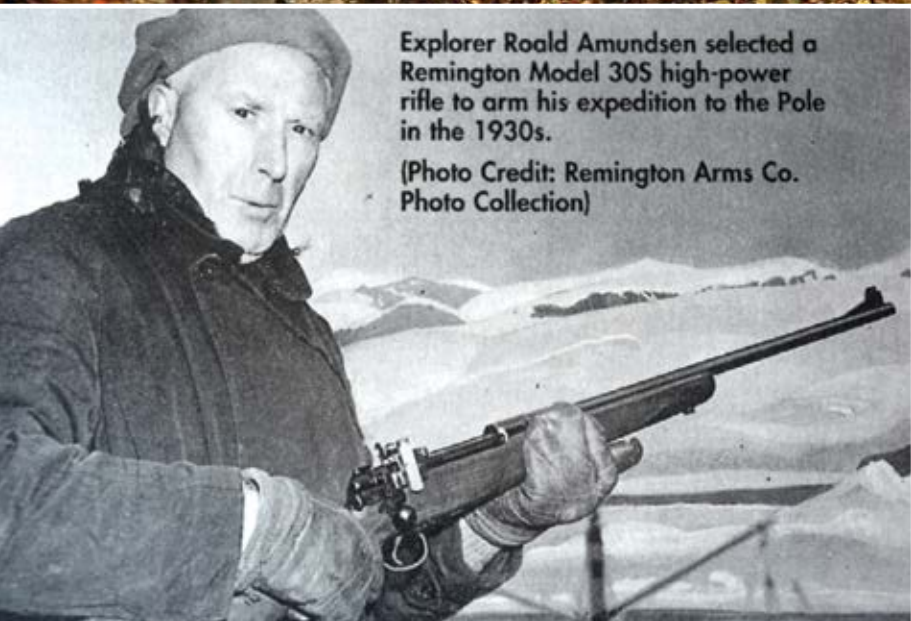


The 700.



Explorer Roald Amundsen selected a Remington Model 30S high-power rifle to arm his expedition to the Pole in the 1930s.

(Photo Credit: Remington Arms Co. Photo Collection)

Our oldest gunmaker, lies in pieces. Its signature bolt rifle, turning 60, is not yet a ghost.

Amundsen's 30S was an upgraded 30 Express. The 30S, in .30-06, 7x57 and .25 Remington, cost \$60.

Gone?

The desert faded to a tan haze under a white sky. The white dot afloat in mirage was brighter but very small. I'd followed it for a couple of hours, aware now it was keeping just out of range. Five hundred yards, give or take. Could he have seen me?

Of course he has, you dolt! Those big eyes are—what had I read?—eight times better than yours!

A rookie mistake. But I was young, with sound legs. Try again. Straightening, I turned and strode south, from whence I'd come. Two hundred yards. Three....At last, heat-shimmer erased the white dot.

I swung east, parallel but, I figured, behind. Afternoon's sun was hot on my neck and surely now bright in the eyes of my prey. Those big, dark eyes that missed nothing.

The next hour brought me up on his flank at around 400 yards. Belly to sand, arm pinched by the sling, I set the crosswire on his back, then nudged it higher and into the steady wash of mirage. Just above his nose it was, when the bullet left.

Mid-dash, the sound of the strike came back. He piled up dead, heart-shot.

My rifle that day was a Remington 722 in .244, under a 4x Lyman Challenger, firing a Remington factory load with a 90-grain softpoint.

Since that long-ago hunt, I've sent more bullets—in competition and at game—from Remington rifles than from any other maker's. So last September's news was dispiriting.

U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Clifton R. Jessup, Jr. of the Northern District of Alabama had just approved the sale of the non-Marlin assets of the Remington firearms business to Roundhill Group, LLC for \$13 million. The sale ended a 13-year struggle, following the purchase of America's oldest gunmaker by Cerberus Capital Management (later the Freedom Group). On July 27, 2020, Remington had filed for its second Chapter 11 bankruptcy in two years. The previous year, it had rung up \$437.5 million in sales, half the total of 2016. Remington hadn't turned a profit since 2018.

