

# Strange Ports and Fine Guns

by: Stephen D. Marvin

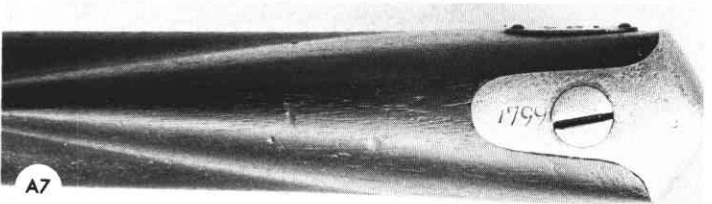
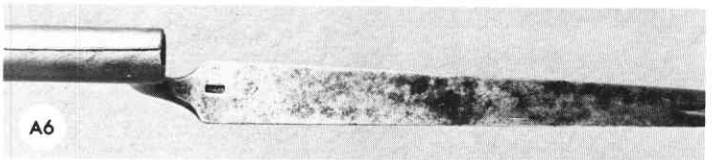
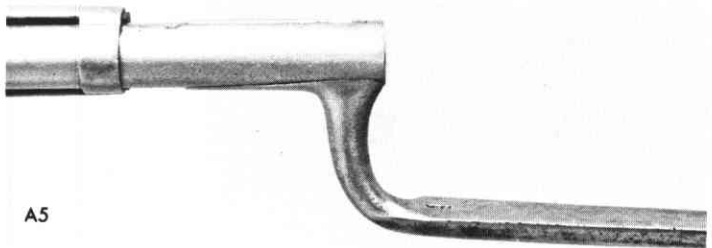
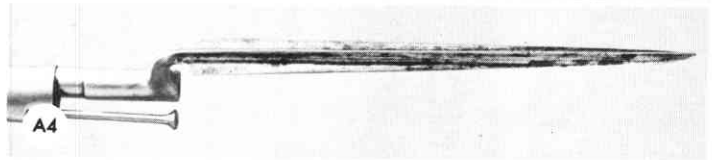
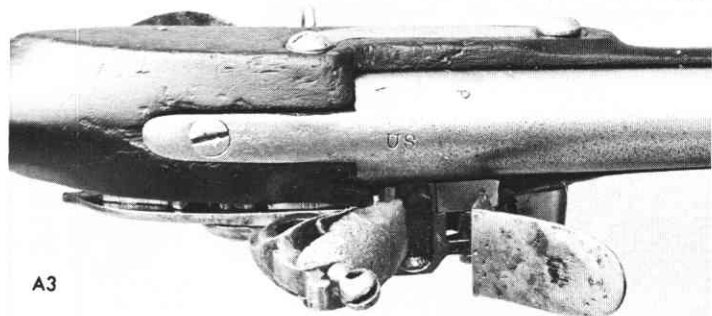
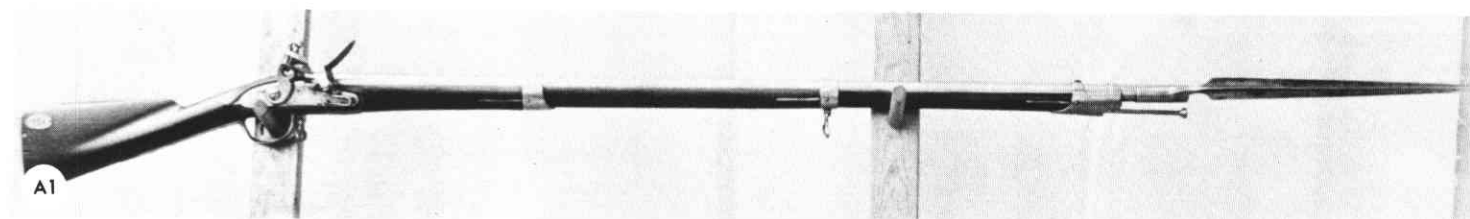
For thirty-three years it was my joy and honor to serve in the Navy of our country. It was a rich, rewarding, happy experience, and it took me into many great cities, storied ports, and unexpected places. In every one of them, one could find guns, and in a few of them one could find really fine pieces. How they arrived where they were can only be deduced, for there were no pedigrees for those arms about which I am writing. The export of U.S. Military weapons, both modern and obsolete, began in the 19th century. The guns flowed away: a few in the limited cases of military sales and others, in large numbers, via the route of condemnation and subsequent purchase for export by arms merchants. The process began early, and the first of my sea stories is about the return of a very special Springfield flintlock musket, model of 1795, which had been found no longer fit for our service and was sent awandering.

