



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND
EXPLOSIVES

Firearms Technology Branch

DATE: 6-30-2011

YOU [REDACTED]

FTB [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives
[REDACTED]

The Firearms Technology Branch (FTB) recently received a technical examination request under your above-referenced investigation number for the following—

Exhibit 1: Ten (10) projectiles made of a brass material described as "Trident bullets." The projectiles are advertised as "Turned solid brass bullets." The Exhibit contained two exemplars of each of the following .223 caliber projectiles: Trident 28 grain, Trident 30 grain, Trident 36 grain, Trident 55 grain, and Trident 62 grain.

As defined in 18 U.S.C. Section 921(a)(17)(B), the term "armor piercing ammunition" means—

... (i) a projectile or projectile core which may be used in a handgun and which is constructed entirely (excluding the presence of traces of other substances) from one or a combination of tungsten alloys, steel, iron, brass, bronze, beryllium copper, or depleted uranium; or (ii) a full jacketed projectile larger than .22 caliber designed and intended for use in a handgun and whose jacket has a weight of more than 25 percent of the total weight the projectile.

Additionally, 18 U.S.C. Section 922(a)(7) states that it shall be unlawful "for any person to manufacture or import armor piercing ammunition, except that this paragraph shall not apply to—(A) the manufacture or importation of such ammunition for the use of the United States or any department or agency thereof or any State or any department, agency, or political subdivision thereof.... Further, Section 922(a)(8) specifies that it shall be unlawful "for any manufacturer or importer to sell or deliver armor piercing ammunition, except that this paragraph shall not apply to— (A) the manufacture or importation of such ammunition for the use of the United States or any department or agency thereof or any State or any department, agency, or political subdivision thereof."

Brass is an alloy metal (which means a metal made by combining different metals) composed primarily of copper and zinc. The amount of copper varies between 55 percent and 95 percent by weight depending on the type of brass and its intended use. Projectiles that are manufactured from brass and which can be used in a pistol would be classified as *armor piercing ammunition* as defined.

The above-listed Exhibit was examined by FTB Firearms Enforcement Officer (FEO) Earl Griffith and determined to consist of brass projectiles, which are "armor piercing ammunition" per 921(a)(17)(B). Consequently, Exhibit 1 constitutes armor piercing ammunition.

This Exhibit will be returned shortly via FedEx. If you have further questions concerning any technical issues pertaining to this case, you may contact FEO Griffith.

John R. Spencer
Chief, Firearms Technology Branch