

Long Range Terror

How U.S. 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles
Wreak Havoc in Mexico



Violence Policy Center

MARCH 2025

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This study was authored by Violence Policy Center (VPC) Government Affairs Director Kristen Rand. Additional research was provided by Kaya van der Horst.

Sincere appreciation to John Lindsay-Poland, coordinator of Stop US Arms to Mexico, a project of Global Exchange, for additional research on recovery data of 50 caliber sniper rifles shared for this study.

The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national nonprofit educational organization that conducts research and public education on violence in America and provides information and analysis to policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the general public.

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Introduction

It is indisputable that the majority of firearms recovered in Mexico, and in particular from Mexican organized criminal organizations, originate in the United States.¹ As a 2021 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found, “Trafficking of U.S.-sourced firearms into Mexico is a national security threat, as it facilitates the illegal drug trade and has been linked to organized crime.”²

The U.S. civilian firearms market is extremely attractive to gun smugglers supplying Mexican criminals. If one set out to design an easily accessed legal market conducive to the business of funneling firearms to criminals, it would be difficult to come up with a “better” system than the U.S. civilian gun market — short of simply and openly selling guns directly to criminals from manufacturer and importer inventories. The U.S. gun market doesn’t just make gun trafficking in military-style firearms easy — it practically compels that traffic because of the gun market’s loose regulation of the distribution and sale of firearms and the gun industry’s design choices over the last several decades.

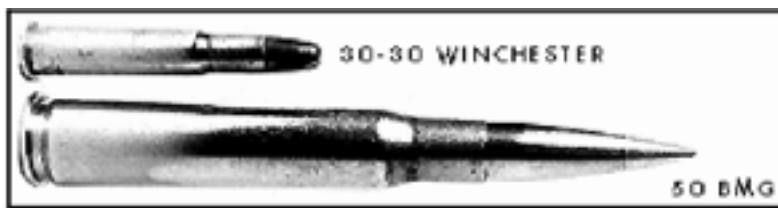
During this period, the firearms industry in the United States has introduced progressively more lethal weapons into the civilian marketplace, innovating for lethality rather than safety. As the industry searches for ways to maintain and increase gun sales, its deadly innovations have become more widely available. These range from next-generation semiautomatic pistols, including so-called “pocket rockets” (small, high-powered handguns marketed primarily for concealed carry), to a wide range of military-style assault weapons, including assault pistols, rifles, and shotguns. In each of these cases, the gun industry used increased lethality — increased *killing power* — as a principal selling point for civilians.

- 1 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Firearms Trace Data: Mexico 2016-2021; “Guns Recovered by Mexico’s Military Come Mostly From U.S. Makers,” *The Trace*, October 20, 2022, <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/10/how-many-american-guns-mexican-cartels/>.
- 2 *Firearms Trafficking: U.S. Efforts to Disrupt Gun Smuggling into Mexico Would Benefit from Additional Data and Analysis*, Government Accountability Office, GAO-21-322, February 2021, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-322.pdf>.

By far the most powerful and deadly innovation available in the civilian marketplace today is the 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifle. Fifty caliber sniper rifles are not just big hunting rifles. They fire the largest round of ammunition generally available to civilians. Under the National Firearms Act (NFA), passed in 1934, weapons which fire rounds any larger than 50 caliber are severely restricted from civilian sale.³ The most powerful of these rounds, used in so-called “heavy” sniper rifles, is the .50 BMG (Browning machine gun) round: half an inch thick and five and a half inches long.



50 Caliber Barrett M107A1



Relative size of 30 caliber and 50 caliber rounds

Fifty caliber sniper rifles are “purpose-designed” and “purpose-built” weapons of war. This terminology is used in firearms literature to describe weapons that are made for a specific, narrow purpose, in this case for sniping — highly accurate firing at a target from a significant distance. Fifty caliber sniper rifles are specifically designed to engage and destroy materiel targets on the battlefield at long range. These anti-armor rifles combine range and striking power that is far beyond that of any hunting rifle, and beyond that of the rifles our infantry carry.

In short, 50 caliber sniper rifles allow Mexican organized criminal organizations to dramatically disrupt the power balance between the cartels and Mexican law enforcement. According to Ioan Grillo, author of *Blood Gun Money: How America Arms Gangs and Cartels*, 50 caliber sniper rifles

³ See 26 USC § 5801(f).

“give a psychological edge to the cartels and create fear among the security forces.”⁴ Moreover, 50 caliber rifles — especially those manufactured by Barrett in Murfreesboro, Tennessee — have permeated cartel culture. In addition to their utility in combat, 50 caliber rifles are ultimately a status symbol and are often flaunted by cartels in propaganda videos. A popular Mexican band has even taken the name “Calibre 50.” One of their hits includes the song “El Niño Sicario,” or “The Child Hitman.”⁵

The 50 caliber sniper rifle was developed by company namesake Ronnie Barrett. His 1987 patent called the new invention an “anti-armor gun.” He described the rifle in his patent claim as a “shoulder-fireable, armor-penetrating gun.” He related the genesis of his anti-armor gun as follows:

The recoil and weight of the Browning M-2 heavy-barrel machine gun (50 cal.), belt-fed, make it unsuitable for firing from the shoulder. The bolt-fed sniper rifle of smaller weight and caliber will not penetrate armored targets. The bolts of guns of a caliber that will penetrate armored targets are often broken by recoil because of excessive strain on the lock lugs. Thus, there is a need for a light-weight, shoulder-fireable, armor-penetrating gun that can stand up to heavy duty use. After extended investigation I have come up with just such a gun.⁶

As early as 1985, a National War College strategic study report written by a former Deputy Assistant Director of the U.S. Secret Service warned of the growing threat from large caliber sniper rifles, and in particular the 50 caliber. The one-time classified document stated that 50 caliber “long range weapons pose a significant threat for U.S. National Command Authority figures if used by terrorists or other assailants.” The former Secret Service official warned, “The weapons are more accurate than shoulder fired antitank rockets and, if used against aircraft, immune to electronic counter measures.”⁷

These same military armaments are freely available across gun shop counters here in the United States. Sold under federal law with the same minimal restrictions as a standard hunting rifle, this purpose-

4 “Losing Control: How Criminal Groups are Transforming Mexico,” *Washington Post*, November 19, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mexico-losing-control/mexico-drug-cartels-sniper-rifles-us-gun-policy/>.

5 “Losing Control: How Criminal Groups are Transforming Mexico,” *Washington Post*, November 19, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mexico-losing-control/mexico-drug-cartels-sniper-rifles-us-gun-policy/>.

6 United States Patent Number 4,677,897, “Anti-Armor Gun,” issued to Ronnie G. Barrett on July 7, 1987, “Just Like Bird Hunting”—*The Threat to Civil Aviation From 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles*, Violence Policy Center, January 2003, <https://vpc.org/graphics/birdhuntingstudy.PDF>.

7 “National Security Experts Agree: 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles are Ideal Tools for Terrorists,” Violence Policy Center fact sheet, https://vpc.org/fact_sht/snipersecurityexperts.fs.pdf.

built tool for intimidation, assassination, and destruction is available for purchase to any terrorist, criminal, or mentally unstable person who can pass a Brady background check and has the necessary funds. And while one must be 21 years old to buy a handgun from a federally licensed gun dealer, the age for long gun purchases — including 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifles — is only 18 years old.

On its website, Barrett Manufacturing⁸ offers a matter-of-fact answer to the question, “How do I buy a Barrett rifle” —

It’s simple. Individuals should contact a federally licensed firearms dealer for purchase information. Dealers may purchase parts and accessories directly from Barrett, or firearms and suppressors from one of the following Barrett distributors: Bill Hicks & Co., Davidson’s, Lipsey’s, MGE Wholesale, RSR Group, Sports South, and Zanders.⁹

In addition, in states that do not require private sellers to conduct background checks, these weapons can be obtained on a relatively anonymous cash and carry basis by purchasers.

The unique capabilities of 50 caliber sniper rifles make them an ideal tool for Mexico’s criminal organizations. The fact that they are freely available at U.S. gun stores ensures that they are easily accessible to illegal gun traffickers supplying Mexican cartels and other criminals.

THE CAPABILITIES OF THE 50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLE

Extended Range and Accuracy

Fifty caliber anti-armor sniper rifles are radically different from hunting rifles. They are specifically designed for greater accuracy against harder targets at much longer distances than ordinary hunting or sporting rifles.

- 8 In 2023, Barrett was acquired by Australian defense contractor NIOA Group, “a family-owned global munitions company” that describes itself as “one team, working together for our families, our communities, our countries and our futures.”
- 9 Several states ban or regulate 50 caliber sniper rifles. California, Illinois, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. ban 50 caliber sniper rifles. Connecticut bans the Barrett Model 82A1. Maryland regulates semiautomatic Barrett 50 caliber rifles by subjecting them to enhanced background checks, minimum age restrictions, and waiting periods. Barrett’s website includes this commentary regarding states that restrict its firearms — including the 50 caliber sniper rifle, “You may live in a jurisdiction that restricts caliber or magazine capacity. First, we recommend that you elect politicians who will change those laws. If you can’t do that, then we recommend that you move to an area that obeys the United States Constitution. In any case, we don’t offer legal advice on what you can or can’t own. Check with your local law enforcement official.”