The dissolution of Remington included the \$81.4 million sale of Remington ammunition to Vista Outdoor, Inc. (Federal, CCI, Speer). It was the biggest slice of a \$155 million pie, proceeds of which will service



A Model 700 in .243, with GreyBull/Leupold sight, downed this pronghorn for Wayne at 320 yards.

Remington's debt. Other corporate orphans included Barnes, bought by Sierra Bullets for \$30.5 million, and Marlin, sold to Sturm, Ruger for a little less. Bushmaster, Harrington & Richardson, DPMS and other brands went to three other bidders. At this writing, 700 employees at Remington's storied Iliion, New York plant, and others at the Lenoir City, Tennessee pistol barrel factory and at the Dakota shop in Sturgis, South Dakota, are awaiting word. And work.

Jeff Edwards of Roundhill has roots in the shooting industry, notably at Easton. He has assured the faithful that the Group is "committed to keeping Iliion open."

Optimists speculate the Model 700 bolt rifle, with 870 pump and 11-87 shotguns and the R1 1911 pistol, will likely re-emerge first.

The 700's action may be the most copied in the sporting world. Rifles of other manufacture puff their "Model 700 footprint," meaning the tubular steel receiver and washer-style recoil lug, with the self-contained trigger and safety unit, will fit neatly into any stock made for the 700.

But the 700 action isn't cloned to suit bedding. It's strong, simple, all but fool-proof, and economical to produce—a proven star on the accuracy circuit, from Benchrest to long-range events.



Forerunner of the Model 700, Remington's 721/722 (short/long action) came in 1948. Here: a .30-06.



Instead of a forged recoil lug, the 721/722 had a washer-type lug secured between barrel and receiver.



The 721/722's recessed bolt head had a plunger ejector, a clip extractor in a circumferential groove.

It's easy to re-barrel and fit with after-market triggers.

Oddly enough, Remington struggled to develop a repeating rifle of any type. The end of the Civil War left Remington with canceled Army contracts and mortgaged machinery. Its focus shifted to hunters, and to a new breech-loading rifle. Joseph Rider's improvements yielded the Rolling Block. It saw service in the West as early as 1866, when a band of 30 cowboys led by Nelson Story trailed 3,000 cattle through Wyoming. Attacked by Sioux under Red Cloud and Crazy Horse, the cowboys were hard-pressed, firing their Rolling Blocks without pause, cooling hot barrels with canteen water. They repulsed that assault and two more, reaching Montana with the loss of just one man.

The Rolling Block proved as efficient as any Sharps in killing bison. "Brazos" Bob McRae once claimed 54 with as many shots from a .44-90-400. After an 1873 hunt George Custer credited his Rolling Block for helping him take "far more game than any other single party..." The next year, Rolling Block match rifles designed by L.L. Hepburn helped U.S. riflemen edge the champion Irish team at Wimbledon.

But the Rolling Block was ever a single-shot. By 1871 Paul and Wilhelm Mauser had sold their first successful bolt-action to the German government. A tube magazine was added in 1884, making the 11mm (43-caliber) Model 71/84 Germany's first repeating infantry rifle. Meanwhile, John M. Browning was developing the first of a series of

Remington has chambered its Model 700 for myriad cartridges, .17 to .375 and .416 magnums.



brilliant lever-action repeaters for Winchester.

Not that Remington dismissed repeaters. Early on, New Jersey inventor John Keene offered up a tube-fed, bolt-action .45-70. The Army rejected it as the company fell on hard times. Receivership in 1886 stalled other efforts. The 1885 Remington-Lee Navy Box Magazine Rifle failed too. Hartley and Graham, which owned Union Metallic Cartridge, bought E. Remington & Sons, the two businesses becoming one corporation in 1916.

