



**DAVE HOLMES VISITS
MAG-NA-PORT INTERNATIONAL
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
PRO-PORT PORTING**

HOLEY BARRELS!



**LARRY KELLY'S OUTSTANDING
AMERICAN HANDGUNNER AWARD,
RECEIVED IN 1984.**

Looking at a successful business seldom conveys the amount of work or ingenuity it took to make it successful. That's certainly the case at Mag-na-port International.

Larry Kelly was born in 1935 in the Detroit (MI) area. He was enamored with hunting as a kid, much preferring time outdoors to time in school – so much so that he snuck out of school permanently in the eighth grade. His level of ingenuity immediately became apparent as he managed to hide

that fact from his parents for a year and a half! He lived guns and hunting, laying the groundwork for the inspiration that would later make a major contribution to the shooting world.

Needless to say, Larry's adventures in field and stream didn't lead to a steady income, but they did lead to a golden contact. One of Larry's friends met a Vice President of a company recently moved to Michigan. He liked to hunt, but, new to the area, didn't know where to go. Larry's name came up. They met and in the process, Larry's lack of steady income ended up a conversation point. He was soon working full time, lapping out Red Stone missile fuel guidance control valves. That

led to later working on Apollo missile guidance control valves and, in a date with destiny, operating an EDM machine.

Electrical Discharge Machining uses an electrical discharge to erode metal. It allows very precise work to be accomplished and permits the working of hardened metals without having to anneal (soften) and re-harden the metal. It doesn't affect the metal around the eroded area other than perhaps a slight surface hardening on the surface of the 'hole'. While the process is touted by some smaller Italian gun makers as though it is something new, the EDM process was invented by the Russian Doctor Lazarenko (B.R. & N.I.) in 1943.

Business Start-up

The entrepreneurial light didn't come on immediately for Larry. Faced with hefty medical bills, he took a second full time job and for the next ten years worked seven days a week. Eventually, he took a job at another EDM shop but kept an eye towards the future. He and a friend bought an EDM machine and started a small business of their own. That led to Larry being fired from the business he had been working for and left him to sink or swim with his partner. They swam – and Apollo - EDM began paying the bills, and a bit more.

Larry drifted back to his shooting roots. He held his breath, ported his first handgun barrel and

found out only good things happened when the trigger was pulled. He began experimenting with different porting configurations to determine what worked best. Handguns and rifle barrel work came first. Eventually the process was used on shotgun barrels. While trapezoidal ports were used on rifle and handgun barrels, ellipsoidal ports were found to be most effective for shotguns.

The initial publicity on ported handguns (1972) led to immediate gratification as orders came in hot and heavy. Interest soon waned as follow-up publicity didn't continue to push the product. It was then that Larry decided to pursue the Mag-na-port venture full time and sold his share of Apollo-EDM.

Realizing the value of advertising, and its absolute necessity, Larry hit on the format that would prove to be both novel and successful – ads featuring animals he had taken with a handgun. It worked. I remember when the picture of Larry standing by a grizzly hide nailed on a shed first came out. He looked awfully small standing there with that handgun!

Handguns and rifle brakes hold center stage even today with Mag-na-port, but Larry recognized the potential of work on shotguns early on and patented the process. The patent was worded such that it pretty well tied the hands of any potential competition, although a few unsuccessfully tried to challenge it. The business thrived. The boy with the eighth grade education and a master's degree from the school of hard knocks had arrived.

Next Generation

Son Kenneth now runs the business. Forty-seven years old, by virtue of a hard working Dad with a business, he already has 35 years experience in the business.



KENNETH KELLY CAN OFTEN BE FOUND AT THE LOCAL RANGES.

Walking through the shop with him quickly makes one realize that Dad made sure son kept his hands dirty. He has rebuilt every piece of machinery in the shop – many more than once. Kenneth is an accomplished pistol smith as well. Anyone who appreciates a fine wheel gun only needs to hear a cylinder turn on one of his tuned revolvers to appreciate the work that has been done – smooth as a baby's butt covered with lotion. To say he knows the business inside and out is putting it mildly.

Kenneth is a shotgunner as well, shooting trap and informal sporting. He has a good understanding of the games and what it takes to win. While some may be prone to dismiss the shotgun side of the business at Mag-na-port, that would be a mistake. There are solid roots.