Deer hunters generally shoot over ranges of 150 to 200 yards. One of the most common ammunition rounds used by deer hunters is the .30-30 cartridge, which is generally considered ineffective beyond approximately 200 yards. Meanwhile, the evidence from manufacturer advertising, military manuals, expert analysis, and civilian owners themselves is that 50 caliber rifles are accurate at ranges of at least 1,000 yards, and in the hands of a patiently trained and well-practiced marksman, 1,500 to 2,000 yards.

The *U.S. Army Weapon Systems Handbook 2020-2021* describes the range of the Army's Barrett M107¹⁰ 50 caliber sniper rifle:

The M107 Semi-Automatic Long-Range Sniper Rifle (LRSR) fires .50 caliber ammunition and can deliver precise, rapid fire on targets out to 2,000 meters, greatly exceeding the terminal effect capability of other sniper rifles in use by U.S. forces. Its primary mission is to engage and defeat materiel targets at extended ranges.

A chart from the handbook compares the range of the Army's various sniper rifles:

	PSR	M2020	M110	M107
Caliber	.338, .300 and 7.62 mm NATO (modular)	.300 WinMag	.308 Win (7.62 x 51 mm NATO)	.50 BMG (12.7 x 99 mm NATO)
Weight (loaded, with suppressor)	~19 pounds. in .300 or .338 caliber configuration	18.7 pounds	17.3 pounds	35.0 pounds
Length (with suppressor)	50 inches	52.2 inches	46.5 inches	57 inches
Range	1,500 meters	1,200 meters	800 meters	2,000 meters (anti materiel); 1,500 meters (personnel)

Destructive Power

The threat posed by the 50 caliber sniper rifle is not just a function of range as detailed above, but a unique and lethal blend of long range and massive firepower. Barrett's description of the power of its Model M82A1 from an undated brochure (apparently, however, from about 1984), obtained from the firm's ATF licensing file states:

This revolutionary .50 caliber semi-automatic rifle allows sophisticated targets to be destroyed or disabled by a single soldier. Armored personnel carriers, radar dishes,

10 Nearly identical to the earlier Barrett M82A1, the M107 is the standard anti-materiel rifle of the U.S. Armed Forces.

communications vehicles, aircraft and area denial submunitions are all vulnerable to the quick strike capability of the Barrett 82A1. With decisive force and without the need for the manpower and expense of mortar or rocket crews, forces can engage the opposition at distances far beyond the range of small arms fire....The advantages are obvious when you consider that many of the same targets for rocket and mortar fire can be neutralized with M33 ball, API M8 or Multipurpose ammunition.¹¹

An excerpt from the U.S. Army’s manual on urban combat also emphasizes the 50 caliber sniper rifle’s ability to destroy materiel targets such as airplanes:

These heavy sniper rifles were originally intended as anti materiel weapons for stand-off attack against high-value targets, such as radar control vans, missiles, parked aircraft, and bulk fuel and ammunition storage sites....It is their ability to shoot through all but the heaviest shielding material, and their devastating effects, that make them valuable psychological weapons.¹²

The *U.S. Army Weapon Systems Handbook 2020-2021* affirms that 50 caliber sniper rifles are specifically designed to engage and destroy materiel targets on the battlefield at long range, noting, “The M107 LRSR provides Soldiers a tremendous tactical advantage with the ability to engage both personnel and light-skinned vehicles at long range. It is especially valuable during military operations in urban terrain where greater firepower and standoff ranges provide counter-sniper capability while enhancing sniper survivability.”¹³

Special Ammunition Increases Destructive Power

As noted earlier, 50 caliber is the largest round of ammunition generally available to civilians. Use of armor-piercing rifle rounds can further magnify the power — and the threat — of these deadly weapons. Federal law restricts only armor-piercing handgun rounds, not armor-piercing rifle rounds.

- 11 “Heavy Firepower for Light Infantry,” Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc. brochure advertising its Model 82A1 50 caliber sniper rifle, in files of the Violence Policy Center. “*Just Like Bird Hunting*”—*The Threat to Civil Aviation From 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles*, Violence Policy Center, January 2003, <https://vpc.org/graphics/birdhuntingstudy.PDF>.
- 12 U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 90-10-1, *An Infantryman’s Guide to Combat in Built-Up Areas* (May 1993), Appendix J, “Countering Urban Snipers,” J-2; “*Just Like Bird Hunting*”—*The Threat to Civil Aviation From 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles*, Violence Policy Center, January 2003, <https://vpc.org/graphics/birdhuntingstudy.PDF>.
- 13 *U.S. Army Weapon Systems Handbook 2020-2021*, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/2020-2021_Weapon_Systems_Handbook.pdf.

Military-Today.com describes how API ammunition magnifies the destructive power of the Barrett M107:

The firepower of the .50 BMG round is superfluous compared to most other small arms rounds, as it is able to penetrate thin steel armor plates even with an all-lead ‘ball’ projectile (though only at relatively short ranges with this type of round), and the wounds it inflicts on a human target can be tremendous; and while the effective range is up to 1800 m, the projectile is lethal out to a distance of several times that. With special ammunition such as API [Armor-Piercing Incendiary] rounds, the damage inflicted can easily be far greater. It is typically used in the M107 to engage ‘soft’ targets at long distances, which traditionally would have required rocket launchers, recoilless rifles, anti-tank missiles, mortars, or even artillery to engage from a distance; these include lightly-armored vehicles, pillboxes, fuel silos, parked aircraft, radar antennae, and cargo trucks.

Today, highly destructive armor-piercing, incendiary, and explosive rounds are available. Below is just one example of ammunition available on the Internet.

KIR AMMO AMMO MERCH BRANDS **ON SALE!** FAQ CONTACT MY ACCOUNT 0 ITEMS

Lake City .50 BMG M20 619 Grain ARMOR PIERCING INCENDIARY TRACER – 1 Round [NO TAX outside Texas]

Home > Shop All Ammunition Types > Rifle Ammo > .50 BMG > Lake City .50 BMG M20 619 Grain ARMOR PIERCING INCENDIARY TRACER – 1 Round [NO TAX outside Texas]

- ▶ Handgun Ammo
- ▶ Rifle Ammo
- ▶ Rimfire Ammo
- ▶ Shotgun Ammo

Brand	Lake City
Cartridge	.50 BMG
Condition	New
Grain Weight	619 Grains
Quantity	1 Rounds
Boxes per Case	150 per Can
Muzzle Velocity	2930 Feet Per Second
Manufacturer SKU	M20

Use by Terrorists

Although recent attention to 50 caliber sniper rifles has focused on their use by Mexican cartels and other criminals in the Caribbean and Latin American regions, this focus marks a pivot from the main concerns of the 1990s and early 2000s when the Violence Policy Center warned that the unfettered sale of military sniper rifles to civilians posed a “serious threat to American national security.”

The 2003 U.S. Army handbook *A Military Guide to Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* warned that “with the development of large caliber sniper weapons, such as the Armalite AR-50 in .50 Caliber BMG, terrorists can also effectively engage light armored vehicles.” The 2007 version of the terrorism handbook identified 50 caliber sniper rifles with telescopic sights and high-performance ammunition as providing “a special capability.”

In 1999, members of the U.S. House Committee on Government Reform requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigate the criminal use of 50 caliber rifles. GAO produced a briefing paper detailing a link between 50 caliber rifles and domestic and international criminal activity. Based on this investigation, they established a “nexus to terrorist groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs, international drug cartels, domestic drug dealers, religious cults, militia groups, potential assassins, and violent criminals.”¹⁴

VPC research has documented a significant history of terrorists (including Al Qaeda) acquiring and using the weapons. Because sales of 50 caliber rifles are relatively unrestricted and cannot be tracked beyond the initial point of sale if purchased from a Federal Firearms License (FFL) holder in the U.S., there is no way of knowing how many sniper rifles have been sold and used in terrorist acts. The following incidents, however, have been documented.

- Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda bought 25 Barrett 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifles in the late 1980s.¹⁵

14 “Briefing Paper: Criminal Activity Associated with .50 Caliber Semiautomatic Rifles,” Government Accountability Office, August 4, 1999, [OSI-99-15R Weaponry: .50 Caliber Rifle Crime \(gao.gov\)](#).

15 The evidence that Al Qaeda bought 25 Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifles came to light during the trial of terrorists charged with the American embassy bombings in Africa. A government witness, Essam al Ridi, testified that he had shipped 25 Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifles to Al Qaeda. The testimony is ambiguous as to the exact date of the transaction, but it appears to have been in either 1988 or 1989. Transcript of trial, *United States of America v. Usama bin Laden, et al.*, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, February 14, 2001, pp. 18-19; “Al-Qaeda’s Business Empire,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* (August 1, 2001); *Voting from the Rooftops*, Violence Policy Center, 2001, <https://vpc.org/graphics/rooftop.pdf>.

