



ATF Firearms Technology Branch

Technical Bulletin 14-01

UNCLASSIFIED/LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

October 28, 2013

Unfinished “80%” AR-15 Type Receivers

There are many unfinished AR-15 type receivers being marketed as so-called “80%” receivers. It is important to note that Federal firearms statutes and supplemental regulations do not employ the terms “80%,” “80% finished,” or “80% complete.”

These terms are industry vernacular and are neither recognized nor defined in Federal firearms statutes and regulations. These marketing terms are used by the industry to indicate that, in their opinion, an unfinished receiver has not yet reached a point in the manufacturing process where it should be classified as a “firearm” as defined in the amended Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA).

As background, the GCA, 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(3), defines the term “firearm” to include *any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive...[and] ...the frame or receiver of any such weapon....*

Unfinished AR-15 type receivers that do not meet the definition of a “firearm” are not subject to regulation under GCA provisions; however, they are still considered defense articles per the U.S. Munitions Import List and, therefore, require an ATF Form 6 for importation into the U.S.

The ATF Firearms Technology Branch (FTB) has previously determined that an AR-15 type receiver which has no machining of any kind performed in the area of the trigger/hammer (fire-control) recess (or cavity) might not be classified as a firearm. Such a receiver could have **all** other machining operations performed, including pivot-pin and takedown-pin hole(s) and clearance for the takedown-pin lug, but must be completely solid and un-machined in the fire-control recess/cavity area. We have determined that in order to be considered “completely solid and un-machined in the fire-control recess/cavity area,” the takedown-pin lug clearance area must be no longer than .800 inch, measured from immediately forward of the front of the buffer-retainer hole. (see photo below)