The Springfield Armory was established in 1794 and produced its first arms — 245 of them — in the following year.<sup>1</sup> This musket was known at the time of its manufacture as the "Charleville Pattern" and was produced as a near carbon copy of the French Arms of 1763.<sup>2</sup> The year 1815 was a sad one for those of us who love these early muskets made at Harpers Ferry and Springfield under the 1795 pattern and the contract muskets of 1798, supposedly made to the same mold. In that year, William Cramond purchased the entire stock of Springfield and Harpers Ferry 1795's and 1798 contract muskets stored at Springfield and in the Schuylkill Arsenal outside Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> I suppose from a practical point of view one cannot fault the government for condemning as unfit for service this group of arms. They were long, frail, frequently very poorly made arms, and the 1808 musket and forthcoming 1812 were far better weapons. Cramond's purchases were exported to the African trade, to South and Central America and to the West Indies. They could not have long withstood the treatment and conditions into which they had been flung.

One hundred and thirty-five years to the month later, in January of 1950, the light carrier, SAIPAN, stood into the Gulf of Gonaives at the eastern end of the island of Hispaniola and anchored off the city of Port-au-Prince, the capital of the Republic of Haiti. I was a member of the ship's company and rated liberty for the entire three day stay. It was my first visit to Haiti, and I was all ready to go exploring in this beautiful place. However, whoever it was who wrote the phrase "where every prospect pleaseth, and only man is vile" must have done so after visiting Port-au-Prince. This was in the hey-day of Papa Doc Duvalier, and from the anchorage one could see a pleasant prospect of pastel painted buildings comprising some exposition or



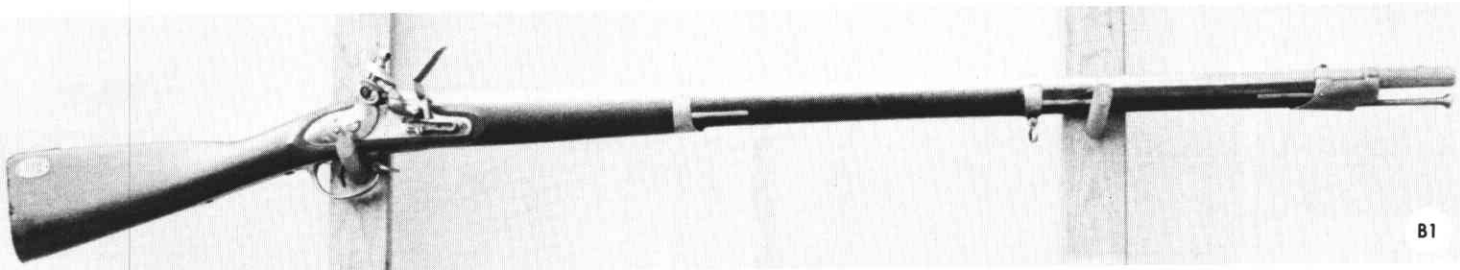
other that he had cooked up. Ashore, it was absolutely horrible: filth, disease, stench, beggars, pick-pockets, everything bad set in the most beautiful tropic paradise one has ever seen. The city went from horrible, to unbelievable, to down right frightening as I probed deeper into it. It was late in the afternoon and I had started back towards the fleet landing. I was about to hail one of the horse-drawn buggies which served as poor men's cabs, when I spotted the junk shop to end all junk shops. It had everything: nautical equipment, diving gear, old steam engines, and I could see some rusty swords. Perhaps there would be guns, so I asked. My French is full of "ain't got no's" and other grammatical violations, and Haitian French is a real mongrel patois in its own right. I suppose we understood each other, because the shop keeper pointed to a far corner across a sea of rusty iron chain and small anchors. In that corner was a lone gun barrel with a bayonet fixed and a ramrod. Since all I could see were the long rusty fingers of iron, I supposed that all that was there was an old barrel, and not wanting that I asked him if he would take the equivalent of 25¢ just for the bayonet. I finally made out that this was impossible, that I would have to buy all of it since the bayonet was "welded" onto the barrel and the shop keeper did not have any way of sawing off the barrel to give me the bayonet. At this point something began to ring deep inside me, so I asked to see whatever was there. And what was there was something that very few if any people have seen for a long, long, long time. The shopkeeper carried over to me a 1795 F/L Springfield musket in remarkably good repair for what it must have suffered for so long. (Photo A1) All of the stock from the rear band aft was largely intact; all of the metal parts including the ramrod which was frozen in place were there and not destructively corroded (Photo A2 and A3), and it had its bayonet; this was some bayonet! There sold-



