



Violence Policy Center

Research, Investigation, Analysis, & Advocacy for a Safer America

Freedom Group's Militarized Marketing

Freedom Group, one of the largest gun manufacturers in the world, specializes in assault rifles and other military-style firearms. The company made the Bushmaster XM-15 assault rifle used at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Here is how Freedom Group sells and markets these weapons.



To attract customers, Bushmaster uses the slogan “Justice for All” on its catalog cover and images of shooters clad in military-style clothing. Their graphics often contain militaristic and law-enforcement terminology like “duty” and “patrol” and feature phrases such as “Control Your Destiny” and “Bravery on Duty.”



ACR

shown A-TACS® : 90820 | inset COYOTE : 90847
inset 6.8 BLACK : 90955 | BLACK : 90838

CONTROL YOUR DESTINY.



KEY FEATURES

- 16.5" COLD HAMMER-FORGED BARREL with an innovative protective coating which uses a nitriding process that dramatically reduces wear for the ultimate in longevity and dependability
- A2 BIRDCAGE-TYPE HIDER to control muzzle flash. 6.8mm Rem SPC has AAC flash hider adapter

NEW FOR
2013
6.8 MM REM SPC

2013 ACR
5
BUSI

BRAVERY ON DUTY.

300 AAC BLACKOUT®

BLACKOUT : 90899

16" M4 Contour Barrel. Four-rail, rifle length, free-float handguard. AAC BLACKOUT® flash hider. Magpul® ACS Stock, MOE® Grip and Enhanced Trigger Guard.

ORC (OPTICS READY CARBINE)

BLACK : 90391

Features heavy oval M4-type handguards. Milled V-match gas block. Six-position telestock reduces overall length by 4" when fully collapsed.



Another Freedom Group product — a Remington 870 shotgun — was used in the September 2013 Navy Yard shooting in Washington, D.C.

TACTICAL



VERSAMAX[®] TACTICAL



The best defense for the most demanding situations. No task is too demanding and no challenge is too intense with our rugged, ultra-dependable and ever-expanding selection of tactical shotguns. Our lineup keeps growing to serve the needs of law enforcement, the military, competitive shooters and people defending their homes and loved ones. This year's centerpiece is the Versa Max[®] Tactical. The pinnacle of autoloader reliability is now available customized with a picatinny rail, forward barrel-clamp side rails and an extended magazine. It's joined by our crew of powerhouse shotguns, each specifically tailored for tactical applications. When you're in the most demanding environments and every second counts, Remington's tactical shotguns give you the confidence and firepower to get the job done.

MODEL 870[™] EXPRESS[™] TACTICAL BLACKHAWK!
Available in: 12 gauge (2 3/4" and 3")
Order No. 81404 (12/18 1/2")

MODEL 870[™] EXPRESS[™] TACTICAL with Ghost Ring Sights
Available in: 12 gauge (2 3/4" and 3")
Order No. 81198 (18 1/2")

MODEL 870[™] EXPRESS[™] TACTICAL A-TACS CAMO with Ghost Ring Sights
Available in: 12 gauge (2 3/4" and 3")
Order No. 81204 (18 1/2")

The Tactical Extended Rem Choke is designed for optimum performance and recoil reduction. It also aids in reducing muzzle rise for consistent shot placement.



62 REMINGTON.COM

Remington describes the firearm as a “tactical” shotgun, and claims that “When you’re in the most demanding environments and every second counts, Remington’s tactical shotguns give you the confidence and firepower to get the job done.”

DPMS/Panther Arms is another brand of assault rifle manufactured by Freedom Group. DPMS describes its assault rifles as “Built to be as Tough as the Mission Ahead,” never defining what that “mission” might be.

BUILT TO BE AS TOUGH AS THE MISSION AHEAD

DPMS A1 LITE 20
RFA1-L20
S829
273 5.56

A favorite of law enforcement for a reason.
It's tough to find a lighter full-size AR rifle out in the market today, but you're in the right place. The DPMS A1 Lite 20 features a Mil-Spec A1 front sight and standard A2 handguard, making it as simple as it is effective.