- At least two, and probably more, Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifles were sold to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which used them to assassinate British troops and Irish constables in Northern Ireland.¹⁶
- On March 19, 1998, following an undercover investigation, federal law enforcement officers arrested three members of a radical Michigan group known as the North American Militia. The men were charged with plotting to bomb federal office buildings, destroy highways, utilities, and public roads, and assassinate the state's governor, senior U.S. Senator, federal judges, and other federal officials. All three were ultimately convicted. A 50 caliber sniper rifle was among the weapons found in their possession.¹⁷
- Anti-government extremist Ed Brown admitted in court in July 2009 that he pointed a 50 caliber sniper rifle at U.S. Marshals who were executing an arrest warrant on his property in New Hampshire. Brown and his wife, Elaine, were charged with 11 felonies in connection with a nearly nine-month standoff with federal agents. The couple amassed an arsenal that included 22 pipe bombs, dozens of gunpowder grenades, 10 booby trap devices, and two 50 caliber sniper rifles. They issued repeated threats against law enforcement agents.¹⁸
- In May of 2006, a White Supremacist gang was indicted in Arizona on drug and weapons charges, including the sale to undercover officers of a stolen 50 caliber sniper rifle. The rifle was represented by the gang as powerful enough to destroy an armored car or shoot down a Phoenix Police helicopter. According to an ATF special agent who participated in the investigation, "The destructive capacity of those weapons [50 calibers] makes the streets much safer without them....No question."¹⁹
- In January of 2006, a grand jury in Florida indicted 10 foreign nationals on charges of attempting to provide material support to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a designated foreign terrorist organization. The indictment alleged that the defendants intended to supply the FARC members with weapons, including fifty 50 caliber rifles and two helicopters.²⁰

16 Toby Harnden, *Bandit Country: The IRA and South Armagh* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), pp. 354-55; "Arsenal Which Threatens Peace," *Daily Record* (Scotland), July 3, 2001, p. 9.

17 "Prosecutor: Hate Was Motive Behind Plot," *The Associated Press*, November 18, 1998.

18 "As any American would: Ed Brown takes the stand in his own defense," *Concord Monitor*, July 8, 2009.

19 "White supremacist gang busted," *Arizona Republic*, May 20, 2006.

20 "Foreign Nationals Charged with Attempting to Provide Material Support to Terrorists and Alien Smuggling," Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) News Release, January 27, 2006.

- Branch Davidian cult members at a compound in Waco, Texas, fired a 50 caliber sniper rifle at federal ATF agents during their initial gun battle on February 28, 1993. The weapon’s ability to penetrate tactical vehicles prompted the agency to request military armored vehicles to give agents adequate protection from the 50 caliber rifles and other weapons possibly possessed by the Branch Davidians. Four ATF agents were killed during the final assault on the compound.²¹
- In 1989, two members of a church in Gardner, Montana, who were part of what ATF described as a “doomsday religious cult,” were arrested and charged with federal firearms violations. Using false identification, the two suspects had purchased hundreds of firearms, including ten 50 caliber semiautomatic rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition.²²

Cartel Attacks and Assassinations in Mexico

As noted earlier, the *U.S. Army Weapon Systems Handbook 2020-2021* cites the ability of the Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifle “to engage both personnel and light-skinned vehicles at long range.” In the hands of a skilled marksman, the potential for assassination at long distances is real. At the extreme, a highly trained sniper can kill at distances of more than a mile. (For example, in 2017 a Canadian special forces sniper used a McMillan TAC-50 sniper rifle to kill an Islamic State insurgent at 3,540 meters — or more than two miles. In 2004, a U.S. soldier killed an Iraqi insurgent with a Barrett M82A1 50 caliber rifle at a distance of 2,300 meters.) Examples of assassination attempts involving 50 caliber sniper rifles in Mexico include the following.

- In June 2023, in Buenavista, Michoacán, Hipólito Mora, a former leader of self-defense groups, was killed when unknown individuals fired at his armored truck with 50 caliber weapons.²³
- In May 2023, in Donato Guerra, Estado de México, SEDENA forces were attacked by armed individuals carrying a Barret 50 caliber rifle. The attackers were in trucks labeled “Familia Michoacana.”²⁴
- In August 2022, in Nuevo León, armed men attacked the Fuerza Civil. Three criminals were killed, four agents were injured, and a 50 caliber rifle was among the weapons seized.²⁵

21 “Weaponry: .50 Caliber Rifle Crime,” *GAO Office of Special Investigations letter*, August 4, 1999.

22 “Weaponry: .50 Caliber Rifle Crime,” *GAO Office of Special Investigations letter*, August 4, 1999.

23 “Asesinan a Hipólito Mora, ex dirigente de autodefensas,” *La Jornada*, June 30, 2023.

24 “Ataca Familia Michoacana a GN al sur de EDOMEX,” *Reforma*, May 2, 2023.

25 “Enfrentamiento entre sicarios y Fuerza Civil dejó a tres agresores abatidos y cuatro elementos lesionados en Nuevo León,” *Infobae.com*, August 24, 2022.

- In June 2022, in Anáhuac, Nuevo León, armed men fired at the Fuerza Civil with a 50 caliber rifle. Six agents were killed, and four were injured.²⁶
- In April 2021, in El Claro, Sonora, a Black Hawk UH-60Q helicopter of the National Guard was attacked by members of the Sinaloa Cartel using a Barret 50 caliber rifle. The fuselage, rudder, and left engine were damaged, but no injuries were reported.²⁷
- In December 2020, in Madera, Chihuahua, armed civilians attacked state security forces on the Guerrero to Madera highway. Four agents were injured, and 50 caliber shell casings were found at the scene.²⁸
- A Barrett 50 caliber rifle was used by alleged Jalisco New Generation Cartel henchmen in a failed assassination plot against Mexico City police chief Omar García Harfuch on June 26, 2020.²⁹ Afterwards, members of the Cartel Jalisco New Generation released a video “prominently boasting their arsenal of sniper rifles.”³⁰
- In April 2020, in General Bravo, Nuevo León, armed individuals in a truck fired at the Fuerza Civil, who returned fire. Four long guns were seized, including a 50 caliber weapon.³¹
- In June 2020, in Apulco, Zacatecas, armed individuals fired at municipal police officers, damaging their vehicle. Fifty-caliber shell casings were found.³²
- In January 2020, in Bacalar, Quintana Roo, armed individuals attacked members of the National Defense Secretariat (SEDENA). One military officer was killed, three were injured, and a 50 caliber rifle was seized.³³

26 “Convoy de hombres armados ataca y mata a 6 policías de Fuerza Civil en Nuevo León,” *Noroeste*, June 27, 2022.

27 “Cártel de Sinaloa ataca helicóptero de la Guardia Nacional con fusiles calibre 50,” *Diario puntual*, April 18, 2021.

28 “Atacaron con Barretts Mata Policías calibre .50 a Estatales en Madera,” *Tiempo La Noticia Digital*, December 15, 2020.

29 “American-made rifle that fires between 400 to 600 bullets per minute among cache of weapons seized from gang linked to cartel faction operated by El Chapo’s sons,” *Daily Mail*, July 15, 2022.

30 “The US Hunt for Cartel Sniper Rifles in Mexico,” *Vice*, March 31, 2022, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7vwyx/mexican-cartel-50-cal>.

31 “Atacan a policías, huyen y dejan armamento,” *Reforma*, April 1, 2020.

32 “Atacan a policías de Teocaltiche,” *El Occidental*, June 10, 2020.

33 “Muerte militar en enfrentamiento con criminales en Bacalar,” *El financiero.com.mx*, January 27, 2020.

- In November 2019, in Celaya, Guanajuato, armed civilians attacked official units carrying the director of the Municipal Police and his escorts. Two agents were injured, and a Barrett 50 caliber rifle was seized.³⁴
- In one incident in the state of Michoacán in October 2019, a police convoy was ambushed with 50 caliber sniper rifles by cartel members, leaving 13 officers dead and nine wounded.³⁵
- In October 2019, in Culiacán, Sinaloa, a military officer lost his leg due to a shot from a 50 caliber weapon during an operation aimed at capturing Ovidio Guzmán López.³⁶
- According to the *Washington Post*, in 2018 five Mexican marines were killed in Nuevo Laredo after cartel gunmen used 50 caliber rifles to pierce their armored vehicles. A 50 caliber rifle was also used in an ambush in Michoacán in 2019 that killed 14 state police officers.³⁷
- The *Small Wars Journal* documents several attempted and completed assassination attempts with 50 caliber rifles from 2008 to 2013, including the killing of Police Commander Francisco Ledesma Salazar in January 2008.³⁸
- In February 2013, it was reported that the commander of Mexico's State Investigation Agency, Gustavo Gerardo Garza Saucedo, was executed by a sniper using a 50 caliber rifle to shoot him as he arrived at his residence in Apodaca.³⁹
- In March 2008, a police officer in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico was killed with a 50 caliber sniper rifle. The gun's origin was linked to Phoenix, Arizona according to law enforcement officials.⁴⁰

34 "Fueron 500 balazos contra director de policía de Celaya," *El Heraldo de Aguascalientes*, November 16, 2019.

35 "American-Made .50-Caliber Rifles Help Fuel Mexican Cartel Violence," *The Trace*, October 29, 2019.

36 "Militar perdió la pierna por disparo de arma calibre .50 durante balacera en Culiacán," *SDP Noticias*, October 19, 2019.

37 "Losing Control: How Criminal Groups are Transforming Mexico," *Washington Post*, November 19, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mexico-losing-control/mexico-drug-cartels-sniper-rifles-us-gun-policy/>.

38 "Mexican Cartel Tactical Note #19: Sniper Rifle Use in Mexico," *Small Wars Journal*, July 16, 2013, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/mexican-cartel-tactical-note-19-sniper-rifle-use-in-mexico>.

39 "Sniper Executes a Police Chief of Nuevo Leon with a .50 Caliber Rifle," *smallwarsjournal.com*, February 25, 2013.

40 "Top prosecutors in Ariz., Mexico target smuggling," *Arizona Republic*, March 14, 2008.

Specifically Designed to Destroy Aircraft and Helicopters

The 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifle was designed in large part specifically to destroy aircraft from long range, beyond a given site's security perimeter. In Mexico, the guns are used to attack police and military helicopters and have been used in an assault on an airplane.

