because they were bona fide members of the National Rifle Assn.

The reason: among the many special privileges bestowed on NRA by the federal government is the right of its members to purchase surplus arms directly from the Army—a privilege denied to ordinary citizens.

Just how many weapons over the years this has put in the hands of criminals holding NRA cards is anybody's guess. But the criminal records of the 41 seeking Army carbines last summer were ferreted out by the Alcohol and Tax Division of the Internal Revenue Service, and they were sold no weapons.

In addition, during that same four months, 26 other members of the NRA were blocked from buying surplus weapons for other reasons.

Local police departments objected in 10 cases, nine were ruled out for "attempted fraud" in failing to give their proper addresses, four had an "alleged" membership in the Ku Klux Klan or "other extremist group," and three had a history of mental illnesses.

These statistics have been quietly slipped by the Army to two key Senate advocates of gun control legislation — Sens. Thomas Dodd of Connecticut and Joseph Tydings of Maryland. They provide valuable arguments against continued special treatment for the NRA's millions of members.

Under long-standing regulations, the Army refers NRA applicants for surplus guns for routine investigation by Internal Revenue's Alcohol and Tax Division.

Since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, however, the Army has imposed new limitations in an attempt to stop gun sales to misfits. NRA members now must belong to an elite marksmanship club. Of those, only applicants who have "an established marksmanship status" qualify.

Private polls taken by both Republicans and Democrats in Illinois point to a runaway victory of unprecedented proportions by Sen. Everett McKinley Dirksen against his Democratic foe — state Atty. Gen. William Clark, a virtually unknown party regular.

The polls give the 72-year-old Dirksen between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the vote



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against Clark. When his own poll gave Dirksen close to 80 per cent, a furious Clark exploded over the waste of campaign money for such information. Although nobody really expects Dirksen to wind up that strong on Nov. 5, the gap is so wide that Clark can scarcely hope to close it.

What's more, Dirksen's big win could carry in the rest of the state Republican ticket. Ironically, Mayor Richard J. Daley's organization, in selecting the slate, passed up more glamorous but less dependable possibilities such as state Treasurer Adali E. Stevenson III and Sargent Shriver to pick Clark.

A footnote: to bolster his strength among independent liberals, Clark had privately decided to endorse the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy sometime after the California primary June 5. This move had the blessing of Daley though it definitely did not connote any Kennedy commitment to Daley himself.

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A highly unusual letter from Rep. James O'Hara of Michigan, chairman of the liberal Democratic Study Group in the House, to DSG members last Wednesday bitterly upbraided them about their poor attendance on the floor the previous day.

In one amendment after another, House conservatives on Tuesday succeeded in whittling down the big housing bill—described by O'Hara in his letter as probably "the most important contribution toward meeting problems of poverty and the urban crisis that we will be able to make this year."

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