Five years later Remington fielded the Model 30, derived from the 1917 Enfield it had produced on contract during WWI. Heavy and costly, the 30 didn't sell. In 1926 it was replaced by the 30 Express, which cocked on opening. A slender stock and 22-inch barrel held weight to 7-1/4 pounds. The 30 Express gave way in 1941 to the 720 High Power Rifle, designed by Oliver Loomis and A.H. Lowe. After a run of only 4,000 Model 720s, Remington focused on building 1903 and 03A3 Springfield for the war effort.

Instead of producing more 720s at war's end, Remington asked engineers

Merle "Mike" Walker and Homer Young for a more economical bolt-action. The Model 721/722 (long and short action) joined the Remington stable in '48. A separate recoil lug was clamped between the tubular receiver and a barrel shoulder. Stamped bottom metal, a ring-clip extractor and a self-contained trigger group pared costs. The twin-lug bolt head was brazed to the bolt body. A plunger ejector enabled Remington to tout "three rings of steel" around the case head. The 721 in .270 and .30-06 cost \$79.95, the 722 in .257 Roberts and .300 Savage \$5 less. In 1949 a .300 H&H Magnum 721 arrived, at \$89.95. Other chamberings followed. ADL and BDL designations replaced the initial "A" and "B" grades.

Remington designers Wayne Leek and Charlie Campbell collaborated on the Model 725, trotted out in 1958. It had the 721/722 receiver but a hinged floorplate, checkered walnut and hooded front and adjustable rear sights. Remington's Custom Shop offered a Kodiak Model 725 in .375 and .458 Magnum. It weighed 9 pounds with its 26-inch barrel and integral brake. Just 52 of these rifles shipped.

Four years later Remington announced the Model 700. Essentially the 721/722 with an upgraded walnut stock, it also had a trim tang and a swept bolt with checkered knob. Mike Walker gave the 700 fast lock time (3.2 milliseconds), tight bore and chamber tolerances and a short leade.

The 700 action came from superior stock. A Benchrest competitor, Walker had designed accuracy into the 721/722. In 1962 rifles on Model 722 actions earned three of the top nine placings in the National Bench Rest Shooters Association championships (counting the best three scores in Sporter, Light Varmint and Heavy Varmint Classes). Remington's target-rifle counterpart, the 40x, accounted for three more.

Early 700s came in two action lengths and two grades. Barrels wore iron sights. Stocks were of walnut, press-checkered. In .222, .222 Magnum, .243, 6mm, .270, .280, .308 and .30-06, the ADL with its blind magazine sold for \$114.95. The BDL featured a hinged floorplate and cost \$139.95. The 700 got a big boost from the concurrent introduction of Remington's 7mm Magnum cartridge. Wyoming

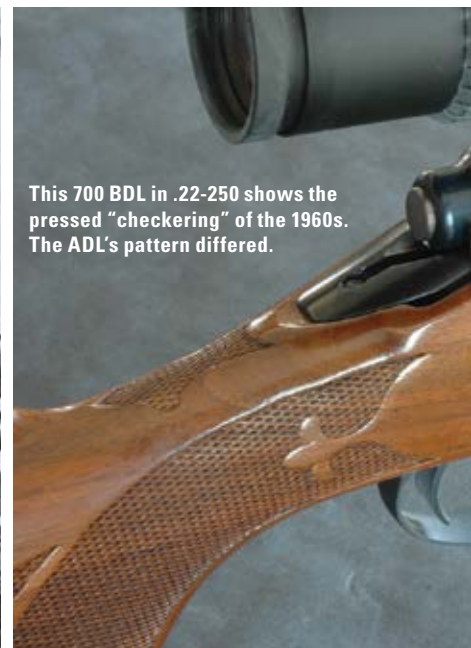
outfitter Les Bowman helped develop and promote it. Another magnum on the charter roster: Winchester's similar but less ably promoted .264. Model 700s with braked 26-inch barrels in .375 H&H and .458 Winchester Magnum (really leftover 725 Kodiaks) cost \$310, same as Winchester M70 "Africans".

Since its 1962 debut, Model 700 rifles have appeared in myriad forms, with carbon and stainless steel, even titanium components. Walnut stocks have moved aside for those of polymer and carbon-fiber and other synthetics. Machine-cut checkering has replaced stamped panels on walnut. Chamberings have multiplied, from .17 Remington to .416 Remington Magnum and .375 Ultra Mag.