DPMS CLASSIC 16
RFA2-16
S859
273 5.56

One of the most conventional carbine rifles around.
The DPMS Classic 16 features a solid, proven, built-to-last 16" heavy barrel with fixed A2 sights, mil-standard A2 buttstock, and a GlacierGuard handguard. Perfect for the minimalist whose mission is anything but minimal.

DPMS PANTHER CARBINE
RFA2-PCAR
S869
273 5.56

Kind of a celebrity in the AR world.
The DPMS Panther Carbine, one of the most recognizable configurations of the AR of all-time. Some attribute it to the short, yet effective 11.5" barrel that features a permanently fixed 5.5" flash hider to reduce muzzle flash.

2013 DPMS FIREARMS | DPMSINC.COM

5.56 RIFLES

**BUILT TO BE AS
TOUGH AS THE JOB**



RFA2-PCAR-16
MSRP: \$859

**DPMS PANTHER® 223/5.56
CARBINE 16**

**RUGGED SIMPLICITY
MADE SIMPLE**

Easy to see with this basic carbine. Its fixed A2 sights, 6 position collapsible stock, 16" heavy barrel is about as straight-forward as it gets. Made to run, not collect dust in the gun safe.

And they use “killin’ zombies” as a means to promote their assault rifles.



Freedom Group also owns Advanced Armament Corp., a manufacturer of silencers. Advanced Armament uses skull and crossbones imagery to market its products.

The firearms industry is pushing to deregulate the manufacture and sale of silencers in the hope of increasing sales.

RIFLE SILENCERS

The engineering and design built into each AAC® rifle silencer result in the quietest, lightest, most durable and compact silencers available anywhere.

M4-2000™

1
MOUNT
Ratchet Mount™ prevents loosening during use and allows one-handed installation or removal in seconds.

2
CORE
360-degree fusion-welded Inconel® 718 core for extreme durability.

3
TUBE
316L stainless steel, fluted, and stepped for weight savings.

4
BORE
Precision EDM'd tapered bore assures alignment.

Advanced Armament Corp.
ILLUSTRATED MADE IN THE U.S.A.

RIFLE SILENCERS

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ADVANCED ARMAMENT CORP. PRODUCT CATALOG 2013

WWW.ADVANCED-ARMAMENT.COM

Background: Freedom Group's Militarized Marketing

In the wake of declining household gun ownership,¹ it is no secret that the gun industry has focused on semiautomatic military-style assault weapons, most notably AR-15-type rifles, in its marketing and sales efforts.

The target markets are two-fold: older males who already own firearms and can be enticed into purchasing one — or one more — of these battlefield-derived weapons; and, young males, who although they lack interest in the traditional shooting sports such as hunting, are intrigued by what one gun industry trade magazine calls the “tactical coolness factor.”

Freedom Group, now formally known as Remington Outdoor Company, Inc., is one of the largest manufacturers of firearms in the world and specializes in the manufacture and marketing of assault rifles.² The company claims that its brands control 48 percent of the assault rifle market — giving it the number-one market position. One of these companies is AR-15 manufacturer Bushmaster.³ Cerberus Capital Management owns 94 percent of Freedom Group.

On December 14, 2012, a Bushmaster XM-15 was used by 20-year-old Adam Lanza to kill 20 first-graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. Soon after the mass shooting, Cerberus founder Stephen Feinberg, whose father lives in Newtown, pledged that the company would sell Freedom Group, with Cerberus stating that “the Sandy Hook tragedy was a watershed event that has raised the national debate on gun control to an unprecedented level.”⁴

More than a year after the Sandy Hook massacre, this promise remains unfulfilled: Cerberus still owns Freedom Group. In fact, less than five months after the Newtown shooting, Freedom Group's leadership was honored by the National Rifle Association at the NRA's annual meeting with other gun industry financial supporters who had “given gifts of cash totaling \$1,000,000 or more.”⁵

¹ For a detailed history of gun ownership in the United States as reported by the General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, see the April 2011 Violence Policy Center report *A Shrinking Minority: The Continuing Decline of Gun Ownership in America* (<http://www.vpc.org/studies/ownership.pdf>). According to NORC, in 2012 only 34.4 percent of U.S. households had a gun in the home.