Early Barrett promotional material promoted the new anti-armor rifle's usefulness against aviation targets. As the aforementioned brochure filed with ATF stated:

The [Barrett] Model 82A1 is designed to provide extreme accuracy at extended ranges with standard military ammunition....The accuracy of the Model 82A1 makes possible the placement of the shot in the most vulnerable area of the target. The compressor sections of jet engines or the transmissions of helicopters are likely targets for the weapon, making it capable of destroying multi-million dollar aircraft with a single hit delivered to a vital area. The cost-effectiveness of the Model 82A1 cannot be overemphasized when a round of ammunition purchased for less than 10 USD can be used to destroy or disable a modern jet aircraft.⁴¹

The threats posed by the 50 caliber to aircraft have been repeatedly cited by experts over time.

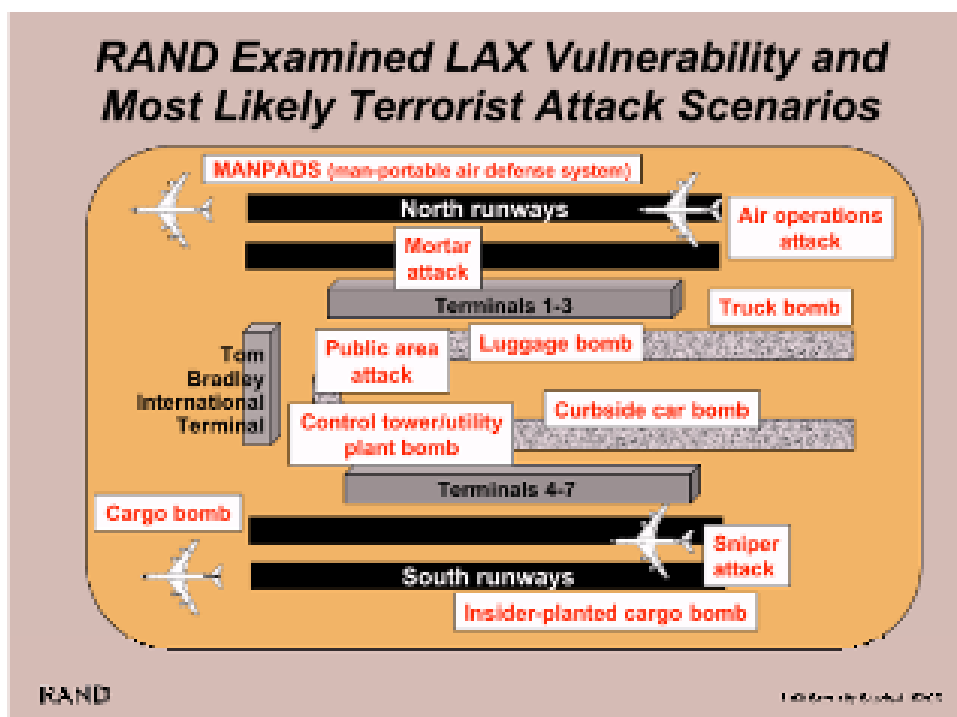
- A 1995 RAND Corporation report identified 50 caliber sniper rifles as a serious threat to the security of U.S. Air Force bases. After noting the success of Barrett sniper rifles against light armored vehicles in the 1991 Gulf War, the authors observed, "Such weapons also give light forces a portable and quite deadly option against parked aircraft....These rifles are effective against man-sized targets up to 1,600 meters away and could hit aircraft-sized targets at even greater ranges....It seems only a matter of time before these or similar weapons find their way into the arsenals of potential adversaries, if they have not already done so."⁴²
- In a 2004 report on security at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the RAND Corporation identified snipers using 50 caliber rifles to fire at parked and taxiing aircraft among a list of potential terrorist attacks. The list of attack options was compiled by "considering the historical tendencies and expertise of terrorist organizations, based on information we gained from

41 "Just Like Bird Hunting"—*The Threat to Civil Aviation From 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles*, Violence Policy Center, January 2003, <https://vpc.org/graphics/birdhuntingstudy.PDF>.

42 David A. Shlapak and Alan Vick, RAND, "Check Six begins on the ground"—Responding to the Evolving Ground Threat to U.S. Air Force Bases (1995); "Just Like Bird Hunting"—*The Threat to Civil Aviation From 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles*, Violence Policy Center, January 2003, <https://vpc.org/graphics/birdhuntingstudy.PDF>.

intelligence organizations.” The analysis was unable, however, to identify “any truly satisfactory” security improvement options (SIOs) to protect against such sniper attacks.⁴³

This report was updated in 2006 and identified 11 major classes of attack, including “sniper attack.” The report warned, “These are not the only possible attacks, but they are the ones that we assess to be most likely and most difficult to prevent.” The report warned of a possible scenario in which a “sniper who sets up on airport-adjacent property with a .50-caliber sniper rifle would shoot at loaded planes firing approximately 50 shots over five minutes.”⁴⁴



- In November 2004, the Homeland Security Center at the University of Southern California — funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security — identified 50 caliber sniper rifles as an imminent threat to civil aviation. A risk analysis prepared by the Center stated that the long range and power of 50 caliber sniper rifles enable them to “target fuel tanks, passengers, pilots, [and] down aircraft in worst case.” The analysis also noted the fact that Al Qaeda and the IRA have acquired 50 caliber sniper rifles and that they have been used against Coalition forces in Iraq.⁴⁵

43 “National Security Experts Agree: 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles Are Ideal Tools for Terrorists,” Violence Policy Center fact sheet, https://vpc.org/fact_sht/snipersecurityexperts.fs.pdf.

44 Donald Stevens, et al, *Implementing Security Improvement Options at Los Angeles International Airport*, RAND 2006.

45 “National Security Experts Agree: 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles Are Ideal Tools for Terrorists,” Violence Policy Center fact sheet, https://vpc.org/fact_sht/snipersecurityexperts.fs.pdf.

The ability to attack aircraft and shoot down helicopters makes the 50 caliber sniper rifle the ideal tool for organized criminal organizations in Mexico to target police and military aircraft, as shown in multiple incidents.

- In September 2016, gunmen apparently linked to the Knights Templar cartel shot down a helicopter belonging to a state attorney general's office using a Barrett 50 caliber rifle in the Tierra Caliente region of Michoacan. The helicopter's pilot was killed along with three officers.⁴⁶



Photo of Mexican helicopter downed by a 50 caliber Barrett sniper rifle by Cartel forces⁴⁷

- In April 2021, in El Claro, Sonora, a Black Hawk UH-60Q helicopter of the National Guard was attacked by members of the Sinaloa Cartel using a Barrett 50 caliber rifle. The fuselage, rudder, and left engine were damaged, but no injuries were reported.⁴⁸
- Following the January 2023 arrest of Ovidio Guzmán López, one of the sons of former Sinaloa Cartel head Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzmán, a video emerged purportedly showing an armed Mexican military light aircraft conducting a strafing run against Sinaloa Cartel members in the city of Culiacán. Cartel members appear to be firing Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifles as well as other small arms at the plane.⁴⁹

46 “Gunmen shot down a helicopter in one of Mexico’s most lawless regions,” *Business Insider*, September 7, 2016, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/gunmen-shot-down-helicopter-one-135607078.html>.

47 *Estados Unidos Mexicanos v. Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc., et al.*, Case No. 1:21-CV-11269-FDS, United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

48 “Cártel de Sinaloa ataca helicóptero de la Guardia Nacional con fusiles calibre 50,” *Diario puntual*, April 18, 2021.

49 “Mexican Light Attack Plane Strafes Cartel Forces After Arrest Of El Chapo’s Son,” *The War Zone*, January 5, 2023, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/mexican-light-attack-plane-strafes-cartel-forces-after-arrest-of-el-chapos-son>.

TRAFFICKING OF 50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLES TO MEXICO

Recognizing the range, destructive power, and easy accessibility of 50 caliber sniper rifles, it is no surprise that they have become a preferred weapon for Mexican cartels. In particular, the Barrett 50 caliber rifle is identified by U.S. federal agents as a primary “weapon of choice” for the cartels in Mexico.⁵⁰ Because these uniquely destructive weapons are readily available at U.S. gun stores, cross-border traffickers face no significant barriers in acquiring them in large numbers.

Unfortunately, information on the criminal use in Mexico of the Barrett and other brands of 50 caliber sniper rifles produced by U.S. manufacturers is often incomplete. Following are some available statistics that help illustrate the prevalence of illegal 50 caliber sniper rifles in Mexico.

- The Violence Policy Center’s ongoing *Cross-Border Gun Trafficking* project analyzes the types of firearms illegally trafficked from the United States to Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean countries.⁵¹ Utilizing indictments and other documents filed in U.S. courts (primarily in the southwest United States) that detail the make, model, caliber, manufacturer, and retail source of firearms seized in criminal trafficking cases, the website reveals that military-style semiautomatic firearms easily available on the U.S. civilian gun market comprise a significant portion of the weapons illegally trafficked to Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The VPC analysis of trafficking cases has so far identified 125 fifty caliber sniper rifles. Sixty-five of those rifles were acquired from Federal Firearms License holders (FFLs). The VPC also identified more than 10,000 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition recovered.

- An analysis of firearms recovered by Mexican authorities conducted for the Government of Mexico’s lawsuit against several U.S. gun manufacturers⁵² found that the percentage of Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifles recovered increased from 0.1 percent in 2011 to three percent in 2020 — a 30-fold increase.⁵³

50 See e.g., *United States of America v. Jose J. Soto, et al*, No. 6:18-cr-00145-1 (S.D. Tex.), ECF 1 at 3-4, filed Dec. 5, 2018.