The Custom Shop has added options too. The 700-X in my rack is a CS rifle with "blue-printed" receiver, Badger-knobbed bolt, M16-style extractor, twin ejectors. The 5 1/2-contour Shilen barrel bored to 7mm Remington Magnum has 1-in-8 rifling for long-range bullets. Fitted with a Swarovski Z8 3.5-28x50 scope, it claps soccer-ball-size steel at 800 yards with mind-numbing regularity. Before the judge gaveled



Engineer and Benchrest shooter Merle "Mike" Walker designed accuracy into the 721/722 and 700.



This 700 BDL in .22-250 shows the pressed "checkering" of the 1960s. The ADL's pattern differed.

Remington into fragments, word was that production-line 700s were slated for several 700-X features.

Not that the 700 is extinct. Though news on Remington's future under Roundhill is hard to mine at this writing, there are rumblings that manufacturing may resume soon, in Ilion and Sturgis. Meanwhile this historic bolt-action appears, with tweaks, in rifles from other shops like H-S Precision.

In 1978 Tom Houghton founded a company to build accurate rifles. By 1991, a year after moving from Arizona to South Dakota, H-S Precision had plans to make all main components—lock, stock and barrel—in-house. Actions had the footprint and many features of Remington's 700. They wore cut-rifled barrels, stocks of carbon fiber, fiberglass and Kevlar. The 15,000-square-foot plant soon tripled in size, as H-S Precision became one of the first

companies to guarantee half-minute accuracy.

Last fall, 25 years after my first H-S tour, I stopped in Rapid City for an update. Tom's daughter Tricia is still active in the business. With long-time H-S representative Josh Cluff, she showed me a fresh series of long-range rifles. Their receivers are machined from thick-wall tubing, like all Remington 700s.

Many rifles have adopted the 700's washer-style recoil lug and its recessed bolt face. Springfield Armory's new Waypoint has a 700 receiver footprint, as do Stiller's Predator V and the Gunwerks GRB. The heart of each Ashbury Saber M700 Tactical rifle is a Remington 700 action. Scott Harrold, whose Quarter Minute Magnums actually do shoot that tight, has built them on this foundation too. The action's clean profile lends itself to sleek hunting stocks of exquisite walnut. The long

version accommodates full-length magnum rounds like the .375 H&H.

While the 700's beryllium bolt-face extractor has been shunned by controlled-feed purists, it is a functional claw, with more case contact than some "M16" or "Sako-style" extractors. After more than 50 years firing 700s, some with frothy handloads, I've yet to see a Remington-built bolt rifle fail to extract.

My 700s include an early 7mm Magnum. Rifle buffs without one, I'm assured, need counseling. There's a .22-250 once used by friend and fellow prone competitor Dick Nelson, who worked weekdays for Boeing on lunar vehicles. Of Model

700 rifles, I like the Classic best and should have bought a few before production dwindled to one chambering per year, then stopped altogether. I'm also sweet on the Model 78, a frill-less 700 with a blind magazine and unchecked hardwood, produced from 1984 till '89. I've barreled Model 78 actions to wildcat rounds, .25 Super and .270 Redding to .35 Whelen Improved.

Recently Shaw Barrels (formerly E.R. Shaw) chambered a stainless medium-sporter barrel for me in 6mm Creedmoor and fitted it to a 700 short action. I turned to Boyds, in South Dakota, for a stock from its huge selection of finished and unfinished maple and walnut. After



H-S Precision builds fine rifles of Model 700 profile. Here: steps in machining a tubular receiver.

This 700-style rifle is H-S Precision, "lock, stock and barrel." Accuracy? A half-minute guarantee!

detailing and a finish of spar varnish and boiled linseed oil, the maple stock I chose was fetching indeed. It mated to the 700 action with no additional inletting: a drop-in fit. Under a 2.5-8x36 Leupold, it drills 3/4-inch groups.

