

The

ATLATL

“Too long have I hunted mammoth alone!”

Rich McWhorter

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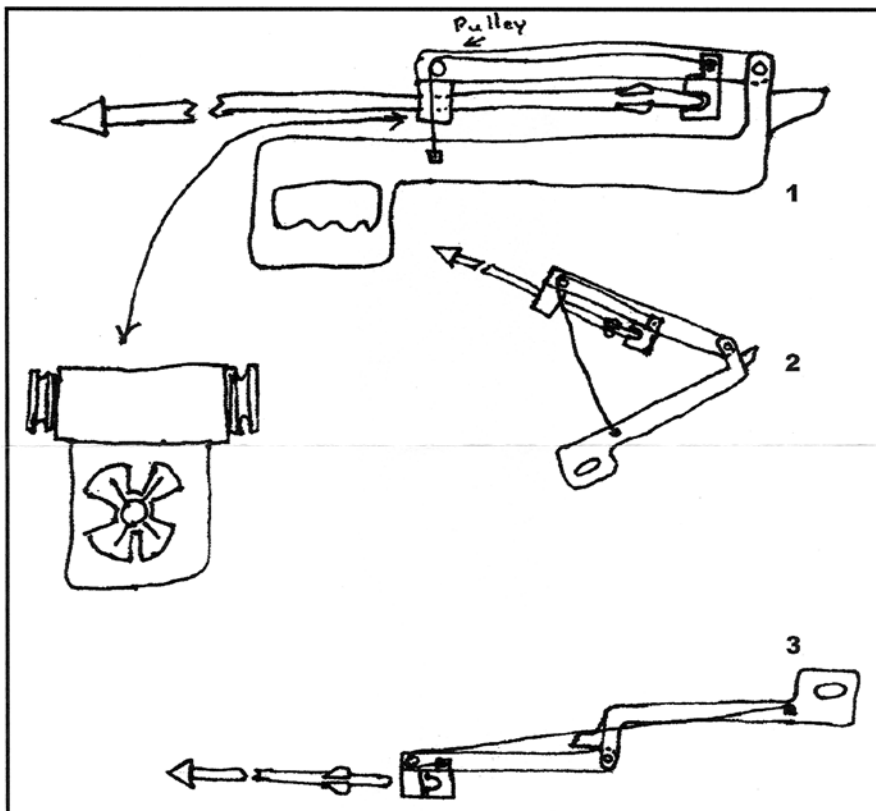
The Williams Compound Elbow-Cam Atlatl

By Bill Tate

More than a dozen years ago, I exchanged letters and information with an atlatl enthusiast from Santa Rosa, California named Charles E. Williams. He gave me this freehand-drawn, rather crude set of plans for his “Elbow-Cam” atlatl, in the hopes that I would construct it. My manufacturing abilities didn’t match his inventive talents and the thing was never attempted.

He stated that he had thought up this idea in the mid to late 1980s and referred to it as a “Progressive--Compound Elbow--Cam Atlatl, with a jointed double beam.” Further, he stated that “it would need considerable development, but the basics are straightforward enough.”

In notes attached to the drawing, he indicated: “Drawing 1 (with inset) through 3 show the ‘Simple--Compound’ atlatl.” He explained that the “Simple--Compound gives exactly twice the projectile velocity of a comparable non-compound atlatl.” He went on to say, “By substituting a double-stage-spool for the simple pulley, any reasonable ratio of projectile-to-arm velocity can be attained.” It would take more of an engineer than I to fully comprehend that, but we have a great deal of talent within the organization and maybe one of you will build it.



Drawing 1 (top) shows the atlatl loaded ready to launch. Note, that his inset was drawn upside down from the way I present it here. If I am wrong in turning it, I apologize, but in my mind, it just doesn’t seem to work as drawn. I corrected the plans based on the location of the two pulleys which show up on either side of this part.

Drawing 2 (middle) shows the atlatl in mid-launch.

Drawing 3 (bottom) shows the atlatl full-forward as the dart is launched.

Charles didn’t identify any of the parts except to indicate the pulley in the top illustration, stating that the other parts, “are self evident as to function.”

I have had this awful fear that I will die and this set of plans will be disposed of as just so much junk, and it might be another thousand

years before it is once more invented. It is my hope that one (or more) of you will attempt building this long-neglected project. It looks as if it really will work although I cannot judge just how accurate such a launcher would be. If in truth, it will increase the velocity by double or more, it might be the atlatl to beat Dave Engvall's long distance Guinness world record. Good luck, and I hope any builder(s) will keep me informed on their progress.

