



BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB
TRAILBLAZER
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TRAILBLAZER SPOTLIGHT

Trailblazers in Conservation represents a level of commitment from industry partners and others that support the mutual interests of science-informed wildlife management and conservation, and hunter ethics and advocacy.



HARNESSE COMPANY

By Tony Caligiuri

B&C Regular Member

President and CEO, Boyt Harness Company, L.L.C.

My uncles, who served with the First Marine Division and the Third and Fourth Raider Battalions, were combat marines who made the landings at Pelelieu, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Okinawa. On their transport ships to the Solomon's, they were pleasantly surprised to find much of the gear they were issued had been made at the bustling harness factory just a few blocks from their house.

For more than 100 years, sportsmen around the world have protected their firearms with gun cases made in the heart of the Midwest.

Boyt Harness Company, the hunting industry standard for firearm storage and transport, traces its beginnings to a family-owned regional harness shop in turn-of-the-century Iowa.

In 1885, a young Englishman named Walter Boyt set sail to America to find his calling in life. Meeting up with his brother John in Des Moines, the pair settled into the well worn workbenches of Des Moines Saddlery Company, learning the time-honored trade as saddle makers and leather workers.

Between long days of sorting hides, making patterns, tooling leather and then sewing it on massive, belt-driven machines, the Boyt brothers found time to travel back to England, enjoy the Iowa rural lifestyle and socialize in the many gathering places along Des Moines' Court Avenue district. But after a few years as employees of Des Moines Saddlery, the industrious Boyt brothers founded Boyt Harness Company in 1901. With his business-savvy wife Mary as vice president and his brother John as bookkeeper and trusted advisor, Walter's burgeoning enterprise primarily manufactured fine driving harnesses for buggies. However, the Great War in Europe took the company in a direction that would frame it for the next 100 years. The onset of World War I found the company building the first of many firearm accessories such as military pistol holsters for the new Colt 1911 .45 pistol, along with cavalry saddlebags and harnesses for artillery and transport horses.

In 1925, Walter Boyt decided to sell the company to John Boyt and his three sons, Joseph Walter, Arthur John, and Paul Alfred Boyt. This new generation of Boyt brothers continued the tradition of making harnesses, saddles, bridles, and tack for farmers and stockmen across the Midwest.

Struggling through the Great Depression and the dust bowl years,



U.S. Marines in World War II were issued more than a dozen items of combat gear manufactured at the Boyt plant in Des Moines, Iowa.

The Boyt Five Star canvas case, named for the five award stars that the company had been presented for their production efforts during the war years, was quickly heralded as the premier method of firearm storage of the times, a position that Boyt has maintained for almost 70 years.

Boyt Harness Company developed a reputation for quality and delivery second to none, and farmers across the country proudly tacked their draft teams in well-oiled Boyt harnesses and collars each morning. But the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor began another shift to production for the war effort. From 1941 through 1945, the Boyt Harness Company produced millions of pieces of equipment destined for American offensives in both the European and Pacific theaters as tens of thousands of teachers, farmers, office workers, and tradesmen were transformed into the largest standing fighting force in the nation's history. Some of those soldiers were local kids from the neighborhoods to the south and east of the factory, including the large Italian American community of Des Moines south side, directly across the river from Boyt.

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In fact, combat Marines were generally issued more than a dozen pieces of gear

that were produced by Boyt, including their backpacks, web belts, cartridge pouches and M-1 Garand slings. There was a saying in the factory that Japanese soldiers had never seen a Boyt backpack because United States Marines never retreated. At one point, war production required 2,800 workers, and Boyt became one of the largest manufacturing operations in Iowa.

After the war, Boyt shifted production back to saddles and harnesses, but the mechanization of America had put most of the work horses out to pasture. For the first time, sporting goods became a priority and gun cases, hunting vests, and cartridge bags began to make up the majority of production. The Boyt Five Star canvas case, named for the five award stars that the company had been presented for their production efforts during the war years, was quickly heralded as the premier method of firearm storage of the times, a position that Boyt has maintained for almost 70 years. Sadly, this period also marked the passing of the founders, both John and Walter Boyt.