51 *Cross-Border Gun Trafficking*, Violence Policy Center, <https://vpc.org/indicted/>.

52 *Estados Unidos Mexicanos v. Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc., et al.*, Case No. 1:21-CV-11269-FDS, United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

53 Sources of recovered firearms were Fiscalía General de la República data for firearms recovered in Mexico from 2010 to 2019 (“FGR Recovery Data”) and Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional data for firearms recovered in Mexico from 2010 to 2021 (“SEDENA Recovery Data”), Decl. of Lucy P. Allen in *Estados Unidos Mexicanos v. Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc., et al.*, Case No. 1:21-CV-11269-FDS, United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

- A February 2021 report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found, “According to U.S. and Mexican officials, TCOs [transnational criminal organizations] are interested in obtaining .50-caliber rifles...because these rifles are powerful enough to disable a vehicle engine and penetrate vehicle or personal armor, posing a significant threat to Mexican security forces. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) officials noted that these rifles are not regulated differently than other rifles and can be purchased in retail stores. ATF reported that .50 caliber rifles account for about 0.5 percent of weapons recovered in Mexico and traced to the United States that were recovered within 3 years of initial purchase.”⁵⁴

In addition, the GAO concluded, “TCOs use firearms, ammunition, and explosives to protect their trafficking routes, drug processing locations, geographic drug trafficking areas, and illicit profits. According to DOJ, DHS, and State reports, TCOs have orchestrated sophisticated attacks on Mexican security forces, with increasing use of .50 caliber rifles, modified fully automatic rifles, and belt-fed machine guns to counter Mexican security forces. According to State reporting, in March 2018, a TCO ambushed Mexican security units in three locations in Nuevo Laredo, using at least 15 vehicles — many with improvised armor — and a .50 caliber gun capable of piercing the Mexican units’ armored vehicles.”⁵⁵

As detailed in the table on the following page, from 2010 to February 2023, Mexican authorities recovered 831 fifty caliber sniper rifles. Of those, 519 are known to have been manufactured by Barrett and 46 by Bushmaster.⁵⁶ During the same period, authorities also recovered 17,031 fifty caliber cartridges.⁵⁷

54 “Firearms Trafficking: U.S. Efforts to Disrupt Gun Smuggling into Mexico Would Benefit from Additional Data and Analysis,” GAO-21-322, February 2021, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-322>.

55 “Firearms Trafficking: U.S. Efforts to Disrupt Gun Smuggling into Mexico Would Benefit from Additional Data and Analysis,” GAO-21-322, February 2021, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-322>.

56 Other manufacturers include Alexander Arms and Armalite, Fiscalía General de la República, response to public document request from John Lindsay-Poland, June 26, 2019, Folio 0001700205819.

57 Documents released by SEDENA in response to public information requests by John Lindsay-Poland, Folios 0000700057819, 0000700001619, 0000700079717, 0000700283519, 0000700154320, 0000700106521, and 330026422000299.

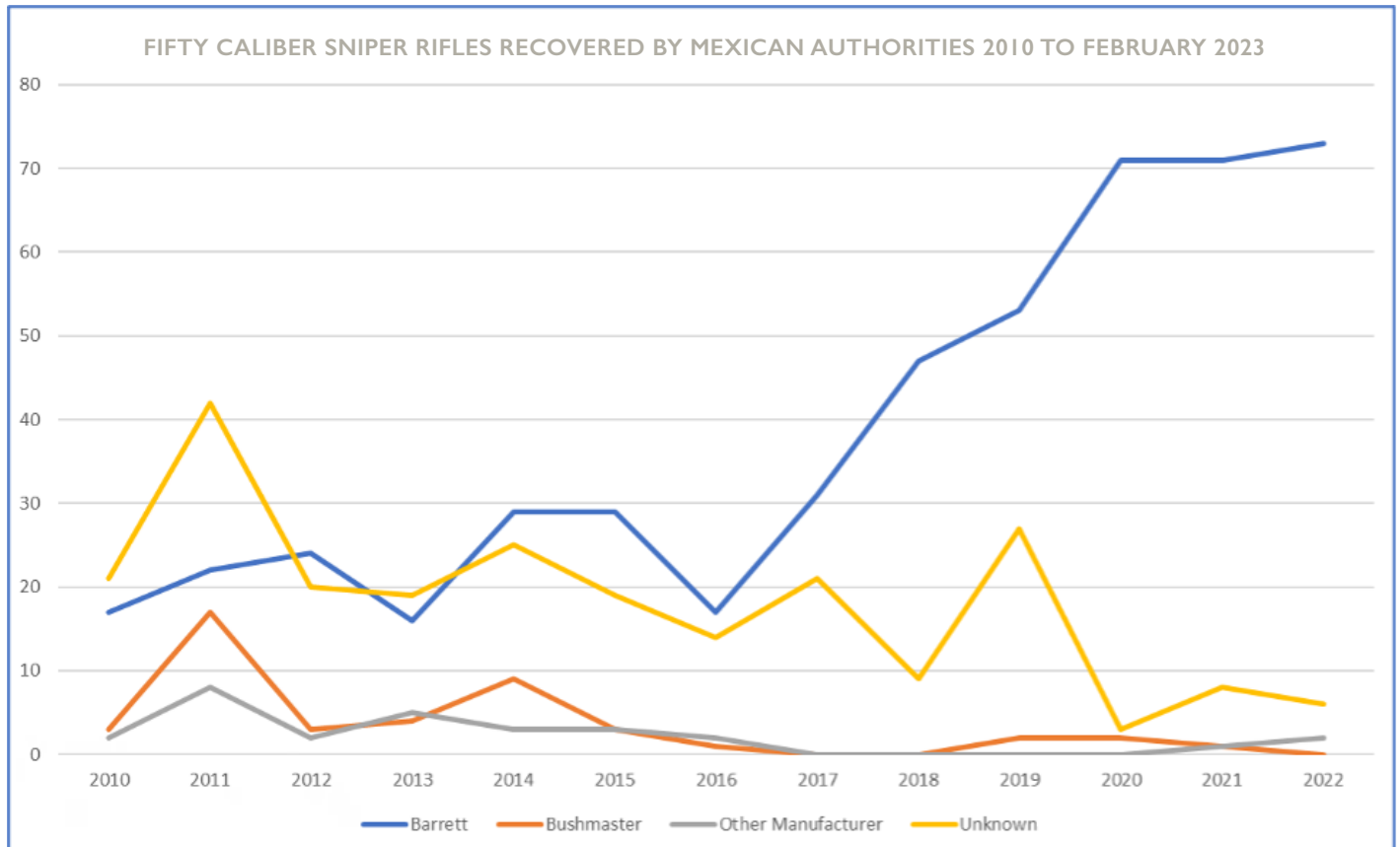
FIFTY CALIBER SNIPER RIFLES RECOVERED BY MEXICAN AUTHORITIES 2010 TO FEBRUARY 2023

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*	Total
Barrett	17	22	24	16	29	29	17	31	47	53	71	71	73	19	519
Bushmaster	3	17	3	4	9	3	1	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	46
Other Manufacturer±	2	8	2	5	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	28
Unknown¥	21	42	20	19	25	19	14	21	9	27	3	8	7	3	238
Total	43	89	49	44	66	54	34	52	56	82	76	81	82	23	831

* Data updated through February 2023

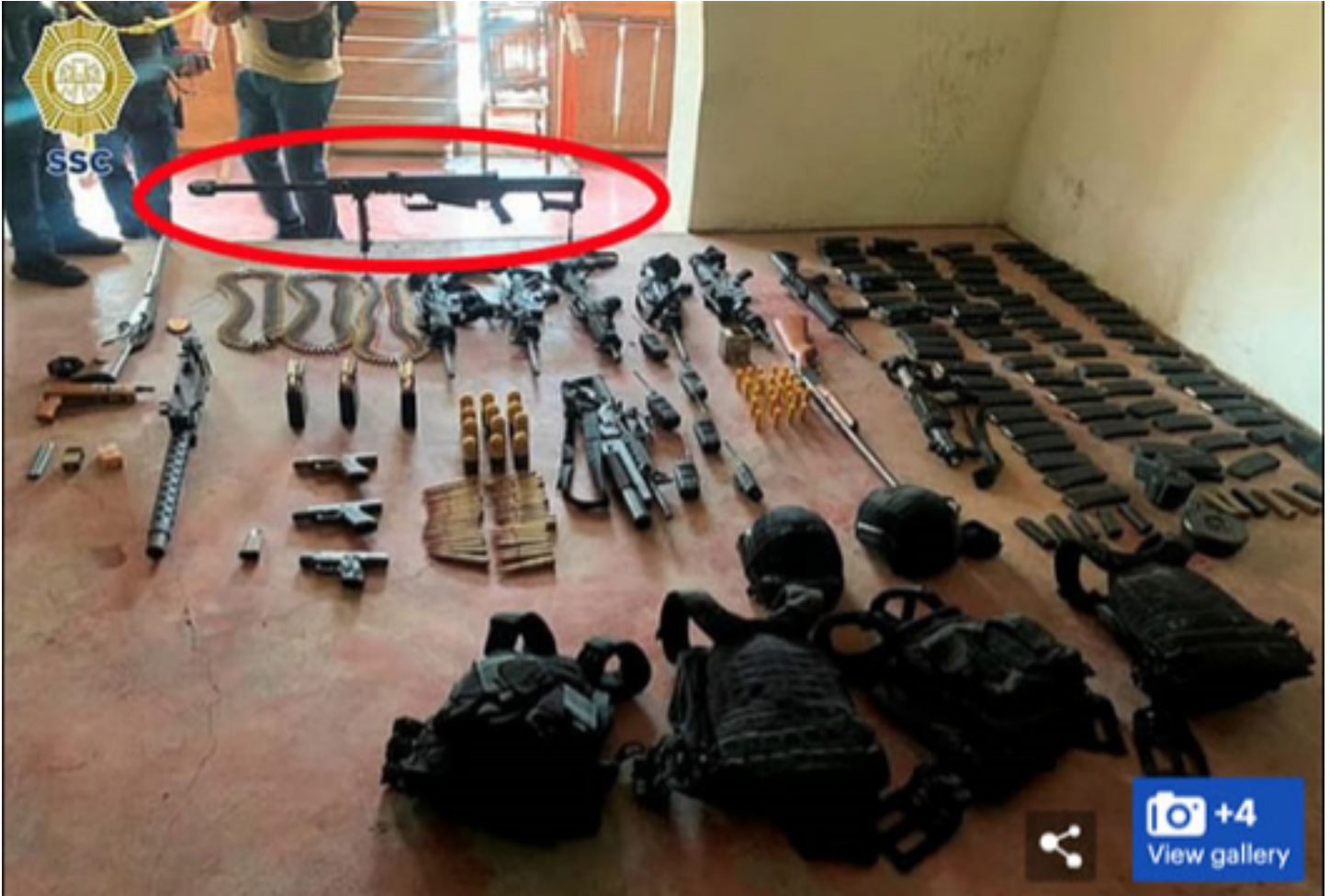
± includes Alexander Arms, Armalite, Browning, DPMS, Firearms International Industries, Galil IMI, Olympic Arms, Remington, Rock River, Safety Police, Sporter, and Survival Arms

