

# SHOOTING THE BREEZE

## Official state guns

A few states in the land of the free have adopted a state firearm.

Some guns are so ubiquitous that they are easily recognized by even the most ignorant cheechako. But precious few become such legends whose employ has fed and protected for so long with such efficacy that they have been adopted in symbolic capacities. Did you know that nine U.S. states have officially adopted a firearm?

The first to do so was Utah, home to arguably the single most prolific gun designer in American history, John Moses Browning. The Beehive State adopted one of his most famous designs, the Colt Model 1911 pistol, in March of 2011.

Officially adopted for military use in 1911, it and several of its variants have been in service ever since. A favorite amongst civilians, military and law enforcement alike, it's little wonder that it made this list.

Not to be outdone, just 30 days later Arizona adopted another world-famous design for its official state firearm. The Colt Single Action Army revolver, also dubbed the "Peacemaker," was the most popular handgun in the American West.

Available in a handful of calibers, the .44-40 and .45 Colt were most desirable to lawman, outlaw or in-law. Colt's revolvers were prized possessions and a vitally important tool in settling the Wild West. The Grand Canyon State has a rich Western history, and it's little wonder they chose Colt's sixgun.

Third came the Hoosier State, with the adoption of the Grouseland rifle. The Grouseland mansion was home to territorial Governor and later U.S. President William Henry Harrison. John Small of Vincennes, Indiana, cobbled the rifle sometime between 1803 and 1812. Its intricate hand-fitted features and caplock muzzleloading design are typical of frontier rifles of the day.

Fourth in line is West Virginia, with the 2013 adoption of the .52-caliber Hall flintlock rifle. Although patented in 1811, it wasn't adopted for military use until 1819. It wasn't the first breechloading design ever adopted by the U.S. military, but innovative as it was, design flaws even-

tually caused a return to muzzleloading rifles.

Fifth and sixth are basically a tie since two states lay claim to being the state of origin for the Flintlock long rifle. Whether you call it a Kentucky or Pennsylvania long rifle, it's doubtful we would have our independence today if not for its creation.

Rifled barrels firing patched round balls were devastating to British regular forces in the War for Independence. Since Kentucky adopted the rifle a year and a day sooner than Pennsylvania, the Bluegrass State wins the No. five spot while the Keystone State is No. six.

Coming in seventh, Alaska made its adoption on July 30, 2014. The Last Frontier State — realizing the influence that the pre-1964 Winchester Model 70 has had there for hunting and providing — chose not to adopt any single caliber but the Rifleman's rifle as a whole. The simple and rugged yet superbly accurate Winchester Model 70 rifle has well earned its reputation among hunters and shooters of all cloths.

Tennessee, the Volunteers State, comes in at No. eight with its Feb. 24, 2016, adoption. The Barrett Rifle Co. has been headquartered in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, since its inception some 40 years ago. It would seem only fitting that the Barrett M82 would be the state's official gun. Firing the enormous .50 BMG cartridge, the Model 82 and its later variants have garnered a following worldwide.

Last, but certainly not least, we have Texas, with the rather recent May 2021 adoption of the Colt Walker .44 revolver as its state gun. Texas Ranger Samuel H. Walker designed this horse pistol especially for chasing renegades and bandits. It was in fact the most powerful handgun in the world until the release of the .357 Magnum in 1935.

Although it's unlikely that we would ever see the adoption of official firearms by all 50 states, it's fun to imagine which firearm each state would likely adopt. Let's hear your votes. Write to us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com and check us out on Facebook!

*Dale Valade is a local country gent with a love for the outdoors, handloading, hunting and shooting.*



Dale Valade



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union High School's Lucas Blood gets back on defense Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, against Stanfield.

# Pros all heart in final home game

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Grant Union 2A boys' basketball team went the distance against Stanfield Saturday, Feb. 12, but could not keep the momentum as Stanfield, the league's No. 2 team, ran away with a 62-49 win in the Prospectors' final home game of the season.

Grant Union, which fell to Union (the league's No. 1 team) 62-30 the night before, came back with a vengeance on Saturday.

RC Huerta, the Prospectors' coach, said the game was close, and it looked like the squad had a chance at one point.

