

AKTI Remembers American Patriots

September 11, 2002 ... We, the American Knife & Tool Institute (AKTI), its corporate members and individual members, speaking on behalf of the U.S. cutlery industry and all responsible American knife users ...

Remember the victims and the volunteers, the ordinary and extraordinary individuals who died and suffered for the American freedoms we enjoy before, during, and after the tragedy of 9/11/01.

We remember the more than 3,000 victims from around the world in New York and Washington, D.C., whose plans, dreams for the future, and work for a better life were cut short that day.

We remember their families, friends and communities, who lost a vital piece of the living fabric of their American dreams ... a father, mother, sister, brother,

“We advocate severe penalties for the use of weapons to commit a crime. We also caution against the overzealous regulation of tools used in our daily lives.”

a smiling face or a neighborly helping hand who added richness and meaning to their everyday lives.

We remember the New York police officers, firefighters and rescue workers who rushed in to save others and were themselves carried out on stretchers. We remember their courageous, selfless example. We applaud the men and women

serving our nation who are still in harm's way preventing this type of tragedy from occurring again.

We remember all the volunteers from New York and across the country who dedicated months of their lives to the recovery effort. We applaud their monumental persistence in going back, day after day, to this gravesite of the innocent.

We remember the heroes of Flight 93. They would not be sheep led to the slaughter. Life was not fair on this tragic day. But they understood the power of ... “If not for me, who would it be?” We best preserve their memories by taking personal responsibility to ensure that American democracy keeps working and that American freedoms remain a meaningful beacon for the rest of the world.

We remember that those who intend to be predators and assassins can choose many instruments to commit destruction. We do not advocate grounding all airplanes because they were used as bombs that day. Our nation and the world relies on air travel. We advocate severe penalties for the use of weapons to commit a crime. We also caution against the overzealous regulation of tools used in our daily lives.

We remember the struggles of real people today and the sacrifices of past American heroes who gave us the American Constitution, the Bill of Rights and a 200-year legacy of the price of freedom meshed with responsibility that we can cherish, maintain, and enhance. In their honor we will move forward to encourage sensible knife legislation, responsible law enforcement and to educate the American community about the responsible, safe use of knives as man's oldest tool.

Australian Knife Laws Today

As we approach the end of 2002 two sets of laws relating to bladeware are in existence in Australia, one that is applied by the Australian Customs Service (ACS) and the other that is applied by the states and territories. The ACS laws (schedules) concerning the importation of bladeware, have remained relatively without change for several decades. However, laws as they apply to ownership, possession and carriage of bladeware in individual states and territories underwent dramatic reform between 1996 and 1998.

From 1996, under the auspices of the Federal Attorney General's office, the state police minister's council decided to make their respective Weapon's Acts more uniform. At that time, state and territory Weapon's Acts to do with bladeware ranged from laws in place in

two states, Victoria and South Australia that were patterned on of the ACS schedule, to no knife laws at all in Western Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

In most states police were already empowered to apprehend and search anyone they reasonably suspected may be carrying a weapon of any sort on their person, in their car, and so on. So why the need to impose specific laws targeting bladeware?

Primarily, weapons reform came about to appease the pleas of the general populace nationwide who wanted to see more done to maintain better law and order in the face of a rising crime rate. In the wake of national gun reform laws imposed after the horrific Tasmanian

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American Patriots

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massacre at the hands of a deranged gunman, the federal and state governments jointly targeted other items for prohibition and control i.e. knives and various other implements that might be applied as weapons of offence or defense in society.

Attacking bladeware was an easy target for the government decision-makers, for it enabled them to be seen by the minority anti-everything-that-might-be-dangerous brigade in society to be taking positive steps in a quest to contain crime.

Imposing bans and constraints on the overwhelming majority of law-abiding folk in society concerning ownership and carriage of bladeware has not, predictively, reduced the crime rate where implements have been employed to intimidate, maim or kill.