¥ includes Illegible, No Especificado, Sin Información, Sin Marca, and Unknown (blank)



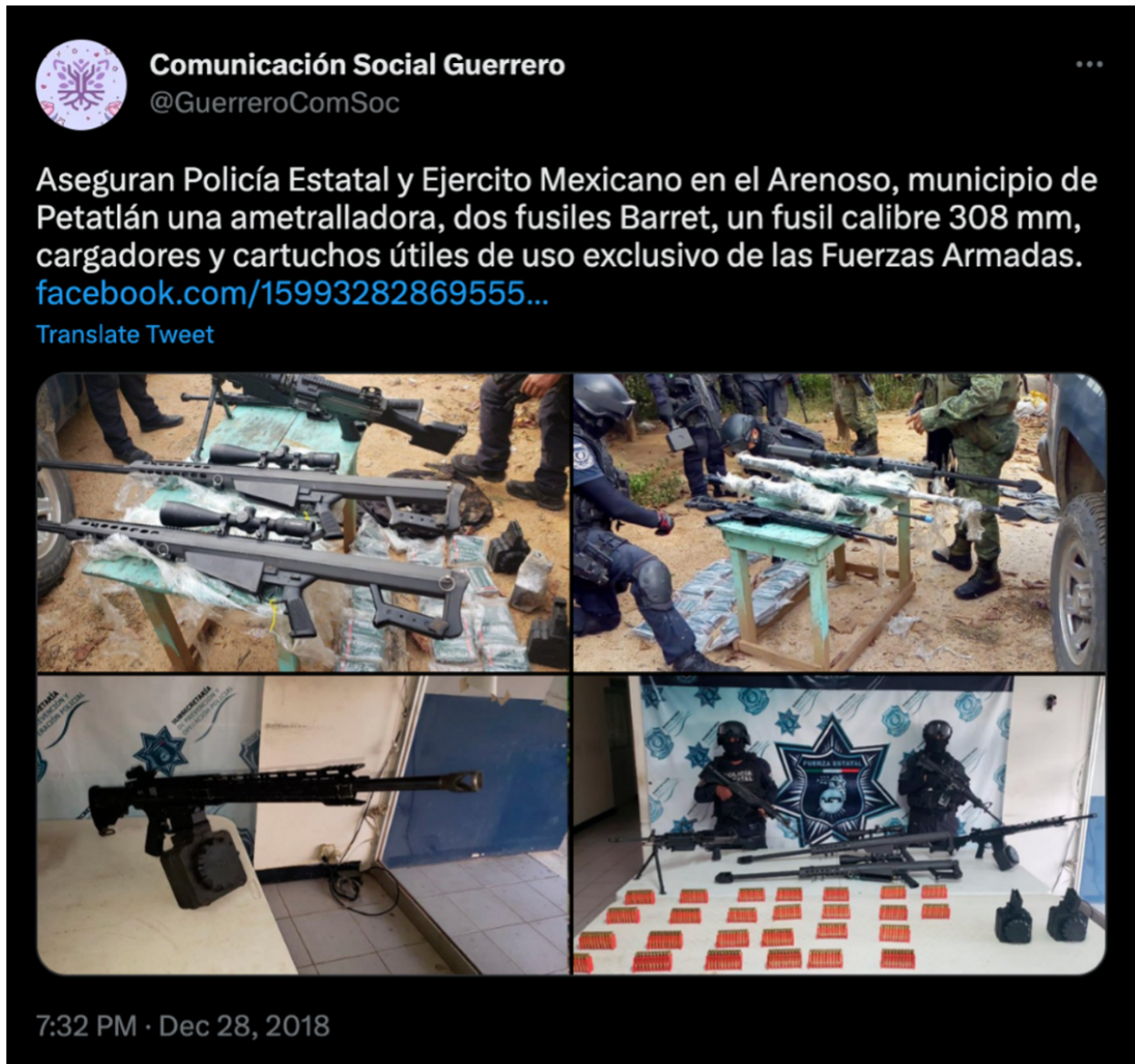
PHOTOS OF EXAMPLES OF SEIZURES OF 50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLES IN MEXICO

- A Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifle was among the weapons seized following a 2022 battle between Mexican authorities and the Sinaloa Cartel that left two police officers wounded.⁵⁸



58 “American-made rifle that fires between 400 to 600 bullets per minute among cache of weapons seized from gang linked to cartel factions operated by El Chapo’s sons,” *Daily Mail Online*, July 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11014811/American-rifle-fires-400-600-bullets-minute-seized-cartel-Mexico.html>.

- In 2018, two Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifles were among the weapons seized by Mexican authorities.⁵⁹



59 Source: @GuerreroComSoc. State Police and the Mexican Army seized two Barrett rifles, among other weapons, Twitter, December 28, 2018, <https://twitter.com/GuerreroComSoc/status/1078720460077043719>.

- A May 2011 social media post shows a 50 caliber sniper rifle mounted inside of a cartel motor vehicle.⁶⁰



60 “Mexican Cartel Tactical Note #19: Sniper Rifle Use in Mexico,” *Small Wars Journal*, July 16, 2013, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/mexican-cartel-tactical-note-19-sniper-rifle-use-in-mexico>.

U.S. FEDERAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ban the future production and sale of 50 caliber and similarly powerful sniper rifles except for use by military and police. Require that all 50 caliber rifles currently possessed be registered under the National Firearms Act (NFA).
- Require background checks and recordkeeping for the sale or transfer of all .50 BMG and similarly powerful ammunition. Ban exotic ammunition such as armor piercing, armor piercing incendiary, and tracer ammunition.
- Expand to *all* states the current requirement that Southern border states report to ATF multiple sales of certain rifles.
- Exempt 50 caliber sniper rifles from the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA).
- Require ATF to produce and make publicly available a report detailing traces of 50 caliber sniper rifles in the United States and Mexico.

APPENDIX: MANUFACTURERS OF 50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLES RECOVERED IN MEXICO

Barrett is the most notorious manufacturer of 50 caliber sniper rifles and its guns are the most commonly recovered in Mexico. In 2023, Barrett was acquired by Australian defense contractor NIOA Group, “a family-owned global munitions company” that describes itself as “one team, working together for our families, our communities, our countries and our futures.”⁶¹

Yet, while Barrett may be the most well known manufacturer of 50 caliber sniper rifles, multiple other gun companies (both U.S.-based and foreign) manufacture their own versions of the powerful weapon. Examples are included below.

Barrett

Murfreesboro, TN

<https://barrett.net>



PRODUCTS TRAINING COMPANY PURCHASE SUPPORT MEDIA SHOP



Model 82A1: THE POWER HOUSE RIFLE

61 See <https://www.nioa.com.au/about>.



M107A1: The modern upgrade to the original Model 82A1.

On its website, Barrett describes the original Model 82A1 as “The Powerhouse Rifle,” stating:

The Model 82 is where the Barrett legacy began.

Engineered as the first shoulder fired semi-automatic 50 BMG rifle, the Model 82A1 has been proven in combat in every environment from the snow covered mountains, to the desolate deserts, and everything in between. Its low felt recoil and reliable repower delivers on target with every pull of the trigger. More than just a rifle, the Model 82 is an American icon.⁶²

The company’s M107A1 rifle is promoted as the “modern upgrade to the original Model 82A1.” Promising that the M107A1 is “engineered for action,” the company asks:

What happens when you combine over 35 years of research and development with feedback from the most demanding military end users?

You get the M107A1. While it may share the same iconic look and legendary reliability of legacy Barrett firearms, that is where the similarities end.