ered — not welded — to the muzzle, was a half socket 1795 bayonet. (Photos A4, A5 and A6.) The musket was dated on the butt plate, in script, 1799 (Photo A7) and had belonged at one time to Maryland, for that state's name was stamped into the wood forward of the trigger guard. It required only some restoration of the wood below the rear band, replacement of the wood forward of the band and moderate cleaning of the metal.

Obviously, beyond its being an early, dated 1795, the musket's stature derives from its bayonet. It is one of those onto which by order of Secretary of War McHenry (1796-1800) a half socket bayonet was soldered — not brazed — using soft solder.<sup>4</sup> The government has not changed much in all these years. Once McHenry's order was given, Springfield went to work. No one said "stop" and so it was not until late in 1806 that a review disclosed that the work was still going on and a halt put to the practice.<sup>5</sup> By then, there were 15,000 of them in storage! There followed the typical spasm-type reaction, and around 8,000 suffered the indignity of having 11 inches of the barrel amputated along with the bayonet.<sup>6</sup> A few were finished and became the 33 inch barreled short version of the 1795.<sup>7</sup> The rest lay in slowly rusting piles for six or seven more years before Cramond gathered them all up and scattered them into the tropics. Today, of those 15,000 fine muskets, the one we have looked at in these pictures seems to be the last survivor. I hope not — I have no desire to be the sole owner of such a gun, for the lovely lines of the 1795 Charleville pattern arm with its bayonet proudly affixed should not be confined to a single point or place in time. The joy of owning this grand old musket draws substantially from knowing that I was personally responsible for saving it from oblivion and permitting it to radiate its particular grace once again, as it had so long ago.

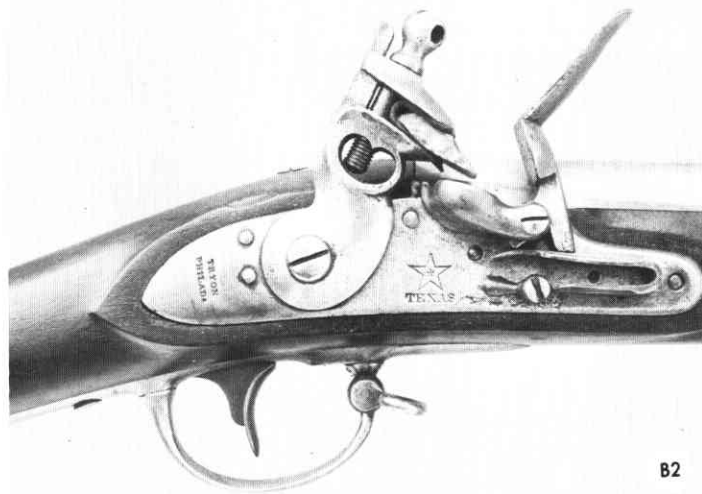
The second tale of "discovery" is of a flintlock contract musket, model of 1816, type III. In the summer of 1951, the squadron of night attack aircraft in which I served was embarked in MINDORO, an escort or jeep carrier. MINDORO had anchored for the weekend in the deep water of Menemsha Bight at the northwestern end of Martha's Vineyard Island which lies a few miles off the foot of Cape Cod. Since my family had owned a summer house on the Vineyard for many years, I had someone to meet the first officer's boat. My father drove home via an old farm on the north shore where we had always bought fresh, wild blueberries. I suppose I had been there a hundred times or more, but this time I asked, for the first time, whether or not there were any old guns in the barns or attic. After some thought, the old lady who owned the farm thought



