

RCBS, Inc. was founded by Fred Huntington in 1943 in Oroville, California and later became one of the world's largest manufacturers of reloading equipment. The name RCBS is derived from the name of the dies the company was founded to produce: "**Rock Chuck Bullet Swage.**"

As few good varmint bullets were produced prior to the early 1940's Huntington decided to make his own and designed dies to swage .22 rimfire cartridge cases to form jackets for those bullets.



Fred Huntington couldn't remember when his interest in firearms began. "I have always loved guns and gun collecting," he said when asked about his early shooting career. Huntington is the champion of reloading. He made his mark in the industry when he designed and constructed a better reloading press. Fred concocted numerous other innovations that promoted the art of handloading ammunition. But Fred Huntington was not always involved in providing reliable reloading tools. He spent more than half his life in another trade.

Fred Huntington's father, also named Fred, was born in Bloomington, Illinois. He was a salesman who moved west in 1906—way west, all the way to Oroville in northern California, with Mrs. Huntington, who was born about 100 miles from St. Louis, Missouri. In Oroville, the elder Huntington opened a laundry and dry-cleaning plant. He was no laundryman, but he took possession of the plant in lieu of a \$5000 loan. It seemed the only way to collect on the debt. Huntington Sr. learned the business and turned the establishment into a thriving operation.

Young Fred, born 20 days before Christmas in 1912, enjoyed his early years in Oroville. Although his father preferred fishing over hunting—and although "He was usually too busy with the laundry to take me shooting," Fred Junior found the opportunity to push hundreds of bullets downbore. Shooting was his passion. When Fred finished high school, he attended laundry and dry-cleaning school for one year and went straight into his father's business. Fred liked Oroville and planned to live his life there. The most direct route to success and to remaining in the California town was to continue with the laundry business. And that's what our reloading captain did—for quite some time.

Fred recalls beginning with serious shooting in 1937. His endearment to firearms, reloading and hunting was a continuous involvement. Fred Huntington Jr. was pulled like metal fragments to a magnet by "the back room," where his deepest interest rested—the nucleus of a tool-and-die empire was maturing. Fortune sometimes wears a crooked smile. Fred Huntington had a terrible time getting all of the ammunition he wanted in the early 1940s. Had this dearth of ammunition not prevailed, our man may never have embarked on a new career. At this juncture, in 1941, Fred came across a book written by W. F. Vickery, a well-known gunsmith of the era. The book, *Advanced Gunsmithing*, changed Fred's life. Between its covers was an explanation of how to make both a press and dies for the creation of 22-caliber bullets. In the rear of the laundry was an old Seneca Falls lathe. Fred Huntington went to work with the lathe, and when he was finished, he was in the bullet-making business. He contacted W. F. Vickery, who took an interest in Fred, shipping him a set of Vickery-made 22- bullet dies so that the young man could compare them with his own creations. From a study of the Vickery dies, Huntington knew he was on the right track. He was happier in the work of making bullets than he had ever been in getting clothes clean.

A truly good product will, in part, promote itself. Soon, Huntington was driving to San Francisco on a regular basis delivering his wares. Now his dies needed a name. Wotkyns said why not call them the "Rock Chuck Bullet Swages?" After all, Fred's dies were for the 22-caliber bullet that was used mainly in the varmint rifle. The name, albeit unwieldy, stuck. Fred decided to reduce the title to its initials, RCBS. If you haven't heard of RCBS, you don't reload.

After trying to convince his son to continue with the laundry plant, Mr. Huntington decided it would be good if Fred moved his enterprise to a new location.

So in 1948, Fred had his own shop. It was very small—only 20 feet by 20 feet in dimension, but in it wondrous things were happening. In my opinion, there's not a great businessman who hasn't an affinity for attracting intelligent people to help promote his ideas.

Fred's small shop could not accommodate the great demand for his products. He had to impound his own garage for more shop space. That move helped for only a short while. In 1954, Fred built a larger shop, 30 by 60 feet, right next to the old one. Since he owned the adjacent land anyway, he figured he might as well use it. "This plant, I felt, would serve our needs for many years," he predicted. But it didn't. While Huntington's RCBS company needed a larger facility within two years, Fred waited until 1958 to build his full-scale RCBS operation. The new establishment began as a 7500-square-foot factory, soon expanding to 50,000 square feet.