Utilizing state of the art design, manufacturing, and materials, every component of the rifle has been engineered to be lighter and stronger than its predecessors. In addition to a 4-pound weight reduction, the M107A1 is optimized for use with a sound suppressor, providing a much-needed signature reduction capability to the warfighter. Lighter, stronger, more accurate, and more capable; the M107A1 has truly been engineered for action.⁶³

62 See <https://barrett.net/products/firearms/model-82a1/>.

63 See <https://barrett.net/products/firearms/m107a1/>.

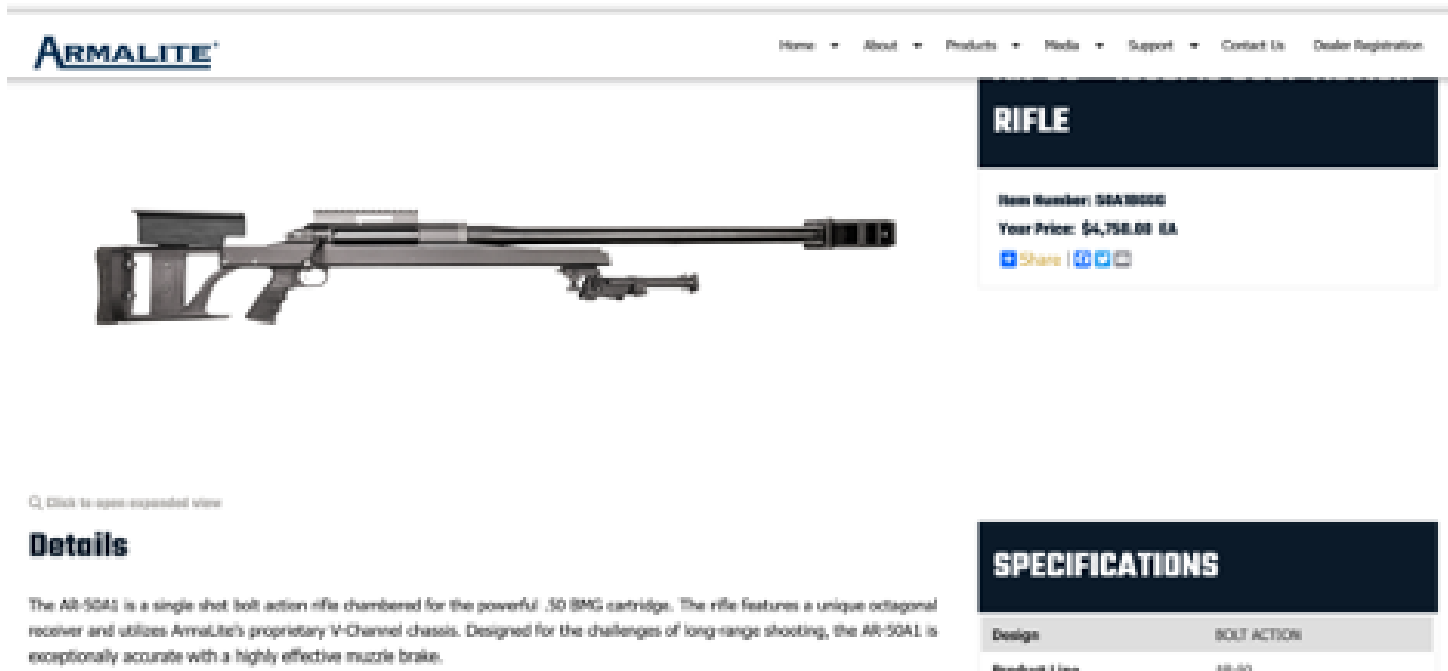
ADDITIONAL 50 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLES

Fifty caliber sniper rifles are produced by numerous manufacturers in addition to Barrett. The VPC has identified sniper rifles from these manufacturers in Mexico trafficking cases.

Armalite

College Station, TX

www.armalite.com



The screenshot shows the Armalite website's product page for the AR-50A1 rifle. The page features a large image of the rifle on the left. To the right, there is a dark blue header with the word "RIFLE" in white. Below this, the item number "50A1BGGG" and the price "\$4,750.00 EA" are displayed. There are also social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Below the image, there is a "Details" section with a description of the rifle. To the right of the details is a "SPECIFICATIONS" section with a table.

ARMALITE Home About Products Media Support Contact Us Dealer Registration

RIFLE

Item Number: 50A1BGGG
Your Price: \$4,750.00 EA
[Share](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#)

Click to open expanded view

Details

The AR-50A1 is a single shot bolt action rifle chambered for the powerful .50 BMG cartridge. The rifle features a unique octagonal receiver and utilizes Armalite's proprietary V-Channel chassis. Designed for the challenges of long-range shooting, the AR-50A1 is exceptionally accurate with a highly effective muzzle brake.

SPECIFICATIONS

Design	BOLT ACTION
Revolvent Line	AR-50

According to Armalite, “The AR-50A1 is a single shot bolt action rifle chambered for the powerful .50 BMG cartridge. The rifle features a unique octagonal receiver and utilizes Armalite’s proprietary V-Channel chassis. Designed for the challenges of long-range shooting, the AR-50A1 is exceptionally accurate with a highly effective muzzle brake.”⁶⁴ Armalite is one of the brands, like McMillan Firearms, that comprise Strategic Armory Corps, which “build[s] premium products in the United States, by Americans, for Americans.”⁶⁵

64 See <https://www.armalite.com/SACItem.aspx?Item=50A1BGGG>.

65 See <https://www.armalite.com/Armalite/About-Us>.

Bushmaster

Carson City, NV

www.bushmaster.com⁶⁶



Originally designed by Georgia manufacturer Cobb Manufacturing, in 2007 Bushmaster purchased Cobb, moving its manufacturing from Georgia to Maine, where Bushmaster was headquartered. Within two years, the 50 caliber rifle was offered by the company. Bushmaster was eventually acquired by Freedom Group, which later rebranded itself as Remington Outdoors, where the gun was marketed under the Remington nameplate as the R2Mi. The guns were reportedly built to order with a starting retail price of \$4,599. Following the collapse and breakup of the companies that comprised Remington Outdoors, the resultant stand-alone iteration of Remington does not currently offer a 50 caliber weapon. By 2023 guns were once again being marketed under the Bushmaster brand, now relocated to Carson City, Nevada, with its website in 2025 promoting the gun, promising, “BUSHMASTER’S LONG RANGE HERO IS BACK (AND IMPROVED).”⁶⁷

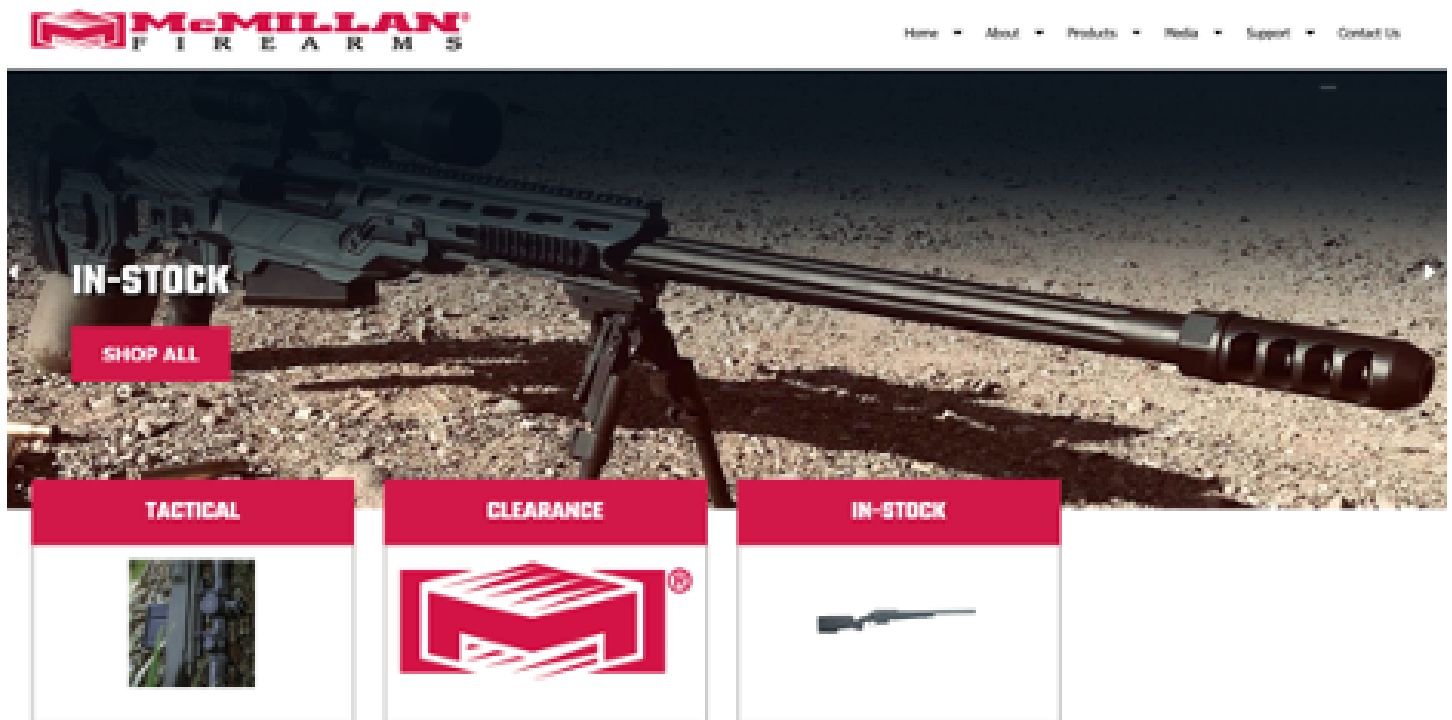
66 This is the current iteration of the company.