B1

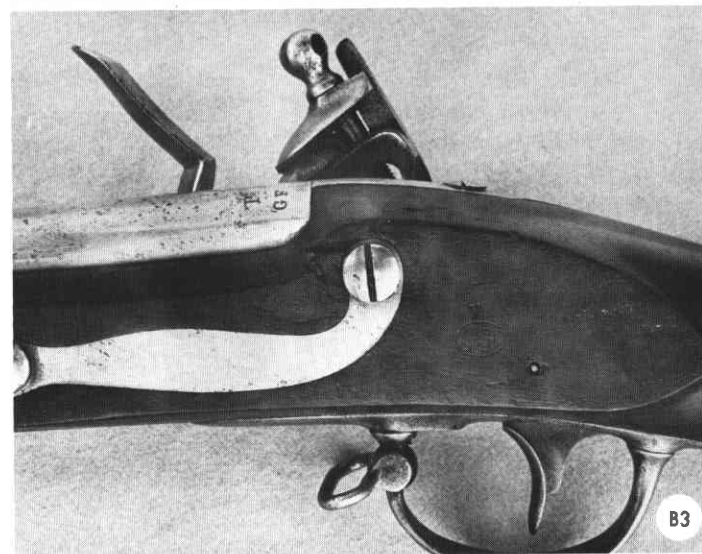
she remembered that there was an old piece in the barn which she and her brothers had played with as children and agreed to look for it. In due course, a flintlock musket of 1816 shape was found. Nothing more was discernible since it was covered with a hard batter of cobwebs, bat manure, chicken droppings, dust and dirt; in fact it looked very much like a sparkler. The negotiations were comparatively simple, for Martha's Vineyard, taking only five or six weeks, and the gun was delivered to my father. (Photo B1.)

I am afraid that I was a bit blasé towards 1816 muskets in those days so it was a matter of weeks before I got around to cleaning the gun. The first hint that I had something better than the average bear, came when the name TRYON emerged from the grime on the rear of the lock plate, for amongst the list of 20 makers of the 1816 which I carried in my notebook, Tryon's name was conspicuous by its absence.<sup>8</sup> However, the stature of the musket did not fully emerge until the central portion of the plate revealed its markings: a five-pointed star surrounding a smaller asterisk size star and under this the word TEXAS. (Photo B2.) The breech and the left side of the stock bear George Flegel's stamp, "G.F." (Photo B3.)



B2

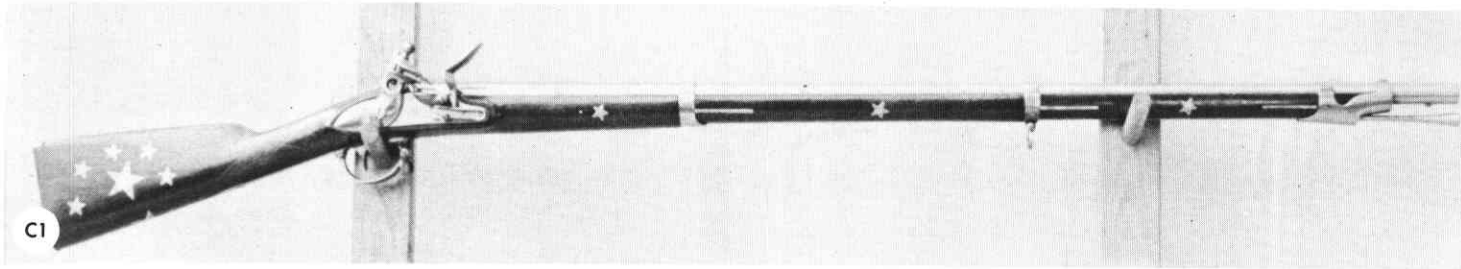
There has been and there remains much confusion in the works of some of our best arms writers over the Tryon arms manufactured for the Republic of Texas. Claude Fuller was probably the first to contribute to the problem in his *Firearms of the Confederacy*, by stating that on 3 April, 1840, Tyron secured a contract from Texas for 1,500 model of 1841 rifles.<sup>9</sup> He then, by inference, substantiated this order by quoting a letter written to Tryon Son & Company in 1846 by Colonel Talcott, asking about the status of the remaining 640 "muskets" as yet undelivered.<sup>10</sup> Long before I came upon my musket, this puzzled me. Why would the Republic of Texas be ordering 1841 rifles from a contractor in April of 1840 when the Ordnance Board which would eventually recommend this weapon for adoption did not receive the model until February of 1841?<sup>11</sup> Why should Colonel Talcott have gotten so confused that he asked Tryon for the status of muskets if he really meant rifles? Neither question seemed to have a better answer than that there was a musket contract in addition to a later rifle contract and that Colonel Talcott did, indeed, know the difference between a F/L musket and percussion rifle.