² Freedom Group CEO George Kollitides has strong ties with the National Rifle Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation. According to an April 2012 press release from the company, Kollitides “currently serves as a trustee of the NRA Foundation and Director of the NRA's Hunting and Wildlife Committee, Presidents Committee on Advancement, and Nominating Committee.”

³ The companies that comprise Freedom Group are: Remington, Bushmaster Firearms, DPMS/Panther Arms, Marlin, H&R, The Parker Gun, Mountain Khakis, Advanced Armament Corp., Dakota Arms, Para USA, and Barnes Bullets.

⁴ “Cerberus founder's dad calls Sandy Hook massacre 'devastating' — firm will sell Bushmaster in wake of the Newtown, Connecticut, tragedy,” *New York Daily News*, December 18, 2012.

⁵ For more information, see the September 2013 Violence Policy Center study *Blood Money II: How Gun Industry Dollars Fund the NRA*, <http://www.vpc.org/studies/bloodmoney2.pdf>.

A driving factor in Freedom Group's strategy to not only maintain, but grow, its share of the assault weapons market is the aggressive promotion of the military pedigree of its products. In its advertisements and catalogs, as seen in the previous pages, the imagery and language used to sell these semiautomatic, high-capacity military-bred weapons focuses on their use in offensive, anti-personnel situations and environments. Often gritty in their visual presentation, touchstone words and phrases include "mission," "patrol," and "duty." While such ads never detail what ill-defined "mission" might be carried out with these guns by their civilian owners, the Sandy Hook and Navy Yard mass shootings offer one horrific answer.

In its recent "Annual How To Sell Issue," gun industry trade magazine *Shooting Sports Retailer* makes clear that the advertising approach taken by Freedom Group is merely the tip of the spear as the gun industry changes from one catering to hunters and sportsmen to what the magazine describes as the "tactical market." As the magazine notes:

Hunters, quite frequently, will not be impressed by the "tactical coolness factor" that has drawn many shooters into the shop looking for a new gun. In fact, some of them will likely be put off by the military-esque attitude and marketing that is so common in the tactical firearms market...

The tactical coolness factor does, on the other hand, attract a lot of first-time gun buyers. Many of them are younger and unfamiliar with firearms, making them prime candidates to be unsure of what to look for or even what they want. Unlike many of the hunting demographic, these potential buyers will likely be interested only in tactical guns, and the military-ish looks and features will be big a selling point with them. As always, knowing the customer and adjusting the sales technique is crucial.

Many of the new shooters attracted to tactical guns for their first firearms purchase will think that they know guns because they've played a lot of first-person shooter video games that utilize real guns and accessories. Anyone with more than a passing knowledge about firearms recognizes that the "realistic" behavior of the real guns in these games is anything but realistic. Gamers inspired by *Call of Duty* to purchase their first gun will eventually discover that they have a lot to learn, but in the meantime it's going to take knowledgeable staff at the gun shop to help them select the right gun and accessories for their wants and needs.⁶

The advertising and catalog copy samples from Freedom Group companies that are featured in this report illustrate what happens when a gun company decides to cater to the "wants and needs" of "potential buyers...interested only in tactical guns" and their "military-ish looks and features."

Freedom Group has made a decision. It is willing to risk future mass shootings in its quest for increased profits — no matter the price paid in death and injury, anguish and heartbreak.

⁶ "Selling Tactical," *Shooting Sports Retailer*, July/August 2013.