67 “Remington Announces R2MI .50 Caliber Bolt Action Rifle,” *Guns.com*, May 15, 2020, <https://www.guns.com/news/2020/05/15/remington-announces-r2mi-50-caliber-bolt-action-rifle/>; “New for 2020: Remington R2Mi .50 BMG Rifle,” *American Rifleman*, May 31, 2020, <https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/new-for-2020-remington-r2mi-50-bmg-rifle/> Bushmaster BA50 FDE, <https://www.bushmaster.com/shop/ba50/bushmaster-ba50-fde/>.

McMillan Firearms

College Station, TX

<https://www.mcmillanfirearms.com>



In describing its “best-of-breed tactical rifles” — in a range of calibers, including .50 — “designed for the needs of the professional marksman,” the company states:

Through years of experience working with elite tactical forces stationed around the world, we have determined what works and what doesn’t under the extreme conditions of actual military and law enforcement tactical applications. The McMillan Tactical Rifle represents a best-of-breed tactical rifle for the professional marksman.

Our rifles offer the features that working professional marksman demand. Our equipment works reliably every time — the way it is supposed to. It ergonomically fits the marksman, not just for a few shots at the range, but for hours or days hunkered down in a hide, waiting for a target to emerge. And our heritage of precision accuracy built into every McMillan tactical rifle has broken long range world records at competitive events, as well as on the battlefield.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ See <https://www.mcmillanfirearms.com/f1ea4f3a-d532-4b21-bc09-9b074811e059>.

The McMillan tactical rifle is designed for the professional marksman assigned with a critical mission in the harsh conditions of the real world.

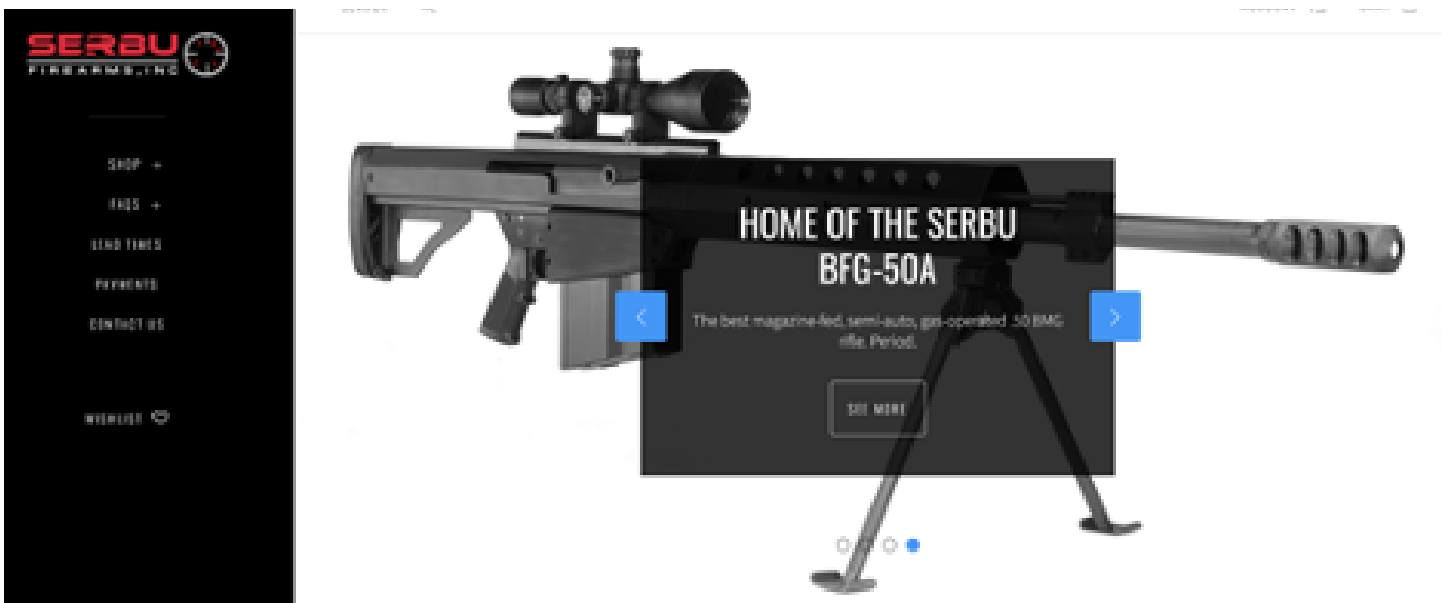
Describing its 50 caliber rifle, priced at \$11,670, the company states, “The McMillan TAC-50C is an update to the renowned TAC-50A1. The TAC-50C features the new folding Cadex Dual Strike chassis system. It includes an adjustable cheekpiece with vertical adjustment and an adjustable length of pull. The stock incorporates a smaller pistol grip to fit a wider range of hand shapes, with and without gloves. Three 1913 MIL-STD rail sections allow for customization of accessories.” The potential buyer is told that “Customer Service will contact you about Paint Customization.”

Serbu Firearms, Inc.

Tampa, FL

<https://serbu.com>

Visitors to Serbu’s website are greeted by a range of 50 caliber rifles.⁶⁹



The page for the 50 caliber BFG-50 with a 22-inch barrel, priced at \$2,595, proclaims, “Great News: For the first time in several years, we actually have BFG-50 rifles in stock, ready to ship!” Descriptive text adds:

⁶⁹ See <https://serbu.com/>.

The BFG-50 — the first design from Serbu Firearms — is a bolt action, single shot rifle. The BFG-50 is constructed using the most modern manufacturing methods and is made from the highest quality MIL-spec alloy steels. In continuous production since 1999, the BFG-50 was Mark Serbu's first rifle design. It has been thoroughly proven with over 2000 rifles delivered. While the price of this gun is incredibly reasonable, the low quality that one usually expects with a low price is not a fact of life with the BFG-50. How can this be done? Low overhead, and a design that's optimized for manufacturability as well as performance and quality. The BFG-50 is a perfect gun for the enthusiast who has always wanted to have a .50 BMG rifle, but doesn't want to spend \$3,000+ to get one.⁷⁰



In describing its RN-50 rifle, priced at \$1,599, the company states, “Our newest .50 caliber rifle — as well as the most affordable, the RN-50 is a break action with threaded breech that just can't be beaten”⁷¹ and boasts:

The RN-50 represents the first time a production firearm has ever been inspired by social media. Designed in conjunction with YouTube celebrity Royal Nonesuch.⁷² The RN-50 is a unique approach to the .50BMG rifle. Rugged, lightweight, accurate, easy takedown and low price make this rifle a winner! The simple screw-on breech cap is not only strong, it applies absolutely symmetrical support to the cartridge case, allowing for incredible accuracy. Using top quality materials as well as parts from our proven BFG-50 rifle, the RN-50 gives you high quality at an incredible price, along with lineage to a safe, proven firearm that's been in production for 17+

70 See <https://serbu.com/bfg-50-22-barrel/>.

71 See <https://serbu.com/rn-50-22-barrel/>.

72 RN stands for Royal Nonesuch, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GR4jdHe6uiE>.

years. Whether you're looking for the least expensive way to get into shooting .50BMG or you want to outshoot your friends' expensive match rifle, the RN-50 is for you!⁷³

Steyr Arms

Austria

<https://www.steyr-arms.com/en>



On its website, the Austrian gun manufacturer describes the HS .50 M1 as “the ultimate long-range hitter,” adding:

The STEYR HS .50 opens an era of longrange shooting. The cold hammer forged barrel ensures excellent precision up to a distance of 1,500 m. Directly after assembly, the weapon is ready for use. Taking off the barrel complete with optics takes only a few seconds. The ‘Side Loading Magazine’ enables to switch the magazine without changing the position.⁷⁴

73 See <https://serbu.com/rn-50-22-barrel/>.

74 See <https://www.steyr-arms.com/en/hunting-rifles/hs-50-m1/>.

On its website, gun seller Atlantic Firearms promises, “Capable of sending a .50 caliber projectile well over 1000 yards with surgical precision, this rifle will generate its own version of shock and awe on the range!”⁷⁵

Zastava Arms USA

Des Plaines, IL

<https://zastavaarmsusa.com>

Zastava Arms USA “is the exclusive importer of Zastava Arms products to US.” On its website, the company explains that:

Recognizing the need to promote Zastava Arms brand in the world’s biggest firearms market, ZASTAVA ARMS USA provides distribution, warranty and repair work along with a well-stocked parts department out of its warehouse in the U.S.

ZASTAVA ARMS USA is proud to be one of the few companies in the world that can provide it’s [sic] customers with the highest quality products reflected in 165 years of experience in making firearms.

The company, the website notes, is “the cradle of Serbian industry.”⁷⁶



According to promotional text for the company’s 50 caliber Black Arrow M93 “long range rifle,” the weapon “is designed on the basis of Mauser action M98, which is proven to be precise and reliable system of bolt-action guns. Great for various types of targets at large distances, up to 1,600 m, in all environments.”⁷⁷

75 See <https://atlanticfirearms.com/steyr-hs-50-m1-mountain-50-cal-bmg-rifle>.

76 See <https://zastavaarmsusa.com/history/>.

77 See <https://zastavaarmsusa.com/product/black-arrow-m93/>.



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