B3

I will make no claim as to whether the Vineyard musket was the first of these Texas Tryon arms to turn up, but it was, at any rate, an early one. Texas collectors have since determined that the Republic did order 1,500 muskets

from Tryon Son & Company of Philadelphia and if, in 1846, 640 remained undelivered, we have the question of what happened to the 860 that were delivered.<sup>12</sup> It is known that the ill-fated Texian-Santa Fe expedition of 1841 was armed with 341 of these weapons. This expedition was led by "Big Foot" Wallace for the purpose of bringing the blessings of liberty and enlightenment to the benighted citizens of "Nuevo Mejico." This scheme was one of Mirabeau B. Lamar's activities during his Presidency of the Republic and he really believed that if the opportunity were offered them, that the citizens of "Nuevo Mejico" would join Texas and become a part of the Republic. The expedition was a complete disaster with but a handful of men escaping the torture, execution and imprisonment which awaited Wallace's group once they

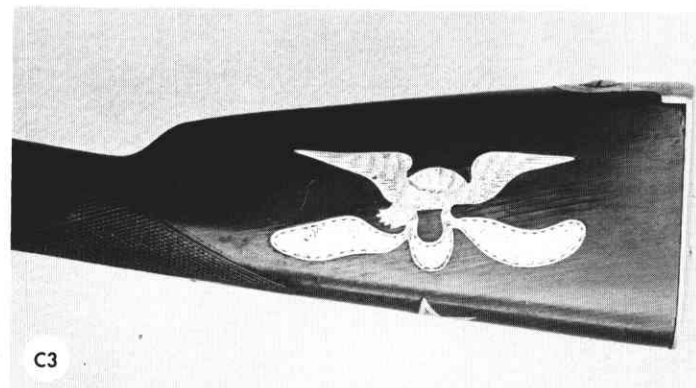
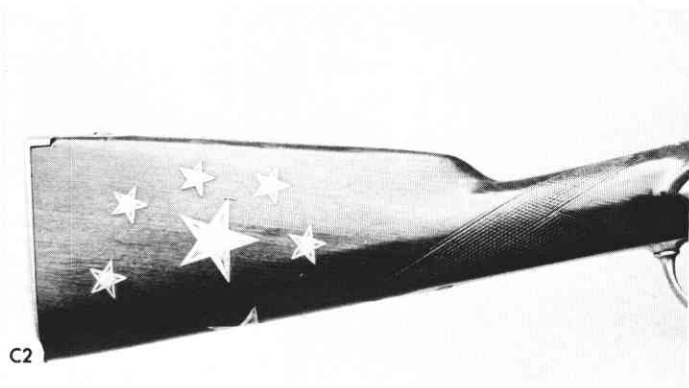


crossed the Rio Grande. One of the surviving muskets, now in the Hendricks collection in Corpus Christi, was carried back by a deserter from the troop who left them just before they entered Mexico. Another group of these muskets was lost when a punitive expedition against the Comanches got itself boxed into a deep canyon; all were killed or captured along with their equipment. In recent years, examples of this musket were to be found in Vic Fredericks' and Joe Bates' collections as well as in the collections of Paul Janke and Tom Holt. Few have survived and how the one we have been discussing reached Martha's Vineyard is a mystery all of its own. Probably the captain of some coasting schooner or whaler touched along the Gulf or Pacific coasts and brought it back, either as an addition to his ship's armory or as just another souvenir weapon to stand in the corner with Maori clubs, Fijian spears and New Guinea axes.