ProPort, the shotgun part of Mag-na-port's business, offers several porting patterns, although they all follow the ellipsoidal port shape. Standard ProPort features 11 ports, with six on top nearest the rib and five below. Pigeon porting has a top row of 11 ports, with a second row of five in the same location as the standard ProPort. Pigeon porting was developed for those shooting heavier loads who

needed the absolute maximum benefit porting can provide for that all important first shot. (Hence the name 'Pigeon' porting – for those who shoot flyers where time, which equals distance, is very much of the essence.)

A single row of 11 ports, the top row of the Pigeon porting design, is offered for those who want maximum lift reduction. It is also used on small gauge guns, where the second row of ports, because of the size of the barrels, would be too low on the side to add to the efficiency of the system. ProPort systems are also available for shotguns with barrel bands and magazine extensions.

Porting Benefits

Certain it is that porting is a much discussed subject among shotgunners. Some are against, based on claims of increased muzzle blast sometimes felt by others. Then there's the noise – some porting systems seem louder than others. The hard facts are that size, shape and angle of porting can contribute to efficiency, as well as sound levels. While it is easy to think of porting as just poking holes in a barrel, it is a bit more involved. The ProPort system is engineered to direct the blast around the shooter while achieving the maximum reduction in muzzle lift.

Reduced recoil claims for porting are often met with the physicist's response that it can't possibly reduce recoil. Actual recoil is based on the weight and velocity of the ejecta and can't possibly be affected by porting. Nobody can argue the math. However, I think it safe to say that most shooters are more concerned

with felt, or perceived, recoil than actual recoil. Discomfort levels mean more than foot pounds. Many factors affect felt recoil – gun fit and a shooter's sensory tolerance being tops on the list. For those who are sensitive to recoil, any reduction is appreciated. Porting's ability to reduce muzzle jump reduces stock rotation on the shoulder, hence comb rotation into the face of the shooter. That feels better – regardless of the math – to many a shooter.



THESE BARRELS AWAIT THEIR TURN ON THE EDM MACHINES. DEMAND FOR PORTING REMAINS STEADY AND WHEN MIXED WITH THE PISTOL WORK AND RIFLE BRAKES, KEEPS THE STAFF HOPPING.

ProPort claims a reduction of the 15-20% in perceived recoil and a reduction in muzzle flip of 60 to 80%. From the looks of the prep tables by the porting machines in the factory, lots of folks agree. The ProPort response to the skeptics sums up the discussion succinctly. "100,000 customers can't all be wrong!" The work they do for other firearms companies also attests to their expertise.

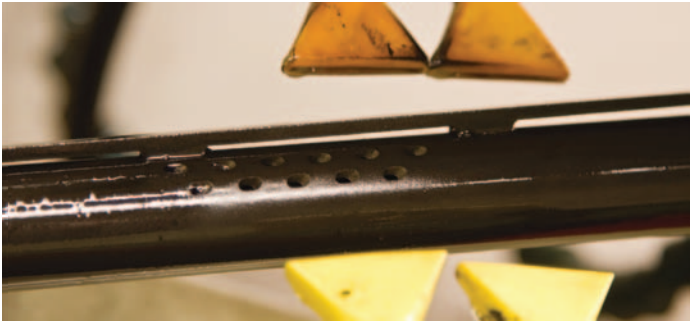
If you are in the area and would like to have some porting work done, call and schedule an appointment – it's often possible to get the work done while you wait.



HERE YOU SEE THE ELECTRODES POISED ABOVE A BARREL, READY FOR THE PORTING PROCESS TO START. THE ELECTRODES DO NOT CONTACT THE BARREL.



THE FLUID BATH CONDUCTS THE SPARK FROM THE ELECTRODE TO THE SURFACE OF THE BARRELS.



PROJECT FINISHED, THE HOLES ARE PERFECT REPRODUCTIONS OF THE ELECTRODES.

Forcing Cones

Another service available for shotgunners is lengthening of forcing cones – but only to two inches. In extensive testing done at Mag-na-port, they found that more length added no benefit. In keeping with the philosophy that guides them in all things, they didn't go longer for the sake of marketing. They stuck with what they knew was best. Cones are re-cut by hand, ensuring concentricity – and then properly polished.

It's always educational to visit the companies that make this

game so interesting in so many different ways. My visit with Mag-na-port was a most worth while day. Not only was I able to learn more about a long-time successful business, I had the opportunity to meet some great folks. If you're interested in any of the services they offer, I don't know how you could go wrong. Good products with great people behind them is a tough combination to beat! ■

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