

The Bakersfield Californian

Muskets, long rifles and AR-15s

By: Ralph I. Robles – January 17, 2013

Norm Haughness wrote to accuse the NRA of being an instrument of the gun manufacturers, pushing sales of weapons ("Some perspective on the NRA's sacred mission," Jan. 10). He stated that they distorted the meaning of the Second Amendment. He stated that the Constitution permits ownership of "well-regulated guns."

Norm thinks that the founders did not envision the AR-15 of today. The Continental Army's long rifles were the AR-15s of their day. Their range was superior to that of the "Brown Bess" muskets used by the British soldiers.

These AR-15s are not "assault weapons." They are semi-automatic, unlike the military weapons that fire on full automatic. That they are military in appearance is used by detractors to frighten people not familiar with the various firearms. The Constitution clearly states that "the right ... to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." It does not mean that the arms will be limited to single-fire muskets.

Not so long ago, rioters were burning down homes and businesses in L.A.'s Koreatown. Law-abiding citizens were at the mercy of mobs intent on destruction. It was shop owners with shotguns and so-called assault rifles that stood up to the rioters and saved lives and homes. In that instance, it would not have been enough to take a stand with single-shot relics. States and cities with the strictest gun control laws have the highest number of homicides. Meanwhile, according to the Cato Institute, states and cities with the highest number of gun owners have the lowest crime rates.