

They're all assault weapons

by BRIAN LOCKHART

There is an annual British Car Show held in Caledon every year.

I was able to attend the last one and spent a couple of hours talking to car owners about their vintage and classic cars from across the pond.

One vehicle really caught my eye. It was a small but classy and stylish number, vintage early 60's. It looked like something that you would see in a European spy movie from that decade.

"That's quite the James Bond car you have there," I said to the owner.

He laughed.

"Hardly," he replied. "It looks good but it barely has 60 horsepower. It's weak and under-powered."

He explained he had to keep to the back roads and bi-ways because it lacked the power to keep up with traffic.

Yes, looks can be deceiving.

The recent government announcement banning certain 'assault'-style guns may sound like a good way to keep bullet-spraying maniacs off the street, but the truth is those guns are no different than any other gun. They just have a military style which some people just don't like.

All guns are essentially 'assault' weapons - they're guns. They aren't designed to throw popcorn and cupcakes. They are designed to fire hot lead at a target.

If you want to get down to real basics and define an 'assault' rifle, it is a weapon designed for warfare in particular, and includes the ability to have selective fire.

Selective fire means the rifle can fire a single shot, a burst, or enable fully automatic fire and empty the entire clip in one trigger pull.

Automatic weapons, those which can empty an entire magazine with a single pull of the trigger are already prohibited in Canada.

So how will banning 'assault'-style weapons reduce gun crimes in Canada? It won't.

The vast majority of gun-related murders in this country are caused by handguns, and are being used by criminals - not law-abiding gun owners.

A law-abiding gun owner keeps the rifle locked in a cabinet with a trigger lock in place and ammunition stored elsewhere, in keeping with current gun laws.

Criminals carry their guns tucked in an over sized coat with the magazine loaded and a round in the chamber.

Law-abiding gun owners don't carry a rifle around town to use as protection.

Criminals DO carry their guns around town and they are used for protection - against other criminals.

You are more likely to be injured or killed by a stray round from a street-level gun fight than you are from a shot fired by a legal and responsible gun owner.

This new ban prohibits rifles that have that modern military look. However is an AR-15 rifle more dangerous than any other weapon?

The Lee Enfield .303 was a military weapon used prior to, and during the Second World War. At the end of the war, there were millions of surplus .303's available for sale. There are thousands of them still in use in Canada. I remember when they sold them in the Sears catalogue.

A Lee Enfield has tremendous power. It can stop a full-size moose at 500 yards, probably farther. However, there is no push to eliminate the .303 and pull them from far north First Nations Reservations where that rifle is used for hunting because of its reliability in cold weather ? because First Nations people use them for hunting ? not shooting each other.

Canada has one of the highest per capita gun ownership rates in the world, and yet we also have one of the lowest murder rates. People are simply not going around using their rifles to kill people.

Banning weapons simply because they are styled like military weapons will have no effect on public safety at all. It just means the government is demanding some citizens give up their legally purchased property under the guise of reducing crime.

And yet that same government does nothing to stop the trade of illegal guns coming across the border in well established routes.

Border officials may catch the odd person trying to smuggle a hand gun into the country, but the real smuggling routes are avoided to protect the government's politically correct persona.

If the government really wants to crack down on gun violence, they are looking off in the wrong direction.

It's time to go after the street thugs who carry illegal weapons, not legal and law-abiding gun owners who follow the rules and shoot for sport.