Though gun cases and other sporting products were the main production focus, the company continued to make saddle and tack into the late 1950s, eventually selling the

MORE *Profit* OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU
WITH *Boyt* BECAUSE . . .

SALES POLICY

Boyt sells direct from factory to retailer, so there's a personal relationship that keeps us constantly in touch with your needs. No middleman stands between us . . . no middleman profit. When you handle the Boyt line, you sell with confidence. You'll find your dealings with us FAIR . . . SOUND . . . PROFITABLE.

QUALITY

Fifty-six years of building quality into our products has made Boyt the natural preference of sportsmen throughout the country. High standards of craftsmanship and materials lets us stand behind our products.

SALES PROMOTION

Another important plus with Boyt is sales promotion. Boyt's new national Public Relations program encompasses . . .

- Customer advertising in the favorite sports magazines . . . ads in magazines read by the cream of the sporting community.
- National all-media publicity campaign for Boyt products.
- Participation in product promotion at dealer level.
- Retail-merchandise that help you sell.
- Fine size advertising mats, auto-producing ads made-made for use in your local newspapers.
- Fine counter and point-of-purchase displays and signs.
- The best returns in the business to help you.

And special Gun Case Racks for best display

De Luxe DISPLAY RACK

Provides maximum display with minimum of floor space—best of floor space—also compact display for gun cases, accessories, cartridges, etc. (shown in black). American sporting signs will attract attention, double investment. Each rack of carrying pins, finished with wire enamel. Fitted rings hold cases, holsters.

Overall Height: 48 inches

\$25 VALUE ONLY \$8.50

Standard DISPLAY RACK

Conveniently carries up to 10 gun cases. Effectively displays all Boyt gun cases. Metal carrying pins, wire enamel. Fitted rings hold cases, holsters.

Overall Height: 48 inches

\$15 VALUE ONLY \$5.00

The profit from the sale of one gun case will pay for either rack, or order one today. Rack includes signs for maximum display. Really profitable with a sale of three. Under other store racks, no these display racks have more than doubled the sale of gun cases.

"You can sell quality when you display it!"

THE **BOYT** COMPANY . . . The Company that made gun cases a business . . . good business for you! THE BOYT CO., INC. DES MOINES 2, IOWA

business to Welsh Sporting Goods in 1963. The 1960s saw the company move its headquarters and production from Des Moines to Iowa Falls, Iowa, along with the creation of Boyt Luggage Company and an expansion into the growing soft-sided luggage market.

In 1996, a small group of investors purchased the sporting goods division from Welsh Sporting Goods and moved operations for all hunting and shooting products to an existing Boyt facility in Osceola, Iowa. Honoring the heritage of the company's history, the new venture became once again known as the Boyt Harness Company.

Building upon Boyt's dominance in the high-end gun case and accessory markets, the company began to acquire other top

Over the years, Boyt has built upon the success of the gun cases and has introduced several other brands involved in the hunting clothing, sporting dog products and firearm accessory fields.



sporting brands, starting with the acquisition of Bob Allen Sportswear in 1997. Bob Allen Company was founded towards the end of World War II in a parachute shop on the tiny Pacific atoll of Tinian. Bob Allen was a young, nationally known, clay target shooter before the war, who later parlayed his aerial gunner instructor duties into a combat assignment in the South Pacific. Bob's first product design was a long-billed cap that helped keep the sun out of bomber crews' eyes on their long flights to mainland Japan. Trading a ration of wartime scotch to the riggers in the parachute shop for each one of his prized hats, the Bob Allen Company was born. After the war, the hats found favor with shooters, and soon Bob was selling hats, shooting vests, pouches and bags from the trunk of his car as he traveled the shooting circuit.

Just a few of Bob Allen's "firsts" include opening the first retail store on the grounds of the Grand American Trapshoot, designing the first shooting vest and the first non-military camouflage pattern. Sadly, Bob was killed in a car accident in November 2004, but his legacy still lives on through the brand he started almost 70 years ago.

Other recent acquisitions have included the Rattlers and Bug Out brands of

protective clothing for the outdoorsman; Secure Vault, personal security and hand-gun storage systems; Mud River Dog Products; and the Outdoor Connection.

