

November 19, 2004

Mark Hendricks
Technical Manager
Connecticut Valley Arms (CVA)
5988 Peachtree Corners East
Norcross, GA 30071

Dear Mr. Hendricks,

Thank you for your time yesterday, and for your call.

I reported to you that my CVA Hunterbolt Magnum rifle had in my opinion, a design defect that nearly caused the death of my son-in-law on November 15, 2004.

On November 15, 2004, during the recent elk hunt, my son-in-law and I traveled a short distance from camp in my Jeep. We had our guns in the car with the bolts open. When we arrived at our destination, we both exited the car and proceeded to prepare our guns for the hunt. When I closed my gun, I checked to make certain the safety was engaged. As I placed the gun sling over my right shoulder, the gun fired on its own, with the bullet passing through the side window of the Jeep, through the roof, missing my son-in-law by only inches.

When I examined my gun, I noted that the safety was still in the on (green) forward position. The firing pin was forward. As I opened and then closed the bolt, the firing pin remained forward.

When I dismantled the bolt, the stock, and viewed the trigger assembly, I noted that the allen bolt that holds the trigger assembly to the barrel was loose. Then I noted that because the allen bolt was loose, the trigger assembly had fallen far enough below the barrel to allow the firing pin to slip past the sear. I also noted that the curly washer was in place between the allen bolt head and the barrel.

When I tightened the allen bolt securely, and reassembled the gun, the Hunterbolt operated correctly.

When I showed the problem to my son-in-law (who was using the identical gun), he told me he had the same symptom occur earlier. The firing pin would not cock, and the pin was always in the forward position. When he disassembled his gun, he found the allen bolt was loose, allowing the sear to fall below the firing pin. When he tightened the allen bolt, the gun would once again cock the firing pin.

My opinion as a graduate engineer, is that CVA has a critical design defect, which should be corrected immediately, and should require a product recall.

In addition to this problem, we discussed the rationale for specifying barrel strength, and I asked you what the strength of CVA muzzleloader barrels was. You would only tell me that the "minimum specification" was 700 kp/cm². When I asked you what the maximum pressure spec was, you told me that no one knows, and that "ignorance is bliss". In other words, you could not tell me at what load pressure the barrel would burst. Is this the same attitude that I heard your customer service technician express when he said that the problem I reported had never occurred, therefore it was not possible?

I would hope that you take some action to remedy the problem that is evidenced in two out of two samples of your Hunterbolt Magnum rifles. Both guns are less than two years old and have been fired less than 100 rounds. Both guns are meticulously clean and well cared for. Both owners have been safety conscious gun owners for many years.

I would expect to hear from your company soon.

Sincerely,

Jack Burns

[REDACTED]
Gilbert, AZ 85234
[REDACTED]