

During the Vietnam Era, specifically 1965-1971, I served in The United States Marine Corps. My initial recruit training took place at Parris Island, SC. A major portion of that training was familiarization with, and attaining high levels of proficiency with several weapons including the semi- automatic M-16 military assault weapon. I saw firsthand what that weapon can do. It was designed to be very efficient at killing and maiming enemies of war. It was never designed to be a "Sporting Rifle", or any other classification that allows access to these weapons so that they may be used in military style assaults on defenseless civilians.

Gun lobbies, The NRA, and "Sportsmen" claim that they have the right to keep and bear arms as stated in the 1791 2nd amendment to our U.S. Constitution, originally signed by Roger Sherman and William Samuel Johnson representing the citizens of Connecticut. In their time the rifles available to Sherman and Johnson were of the muzzle loading, black powder, flintlock, single shot variety.

Our founding fathers never intended legislation that would allow the use of assault weapons designed for war to be used as tools of unimaginable violence to slaughter moviegoers, teachers and schoolchildren.

We must review our current laws and enforce them...we must create legislation that helps to prevent the sale, importing and use of high capacity assault weapons in Connecticut. Because of past lapses in judgment and unforgivable mistakes, we may never be able to totally solve this issue, but don't we owe it all those who have been sacrificed in the name of constitutional freedoms and the rights of hunters and sportsmen to give it our best effort? True sportsmen would never stand behind 222 year-old thoughts and principles that have recently been used as shields to hide behind in efforts to ignore the problems that face us as a society today.

It is all too easy to say "we will never forget" and then move on...let's indeed move on, but along the way, let's truly remember all those so unnecessarily lost to violence at the hands of those with automatic assault weapons. We can do this by using our courage and convictions to eliminate civilian use of these weapons of war.

If the NRA insists on honoring the 2nd amendment, have them turn in their assault weapons in exchange for a muzzle loading single shot flintlock...Sherman and Johnson would be proud of them. We would ALL be proud of them.

Jeff Lee
West Hartford, CT 06117