We could call the next story "a tale of two cities" — the city of London where the gun came to light and the village of Little Creek, Virginia where I stumbled on to it. The weapon is a Springfield flintlock musket, model of 1840 which has had some spectacular attention devoted to it. (Photo C1.) The musket was included in a small local auction of arms and armor in London in 1959 and was obtained by a part time arms dealer who was an acquaintance of an American Navy Officer stationed in London. This officer was a friend and Naval Academy classmate of mine who owned a cased great-coat pistol of no special merit which his dealer friend wanted — nature took its course, and the cased pistol was exchanged for the musket. Interestingly enough neither the fact that the gun was an example of a very rare musket per se, nor the ornamentation seemed to overly stimulate my friend's regard. I arrived on the scene at Little Creek, Virginia, the major home port for the Atlantic Fleet's Amphibious Force, just as he was beginning to make sounds about getting rid of

the gun. What he wanted for it was not clearly discernible. However, he had a chink in his armor — he was a North-South skirmisher at the time when this particular breed of creature was in its glory, scooping up beautiful Civil War muskets and carbines and taking them out to the ranges to be shot and gradually marred. He seemed to be a likely candidate therefore, for a trade involving a mixed model Civil War rifle musket which I owned. This was a beautiful gun, no less handsome than any one of those in the famous Springfield "organ" of muskets. But its mixed nature made it too susceptible to having been homogenized by any one of a large number of people. You can sense my amazement when he fell for the mixed model, hook, line and sinker; every time he fondled it you could see him charging up Malvern Hill in his imagination. It did not take too many sessions for him to stumble onto the key to this "great Civil War musket" nor did it take very much longer after this revelation for an arrangement to be reached. If that 1840 musket could breathe a sigh of relief, it could have been heard then, for at last it was owned by someone who appreciated what it really was.

Original flint muskets of 1840 are very rare items since the great majority were altered for service in the Civil War where they, the percussion model 1842, and the 1855 family of arms bore the brunt of the earliest fighting and were simply used up through four years of constant service. Beyond this, a presentation adorned 1840 musket was something very special as its pictures clearly depict. (Photos C2, C3 and C4.) It is still the only example to have come to my attention in the fifteen years I have owned it. Since the arm is uninscribed, it cannot be called a presentation musket; the barrel marking of BLUNT AND SYMS, N.Y. is more of a trade or makers identification in my opinion (Photo C5) and I believe the absence of any dedication on the flowing ribbons clutched by the eagle supports this. The American fashion of adorning military muskets var-



ed considerably. It might be merely an inlaid plaque suit-  
ably inscribed or it could be as extensive as the work on  
his musket. Silver was the most commonly used material  
or a wide diversity in inlay design. The most often  
ncountered motif is a combination of varying size stars  
nd a spread eagle. A favorite number of stars seems to  
ave been thirteen — possibly after the original colonies  
— although other numbers are found (fourteen on this  
usket). The eagle may be placed on either side of the butt  
nd may or may not be partially surrounded by stars. Usual-  
ly, the name of the recipient and a brief inscription was  
placed on the flowing ribbons clutched in either the claws  
or the beak of the eagle. Engraving — other than the detail  
of the eagle and the inscriptions — was generally a simpli-  
fied “C-scroll” on the barrel tang and rear portions of the  
barrel. Stock work varied from none at all to a highly pol-  
ished finish augmented with checkering. The metal parts  
of the arm generally remained as the armory finished the  
piece. The majority of the U.S. F/L muskets so embel-  
lished are model 1816 arms and were presented for a vari-  
ety of occasions: acts of heroism; prizes in marksmanship  
competitions; gifts to dignitaries and foreign officials;  
tokens of esteem; prizes at sanitary fairs; and business  
promotion to name a few.