Mud River Dog Products builds innovative and high-quality accessories for dog training and the hunting world for puppies to full-grown dogs. Mud River has beds, bowls, collars, and everything in between to keep dogs happy, healthy, and hunting.

The Outdoor Connection, a longtime firearms accessory manufacturer, is based in Waco, Texas. The Outdoor Connection was founded by Floyd and Pat Hightower in 1983 and is best known for its line of slings, including the Original Super Sling and Padded Super Sling as well as sling swivels, including the Talon and Brute brands. More recently, the company expanded into gun cases, range bags and related accessories including tactical gear under the Max Ops brand.

In addition to growing sales through acquisitions, the core Boyt brand has continued to expand as well, entering the injection molded travel case market with the introduction of the Boyt H-Case series.

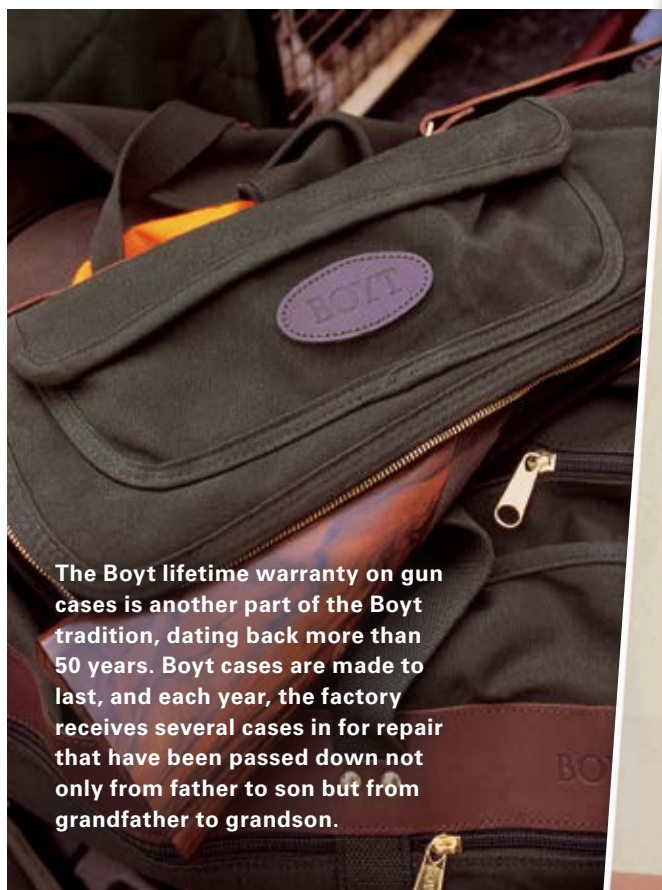
All of us at Boyt are avid hunters, and regardless of our positions, we all have input into new product ideas. Because hunting and travel often go hand in hand, we saw a need for a rugged, purpose-built travel case, which resulted in the concept and design of the

H-Case series. With more than a quarter million H-Cases in use around the world, the hard cases have now become just as important to the success of the company as the soft cases were during the last century.

The H-Cases feature high-density, easy-to-customize foam, a dust-and-waterproof O-ring seal, and a built-in pressure-relief valve that equalizes pressure on the inside of the case. Its stackable design makes storing multiple cases a space efficient snap. Larger models have heavy-duty in-line wheels for easy maneuvering. The case's most unique feature is the time-proven draw latches that keep the case closed and sealed tight under even the most extreme conditions. Each case features two padlock boss areas to facilitate secure travel and safety as well.

The Boyt lifetime warranty on gun cases is another part of the Boyt tradition, dating back more than 50 years. Boyt cases are made to last, and each year, the factory receives several cases in for repair that have been passed down not only from father to son but from grandfather to grandson.

Fully understanding that there would be no Boyt Harness Company, or any other hunting concerns for that matter, without the efforts of organizations like Boone and Crockett, Boyt is proud to be part of the first generation of Trailblazer sponsors! ■



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See a complete listing and find out more about Boone and Crockett Club's Trailblazers in Conservation online at www.Boone-Crockett.org