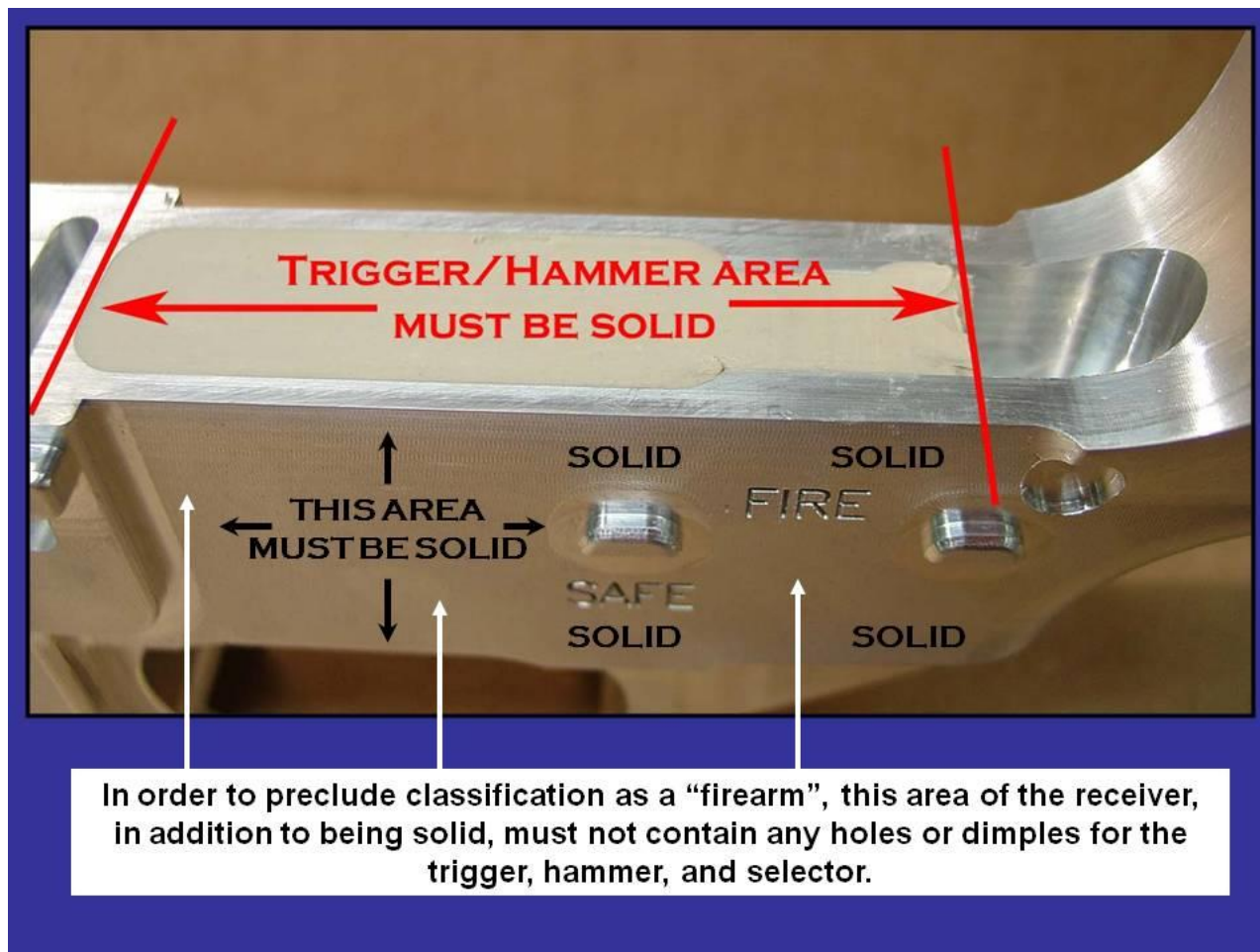
ATF Firearms Technology Branch

Technical Bulletin 14-01

Page 1 of 6

October 28, 2013

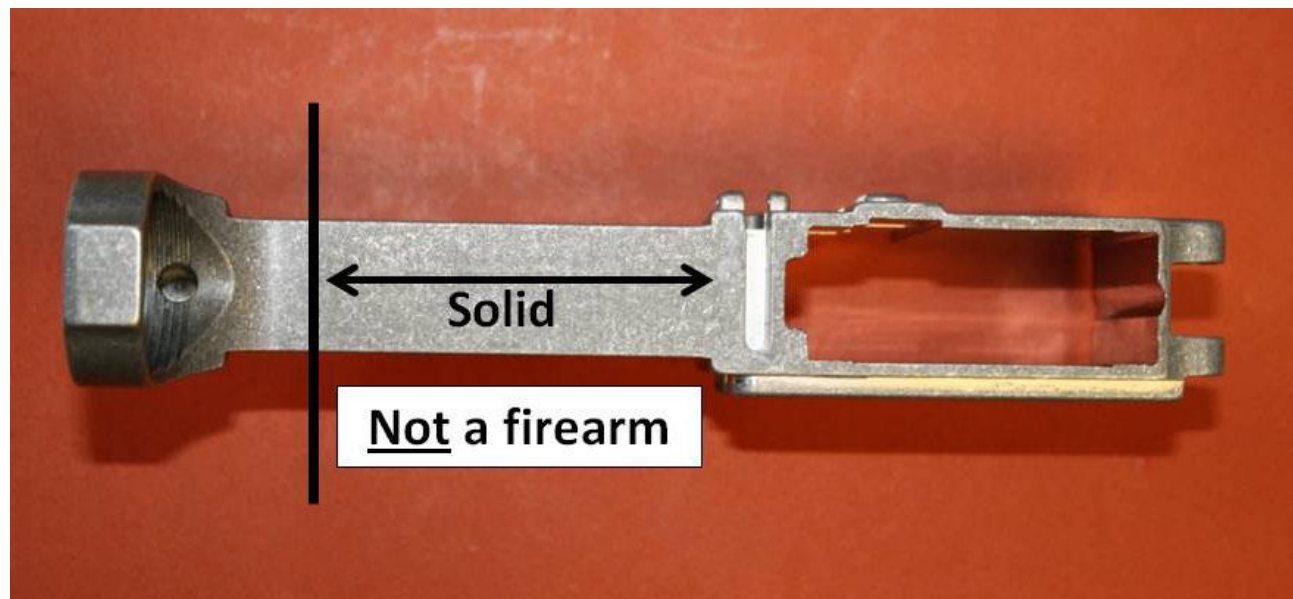
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However, FTB has examined many "80%" AR-15 type receivers and has found that, in some cases, items being marketed as "80%" actually meet the definition of a "firearm" as defined.

The following photos depict the most commonly encountered variations of unfinished "80%" AR-15 type firearm receivers and are provided to assist you in determining their classification status.