Governments tend to make laws arising out of extreme circumstances that occur infrequently and involve a very small minority of villains, but the vast majority of law-abiding people are disadvantaged unnecessarily by the outcome. Informed people know that one need look no further than the kitchen drawer to find an edged tool that can be transformed into a weapon, if such is the will of the user.

The specific purpose of most commercial cutlery is to cut meat in the kitchen and prepare vegetables for consumption. Yet, these are not the knives

that attract bans. It's the "dangerous-looking" bladeware that gets prohibited, daggers heading the list.

Challenging anti-knife laws

I began the fight against anti-knife legislation in 1993 by challenging those responsible for drafting proposed changes to state weapons acts to define, in terms of design and dimensions, what deems one knife to be more "dangerous" than another. Of course, there can be no such criteria. In the hands of an expert or desperate user, not only any knife, but also any implement is potentially lethal.

Alternatively, the potential threat of even the most functional knives might be minimal in the hands of an inept user.

However, arguments put forth based upon logic and commonsense fell upon deaf ears. Only .005% of the Australian population in any given year took up a knife as a weapon. That fact was ignored. More than 99% of all knife usage is lawful. Most knife and machete attacks occurred in gang warfare amongst certain ethnic groups. I produced a list (substantiated by newspaper cuttings) of over 60 implements, not including knives, used to commit crimes. All this and more, much more, meant nothing in the final analysis.

The only thing that ever influences politicians is the threat of losing votes at the next election. That sort of pressure could not be brought to bear by the

Australian knife industry, although it wasn't for the want of endeavour, and in some cases, a lot of hard work trying to protect the right of law abiding citizens to own and responsibly carry bladeware. In spite of the voice of reason and valid arguments to the contrary, I discovered determined elements in the Australian government would have their way when change is in the wind.

The current law on knives in Australia goes like this. The ACS prohibits the importation of daggers & double-edged throwing knives, switchblades, knuckle knives & knuckle-duster knives, sword canes, butterfly knives, buckle knives, gravity knives, ballistic knives and certain martial arts knives (i.e. shuriken). If the importer can provide a letter of non-objection or an exemption certificate issued by the appropriate state or territory government, then the ACS will permit the importation an item.

Generally speaking, the six states and two territories now operate under similarly worded Weapons Acts, which is essentially based upon the ACS schedules that have been in place for the longest period of time. The dagger (double-edged knife), because of its popularity, is an important variant. In three states and one territory the dagger is not prohibited to own and possess. One can apply to own prohibited items and exemptions are

usually available via the appropriate government department. They are subject to a fee and compliance to certain conditions, which includes an approved storage facility. It can be a costly exercise, and depending upon the state involved, an up to date record is required of exempt knives.

One can own and possess any item of bladeware that does not appear on the prohibited list of that particular state or territory. There are, however, stringent laws in place relating carriage of bladeware – you must have a *lawful reason for having it on your person, and the onus is on the carrier to prove they have a lawful reason!*

Heavy fines or imprisonment are laid down for those who commit ownership, possession or carriage of knife offences. The laws are open to interpretation by officers of the law. The widespread changes to the Weapons Acts in fairly recent times, coupled with media anomalies (don't let the facts get in the way of a sensational story mentality) adds up to confusion amongst Australian knifemakers, users and collectors. Things like what can and can't be owned and how to legally store them, as well as when, where and how knives can be lawfully carried to show or sell or use for work and sport.

In several instances the new laws were unreasonably enforced by over-zealous police officers applying the laws to the letter. One example saw the confiscation of pocket knives from farmers belt pouches at stock markets in rural regions at country towns. Some were prosecuted. ACS officers have construed bowie-style knives (and other single-edge styles) with sharpened false edges to be daggers then seized them. At best, the importer can have the interpretation overruled, at worst such unreasonable rulings can be upheld, but the casual importer often writes the knife off as a

bad idea. Naturally, those whose business it is to import cutlery products have adapted to the changes in the way things work at the ACS and regional police departments.