When that action left Iliion, Remington had short months remaining to produce rifles in a factory built on a 100-acre tract Eliphalet Remington had bought for \$2,800 from John and Nancy Clapsaddle in 1828. I had no idea it would be the last 700 from the Remington I'd grown up with—the Remington that had built my first shotgun and the .22 match rifle that earned me a state title.

It won't be my last 700. The machinery at Iliion may rumble to life again. Until then, the second-hand market is flush with Remington bolt rifles. Finding a 700 at the 1962 price of \$114.95 will be hard, but I'm okay with spending more. A gallon of gasoline cost 22 cents in 1962, and I still drive. Besides, a good rifle is a good investment. By any measure, a 700 is a good rifle. ■

Wayne's most recent Remington: a short-action 700 with Shaw barrel, a maple stock from Boyds.



Green Before it was Chic

The color of Remington logos and packaging gave the firm its “Big Green” moniker. As did 12-bore shotshells (with yellow 20-gauge to avoid mix-ups). “Green” as a political agenda could hardly have been imagined when in May, 1956, Remington Arms bought a 2,970-acre Chestertown, Maryland estate 90 minutes from Washington D.C. It included a brick manor house dating to 1708 and named Broadknox. Renovations had begun in 1940, when the property was purchased by Glenn L. Martin of Martin Marietta Corporation. He'd restored the exterior of Broadknox using bricks from the Chestertown Brick Company. Remington would tend and develop the estate, with support from DuPont, its largest shareholder.

Four months later Remington hired Dr. Joe Linduska, former chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Game Management Branch, to manage the property as Remington Farms. Besides meetings and seminars at Broadknox, the Farms would host studies in wildlife conservation and restoration, especially as they related to land in agriculture. Over the decades Remington Farms would add acreage and become a showcase of what hunters' dollars, through the Pittman-Robertson Act and other means, could achieve.

“It was a magical place,” recalls Art Wheaton, “a waterfowl paradise that grew to include wildlife habitat beyond wetlands.” Art had joined Remington nine years after it acquired the land. By 1990, as VP of Marketing and Sales, he'd become responsible for the management of Remington Farms. “Broadknox oozed history,” he says. “Remington

worked hard to share that history, and what the site and accumulated furnishings represented: field sport traditions and wildlife bounty grown and maintained by hunters.”

A shiny public image can boost sales and encourage customer loyalty. But Remington invested in projects that had little to do with immediate profits, to show hunting as an experience with many parts besides killing. Those other hard-to-articulate elements informed its corporate culture and its advertising. The company “walked the walk” as it promoted ethical hunting and science-based wildlife management.

Wheaton oversaw production of Remington's calendars, whose paintings by Tom Beecham and Bob Kuhn celebrated wildlife, adventure and conservation. “Those calendars were an important extension of our business,” he says. “They defined Remington as a partner afield, not just a gun-maker. Images of wild creatures and places, of ‘moments of truth’ shared with family and friends told stories hard to write.”

A Remington-sponsored film, *A Question of Hunting*, shepherded by Director of Advertising, Jack Mitchell, and produced by Larry Madison, spot-lit the key role of hunters in wildlife conservation. It was very well received in public showings as well as in industry seminars. “Meanwhile,” adds Wheaton, “Remington supported with annual stipends and board representation three groups vital to wildlife and hunting: the Wildlife Management Institute, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute.”

When Remington sold in 1993, the DuPont family kept the Farm out of sales agreements. Now Chesapeake Farms, it maintains a conservation focus, with self-guided tours that continue Remington's mission to enlighten the public on wildlife management. Broadknox still evokes the spirit of earlier times. The severed ties to Remington, however, are palpable. Key “Remington Farms” on the Internet, and little if anything appears. Search “Chesapeake Farms,” and the screen fills. A generation that gets its news and views on-line won't readily connect the 3,300 acres on Maryland's Langford Creek with hunting. It won't know, intuitively, how the nearly four decades of conservation work there, funded by hunters and America's oldest gunmaker, still benefits wildlife nation-wide.