

Safety Alert to users of modified Military Rifles

Users of certain military actions originally designed for .303 ammunition (specifically Lee Enfield makes including No 4 MkI and MkII; and Mauser M93 through to M96), which have been converted to 7.62mm NATO are advised that the use of SAMMI specification .308 Winchester ammunition, whether factory produced or hand loaded, may produce pressures well above the design limit of the actions. This may lead to safety issues.

Accordingly, the NRAA advises that the use of SAMMI specification .308 W Ammunition in these modified military Rifles is NOT permitted."

Rationale

In regard to the above statement prohibiting the use of SAMMI Spec .308W in certain service rifles, the NRAA consulted with our appointed Armourer, Keith Hills, and the following rationale is provided as being the position of the NRAA:

Proof testing does not mean that a tested action should be used with ammunition with pressures above what the action design is rated at. The issue with the military actions in question is a gradual degradation of safety tolerances over time.

The alternative to proof testing is crack testing, but there is no standard in place for crack testing and certifying actions in Australia.

It is not appropriate to use certain military actions with SAMMI specification .308W ammunition as opposed to 7.62mm NATO ammunition. The reason is that 7.62mm NATO ammunition is rated at up to 47,000 psi CUP, whilst .308W is rated at up to 55,000 psi CUP. .303 British, for which the actions were originally designed for, is rated up to 45,000 psi CUP. So using .308W ammunition in these rifles is likely to lead to safety issues over time. This is because in operating them at the limit of their safety margin, these actions will stretch over time, unless reduced pressure hand loads are used. The latter is impossible to regulate due to the variations in ammunition components, chamber sizes, distance from the projectiles to the lands and the potential for human error or ignorance of pressure indications on fired cases.

As a result, the NRAA is compelled to put the safety of our members first and users of the Military Rifles specified above, that have been modified to 7.62mm NATO, must comply with this direction.