More joining collectors clubs
In the wake of these changes, we've noticed an increased desire by knife collectors to join a knife collectors club. More novice knifemakers are coming on line. There's a dramatic increase in those interested in bladesmithing and more hobbyists experimenting with knife customization. In some states, makers who sell knives are supposed to number the knives and record all sales with a description according to the law, as you would with

a firearm sale.

I have personally embarked upon different approach - one of education and encouragement. Under the auspices of the Australasian Knife Collectors (Club), founded in 1990, AKC Publications & Video Productions was structured and publishes *KNIVES AUSTRALIA*, the nation's first and only news-stand knife publication, now in its second year of production with six issues delivered into the marketplace. We put bladeware in its true perspective and provides a balanced viewpoint for humankind's oldest edged tool.

KEITH SPENCER - Editor,
Knives Australia Contact:
www.akc.iinet.net.au

AKTI Celebrates Fifth Anniversary at the 2003 S.H.O.T. Show

YES, I will join AKTI and help support responsible knife use!

Give generously! Your membership dues help ...

- 1) Fight for your knife rights...as we did in Boston, as we're doing in Florida, wherever AKTI is needed!**
- 2) Communicate regularly with knife users and the editors of more than 50 outdoor publications!**
- 3) Work with AKTI state groups to organize meetings with their lawmakers.**

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Note: Since the American Knife and Tool Institute, Inc. has filed as a 501(c)(6) not for profit tax status, dues may be deductible as a business expense, but not as a charitable contribution.

AKTI
ANNUAL MEETING
Thursday, June 12, 2003
5:00 p.m.
before Blade Show
Renaissance Waverly Hotel
Cobb Galleria Center
Atlanta, Georgia

22 Vista View Dr
Cody, WY 82414-9606

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Web site: www.akti.org

Forum: go to www.akti.org and click
on AKTI Forum or go to
www.bladeforum.com
or knifeforum.com

Florida Anti-Ballistic Knife Law Update

THE PROBLEM. A Florida Appellate Court recently

handed down a decision which effectively bans the sale of "one-hand-opening" knives in Florida. The case (*Florida v. Darynani* 774 So.2nd 855) **wrongfully** applies the definition of "ballistic knife" to many other classes of knives that have been legally sold in Florida.

THE SOLUTION. The definition of a ballistic knife in Florida law needs to be amended to make it clear that one-hand opening and automatic knives are not ballistic knives.

Florida knife owners attempted to have the law amended last year in the legislature. Steve Corn, Brad Winston, and Alex Clark spent two days in Tallahassee educating legislators about the problem. Veteran Lobbyist Rick Watson was hired to coordinate the effort. While we gained broad support for the amendment, it did not pass. We believe that chances for passing our bill are good for 2003. We have already obtained legislative sponsors for a free-standing bill to be filed soon.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU ...

1. CONTRIBUTIONS. We need to raise \$10,000 to cover the expenses of our lobbyist and the other expenses associated with this effort. Benchmark has agreed to do a matching donation and put in \$2 for every dollar we collect up to \$5,000. Therefore, any donation you make is really triple the

amount donated. For those of you who have contributed previ-

ously, we need your help again!

2. CONTACT US. Please send us your email address, phone number, fax number and mailing address. We will send you a sample message to deliver to your legislators.

3. CONTACT LEGISLATORS. You need to contact your legislators as this bill makes its way through the process. You are important in this effort! Legislators are concerned about every vote (remember the 2000 Florida Presidential Election). They realize one person getting involved may speak for hundreds or thousands who are not motivated enough to send a letter, fax, email, or call.

4. We can correct this bad court decision! We need your

contribution and a little bit of your time. We hope we can count on you. Feel free to call any of us for updates.

Sincerely ...
Steve Corn, (954) 484-2400
Brad Winston, 8211 W. Broward Blvd., Suite 420, Plantation, FL 33324, (954) 475-9666
Tony Martione, 932 36th Court, S.W., Vero Beach, FL 32968, (772) 569-3058

Make checks payable to **FLORIDA CUTLERY ASSN.**

Mail to Steve Corn, P.O. Box 10038, Tallahassee, FL 32302.