"We felt like we were really close and right there with (the Tigers), but we just couldn't hold on."

Stanfield burst out of the gate in the first quarter, outscoring Grant Union 18-6.

However, the Pros responded in the second, scoring 19 points and holding the Tigers to 12.

Charley Knowles, a freshman, led the Pros in scoring with 15 points for the game on three 2-point field goals and three 3-pointers.

Parker Neault collected 13 points after knocking down six 2-point field goals and going one for three at the free-throw line. Sheldon Lenz, a sophomore, had a solid offensive output, scored 13 points on five 2-point field goals and three out of five free throws.

Ryland Beil, a freshman, poured in seven points on three 2-point field goals and one free throw, while Cash Madden hit one out of two free throws.

Huerta said the team showed a lot of grit in a never-say-die effort against the 10-2 Tigers.

"They got up to the line and played hard

defense," Huerta said. "They were on the ground for the basketball, and they were crashing the boards, trying to get steals, and they were there to help each other."

Parker Neault, the Prospectors' lone senior as the school celebrated Senior Night, said it meant a lot that his teammates played with so much intensity in the final game of his high school career.

Grant Union finished the season with an overall 4-18 record and went 3-9 in Blue Mountain Conference play.

Huerta said the wins and losses throughout the season do not reflect the team's tremendous improvement.

"They really were a coachable group of young men who just continued to improve every day," Huerta said. "The wins and losses are not going to show that, but every single game, they poured their heart out, and I think anybody would attest to that."

# Lady Pros finish season with a loss

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The injury of a key starter and the emotions that come with Senior Night were contributing factors in the Grant Union girls basketball team's 56-28 loss to Stanfield on Saturday, Feb. 12, as the Lady Pros played their final home game of the season.

Grant Union coach Jason Miller said senior Grace Taylor's injury during the 61-40 loss to Union on Friday, Feb. 11, made Saturday's game difficult.

"It was a challenge without Grace," Miller said. "She is a key performer for us. Also, the emotional toll with her injury and Senior Night was apparent in the first quarter."

The Lady Pros, clearly at a disadvantage against Stanfield, the No. 2 team in the Blue Mountain Conference, held their own.

Seniors accounted for all of Grant Union's scoring. Paige Gerry led the team with 12 points, while Riley Robertson and Carson Weaver poured in seven and five points, respectively.

Raney Anderson and Audrey Walker combined for four points.

Miller said the Lady Pros will face Heppner in the first round of the Blue Mountain Conference District Tournament on Friday, Feb. 18, at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Miller said the squad is a "fantastic" group of girls who work hard, and coaching them has been a "blast" this season.

"I am really proud of the progress they have made and how they approach basketball and life," Miller said.

## SPORTS ROUNDUP

### SPORTS SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, FEB. 18

Grant Union Girls Basketball vs. Heppner, 7:45 p.m., Blue District Tournament, Pendleton Convention Center

Grant Union Wrestling @ District Tournament, noon, Adrian High School

PC boys win two in a row to close out regular season

PRAIRIE CITY — The Panthers hosted Huntington for the team's Senior Night game on Thursday, Feb. 10, and collected a 78-23 after defeating Dayville/Monument the day before, 79-35.

Prairie City will face Four Rivers Thursday, Feb. 17, at 2:45 p.m. at the High Desert League Tournament at Grant Union High School.

Prairie City will be hosting the tour-

namment, which runs through Saturday, Feb. 19. See story at bluemountaineagle.com.

Prairie City girls basketball team wins one out of two

PRAIRIE CITY — After a 60-35 loss to Jordan Valley Wednesday, Feb. 9, the Lady Panthers bounced back to defeat Huntington 34-18 Thursday, Feb. 10, in the squad's final home game of the season.

The girls squad will face Four Rivers Thursday, Feb. 17, at 7 p.m. in the High Desert League District Tournament at Grant Union High School.

Long Creek boys basketball team ends season with pair of losses

LONG CREEK — After falling to Crane 80-14 on Wednesday, Feb. 9, the Long Creek boys basketball team lost 46-13 to Jordan Valley Saturday, Feb. 12.

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