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The National Firearms Act (NFA), 26 U.S.C. § 5845(a), defines "firearm" to include... (3) *a rifle having a barrel or barrels of less than 16 inches in length* and (5) *"any other weapon" as defined in subsection (e).*

Finally, the NFA, 26 U.S.C. § 5845(e), defines "any other weapon" (AOW) as: *Any weapon or device capable of being concealed on the person from which a shot can be discharged through the energy of an explosive, a pistol or revolver having a barrel with a smooth bore designed or redesigned to fire a fixed shotgun shell, weapons with combination shotgun and rifle barrels 12 inches or more, less than 18 inches in length, from which only a single discharge can be made from either barrel without manual reloading, and any such weapon which may be readily restored to fire. Such term shall not include a pistol or a revolver having a rifled bore, or rifled bores, or weapons designed, made, or intended to be fired from the shoulder and not capable of firing fixed ammunition.*

Your specific question is in italics below, followed by FTISB's response:

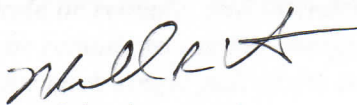
Q) Would the addition of a vertical foregrip to an AR-15 pistol longer than 26 inches in overall length with a barrel less than 16 inches and no buttstock change the classification of the pistol?

A) Yes, the weapon that you describe would be classified as a "firearm" under the GCA. The attachment of a vertical forward grip to a pistol results in that pistol no longer being designed to be held and fired by the use of a single hand; thus, it cannot qualify as a "handgun" or "pistol" as defined above in Federal statutes and regulations. Therefore, the subject weapon you describe would no longer be classified as a pistol.

Further, the subject firearm would not be subject to the NFA/AOW classification since its overall length is at least 26 inches and provided it is not actually concealed on the person.

We thank you for your inquiry and trust the foregoing has been responsive to your inquiry.

Sincerely yours,



Michael R. Curtis
Chief, Firearms Technology Industry Services Branch