In 1976, Fred sold the RCBS interest to Omark Industries. "I had hired 250 people by then," Huntington said. "From about 1965 to 1976, my company had the largest payroll in Butte County."

Fred Huntington would have been a starburst success had he remained in the laundry and dry-cleaning business. He's the kind of guy who probably would have come up with a way to bleach raspberry stains out of white shirts. Fred is inventive, energetic and willing to take a chance. He would have made it in any business because of his talent and tenacity. He could have been a success had he opened an ice cube factory in tile Arctic Circle. His abilities all furthered his efforts. The ability to design ingenious tools, the ability to organize people, a knowledge of the manufacturing process, and the art of selling combined to make Fred Huntington the leader of the reloading industry. People like the Huntington product, and Huntington, the man. "I made not only customers for our products but many friends!" Fred reflected one day. For more information and the complete story, go to www.huntingtonsports.com/specialinterest.html.

Today, RCBS has been the leading producer of high-quality reloading equipment for over 60 years. The company, which is based in Oroville, California, is part of ATK's Civil Ammunition Systems Group. For more information on RCBS, visit www.rcbs.com.

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ATK Sporting Group

ATK Sporting Group is a portfolio-based consumer branded products company that is the leader in sporting, law enforcement and military ammunition. In addition, ATK Sporting Group is a leading supplier of firearms and accessories for hunting, shooting and outdoor markets.

ATK was launched as an independent company in 1990, when Honeywell spun off its defense businesses to shareholders. The former Honeywell businesses had supplied defense products and systems to the U.S. and its allies for 50 years, including the first electronic autopilot that enabled B-17 aircraft to accomplish pinpoint bombing missions during World War II.

ATK expanded into the aerospace market with the acquisitions of Hercules Aerospace Company in 1995 and Thiokol Propulsion in 2001, which transformed the company into the world's largest supplier of solid propellant rocket motors and a leading provider of high-performance composite structures.

A series of other acquisitions and key contract wins have continued to increase the company's presence in the aerospace, defense, and commercial markets:

2000

Selected to operate Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, the U.S.'s Government small-caliber ammunition manufacturing facility.

2001

2001 Acquired the commercial ammunition businesses of Blount International, which made ATK the nation's largest manufacturer of ammunition.

2002

Acquired the ordnance business of Boeing, which brought together ATK's munitions portfolio with the products and capabilities of a leading military gun manufacturer.

2002

Acquired the assets of Science and Applied Technology, Inc., which added critical precision seeker, guidance, and system-level expertise.

2003

Acquired Composite Optics, Inc., which made ATK the world leader in composite space structures.

2003

Acquired GASL and Micro Craft, which added leading-edge propulsion and airframe technologies for highly demanding aerospace and defense applications.

2004

Acquired Mission Research Corporation, which enabled an advanced to aerospace and defense technology pipeline spanning concept development full-scale production.

2004

Acquired the PSI Group, which strengthened ATK's space systems portfolio and positioned the company to capture emerging opportunities in spacecraft integration and satellite technology.

2007

2007 Acquired Swales Aerospace, adding enhanced systems engineering and engineering services to ATK's existing space launch, space exploration, small satellite, and spacecraft markets.

2009

Acquired Eagle Industries as a wholly-owned subsidiary, expanding position in the domestic and international accessories markets serving military and law enforcement customers.

2010

Acquired BLACKHAWK! Products Group, which added tactical, military and law enforcement equipment expanding ATK's product base and market penetration in the growing security markets.

2013

Acquired Caliber Company, parent company of Savage Sports Corporation. Savage is one of the world's largest manufacturers of hunting rifles and shotguns, to complement ATK's highly recognized hunting and shooting sports brands.

2013

Acquired Bushnell Group Holdings, Inc., a leading global designer, marketer and distributor of branded sports optics, outdoor accessories and performance eyewear. The company offers a broad portfolio of high-quality, innovative and affordable products targeted to the outdoor and sport enthusiast.

After the tour, and you have a spare moment before heading home, go next door to Huntington's Sportsman's Store.



There you will find a historic collection of firearms that Fred Huntington collected over the years.



There is also an extensive taxidermy collection.





All very much worth the time. So, enjoy your day here in Oroville!!

As a side note, SC-OR monitors ATK / RCBS as one of our industrial dischargers. They have three (or are about to) outfalls: the Powder Paint line, the Black Oxide line, and a Tumbling line.