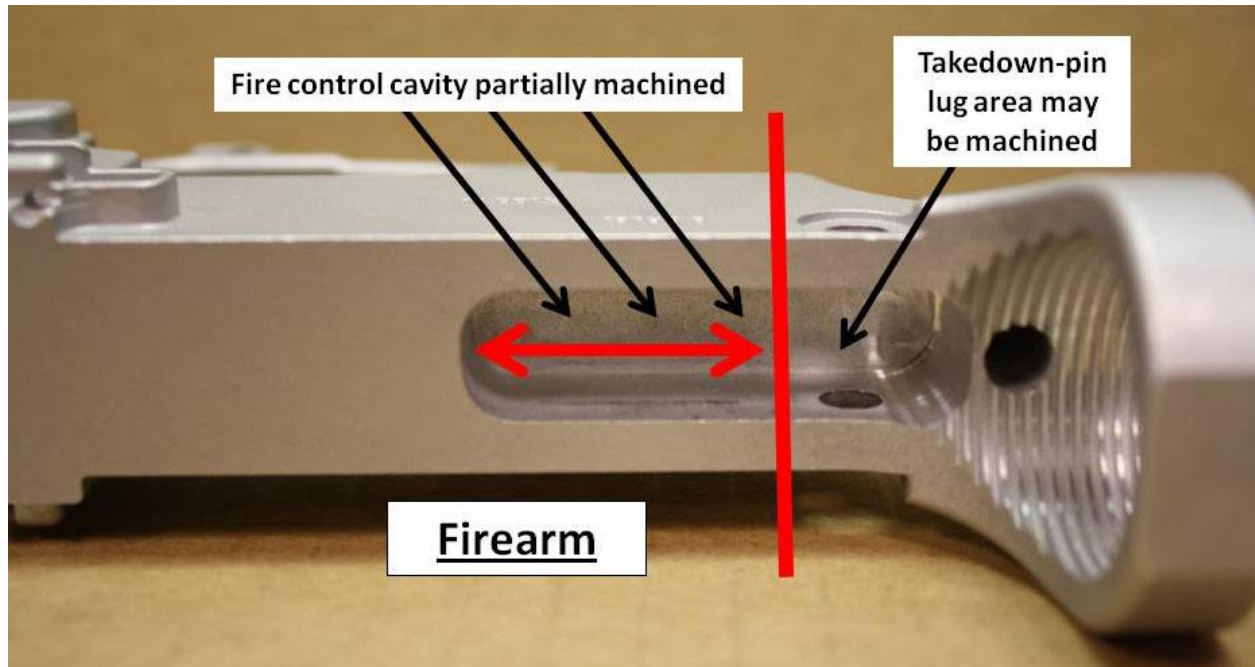


Example 1



Example 2





Example 3

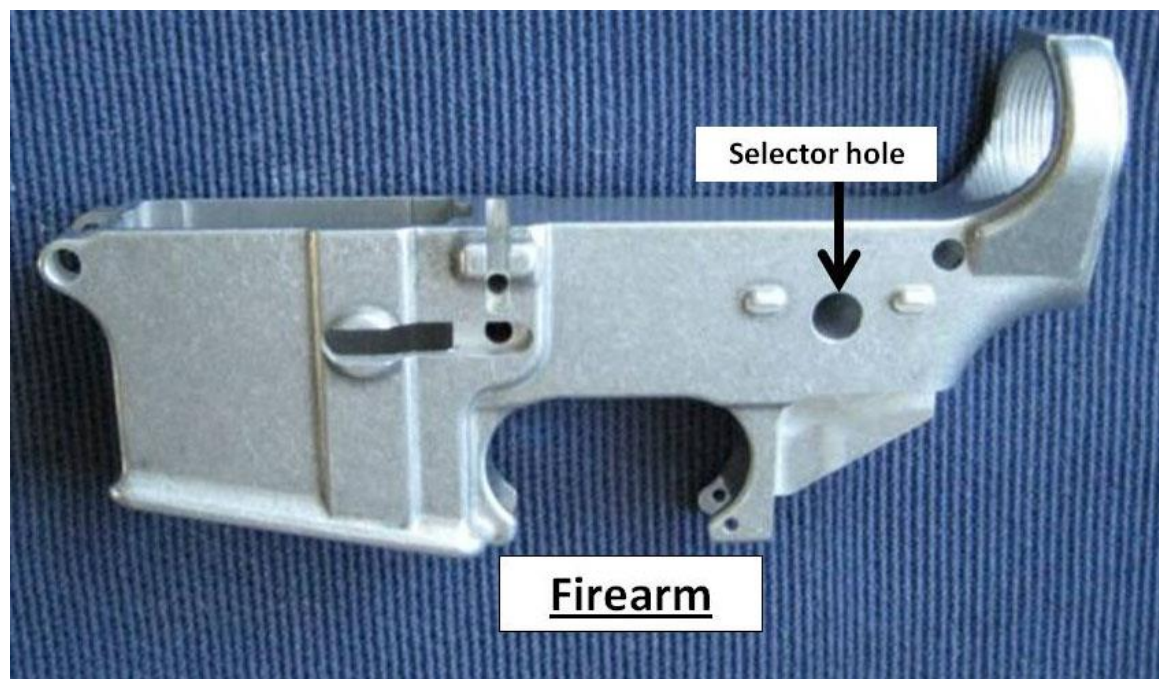


Example 4





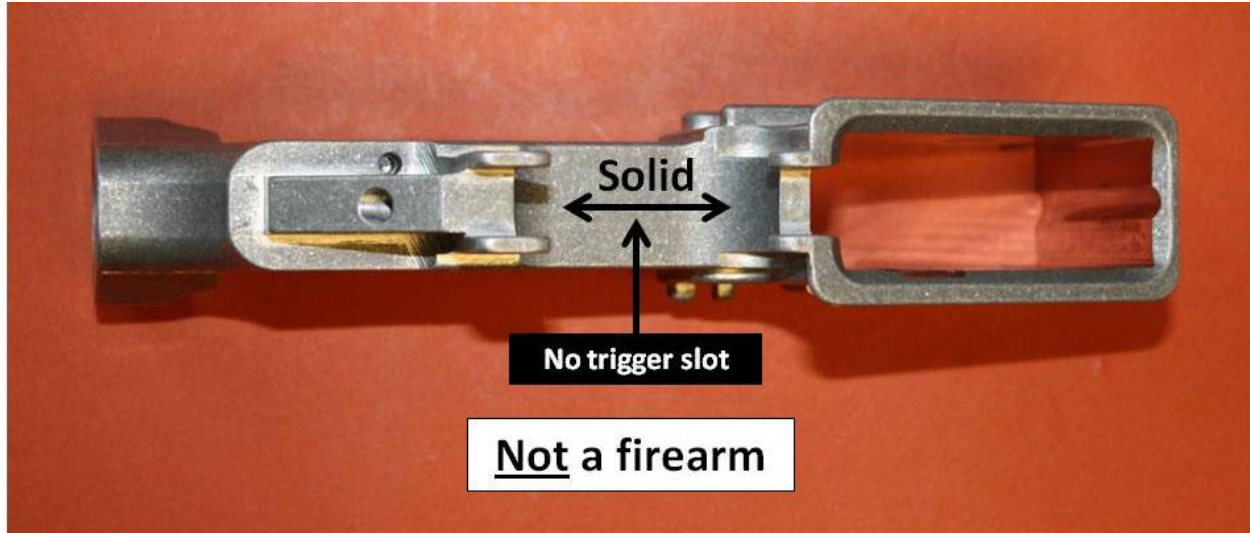
Example 5



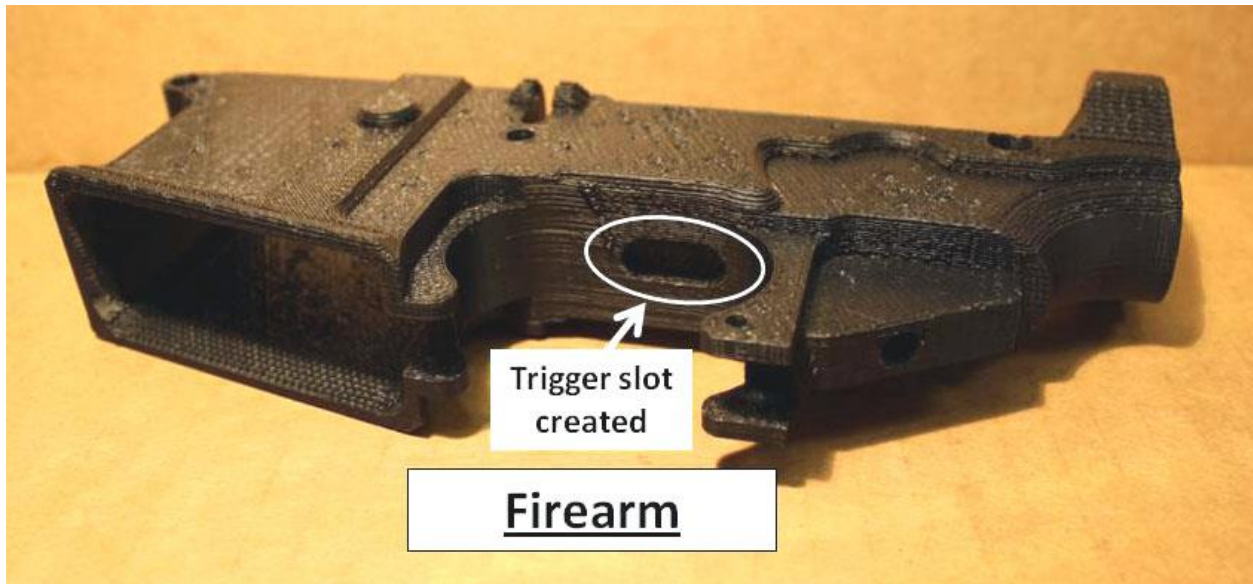
Example 6



ATF Firearms Technology Branch Technical Bulletin 14-01



Example 7



Example 8

This general guidance is provided to assist ATF Special Agents and Industry Operations Investigators, but is not meant to be used in lieu of a formal determination. FTB cannot render a formal determination without physically examining a submitted sample.

If you encounter any variations not depicted or described in this bulletin, or, if you have any additional questions, please contact FTB.