What about this gun? What is it and how did it get to  
London? We are only able to surmise. In Tom Wood’s col-  
lection of Blunt and Symmes pepper boxes, is an example  
of that company’s earliest piece which was manufactured  
briefly in 1848. A comparison of the engraving on these  
two arms shows them to be identical, clearly by the same  
man. This would seem to date the adornment process in  
1848 or 1849. We also know that Blunt and Symmes estab-  
lished a London office in the early 1850’s. England, at this  
period, was a land much given to the presentation of finely  
adorned weapons, and it would be logical for Blunt and  
Symmes to have on display an example of their best  
adornment work. Later, when the taste and call for such  
extravagant work fell off and lack of interest developed,  
the arm could either have been taken home by the man-  
ager of the office or sold to some interested customer. As a  
variant theme, following the fine art practiced by Colonel  
Colt, the musket might have been presented to some influ-  
ential, middle grade civil servant, military officer or per-  
son in a position to help Blunt and Symmes. Such an offi-  
cial might enjoy and savor the use and ownership of such  
a fine gun without being particularly offended by the not  
unobtrusive advertisement emblazoned on the barrel. Of  
the foregoing, I would favor the first hypothesis.

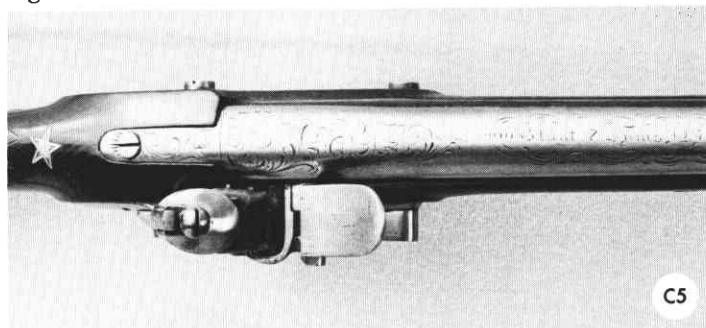


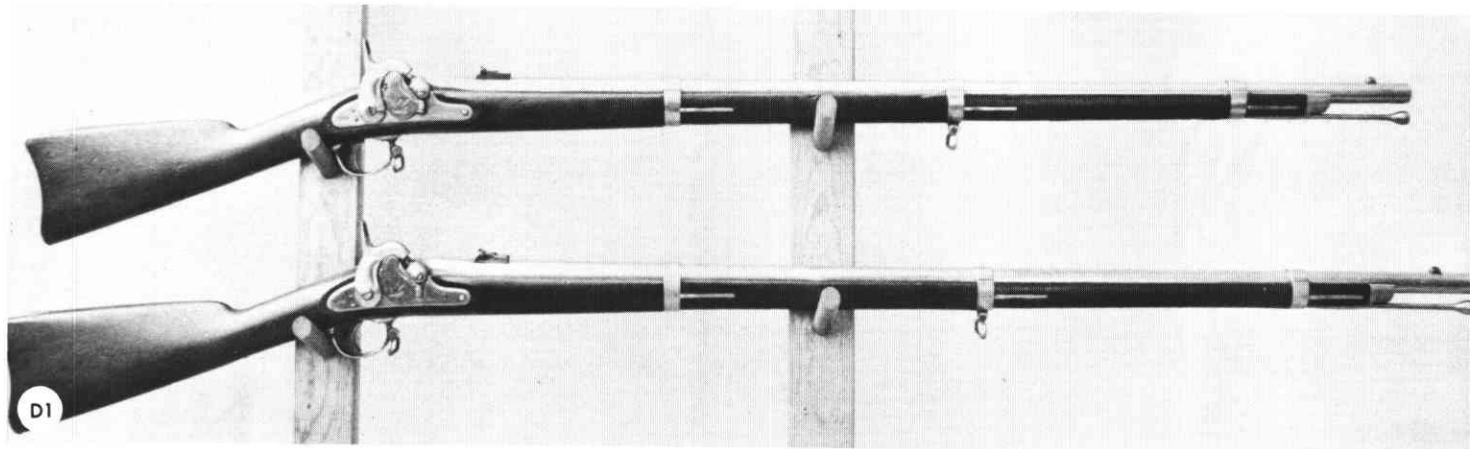
All conjecture I know. Yet, here we have a beautiful  
piece with a considerable degree of mystery associated  
with it. Perhaps, another will turn up — I hope so and I  
hope one of you finds it. Until such time, however, it  
remains a fascinating monument to the two so very differ-  
ent cities through which it passed to me.

One of the unpublished duties of a Navy Aide and Flag-  
Lieutenant is to scout out good shopping for his Admiral  
in case the great man has a few moments to spare. This  
can be a real chore or it can be great fun. Its only peril lies  
in buying the only one of something in advance of the  
Admiral’s seeing it, and I won a few and lost a few in this  
regard. One lovely April, the NATO Standing Group met  
in Paris, and my Admiral was sent to represent the Com-  
mander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet and Atlantic Com-  
mand. I was taken along and in due course was sent out to  
find the shops where a long list of items sought by his  
women-folk was carried. This forced me into a very exten-  
sive walking tour of Paris and led me to the next fine gun.  
The shop was not very prepossessing. It was called AU  
BON VIEUX CHIC and was several blocks upstream from  
the Louvre on the right bank of the Seine. Its windows  
were stuffed with swords, armor, and old French military  
equipment — it was sort of a mini-Bannerman. Now there  
was nothing on the ladies’ shopping list in this store, but  
thoroughly foot-sore and worn out with three days of  
frantic scouting as I was, finding it started the blood circu-  
lating, the heart pounding, and the hopes rising. It just  
looked like the place where there had to be something  
good; as indeed there was!

There is nothing quite as distinctive as the last six or  
seven inches of the muzzle of a member of the 1855 family  
of tape-lock rifle muskets, bright steel, flat band, brass  
(though sometimes iron) stock tip, tulip headed ramrod  
with a pregnant swelling about five inches below the head  
and square based front sight. Once you see it, you will not  
forget it. To see five of these together in a corner is a grand  
experience and to see a sixth one about six inches shorter  
than all the rest is a sure way to test your savoir-faire if a  
shopkeeper is watching you closely. (Photo D1.) Examina-  
tion revealed that the “shorty” was just what I was hoping  
it would be — a truly nice example of the cadet of the  
1855’s — the model 1858 cadet musket.

Our Ordnance Department had been designing cadet  
arms for many years by the mid 1850’s, never in great  
numbers and frequently in extremely small groups. As the  
size of West Point increased and the age and accompany-  
ing stature of the cadets advanced, so also increased the

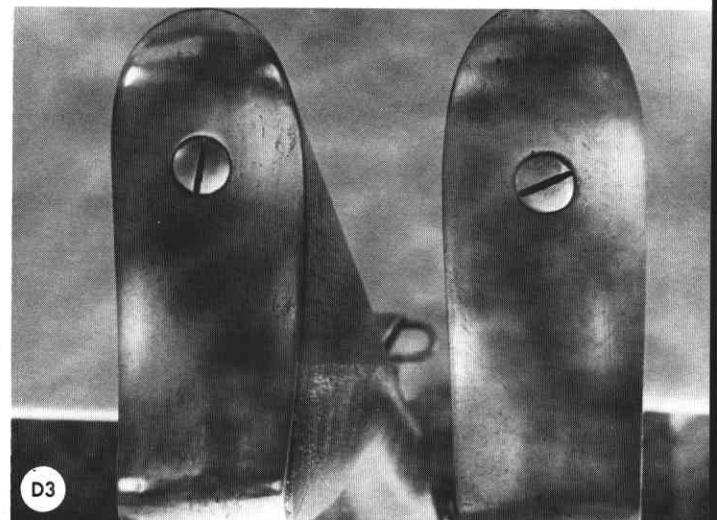
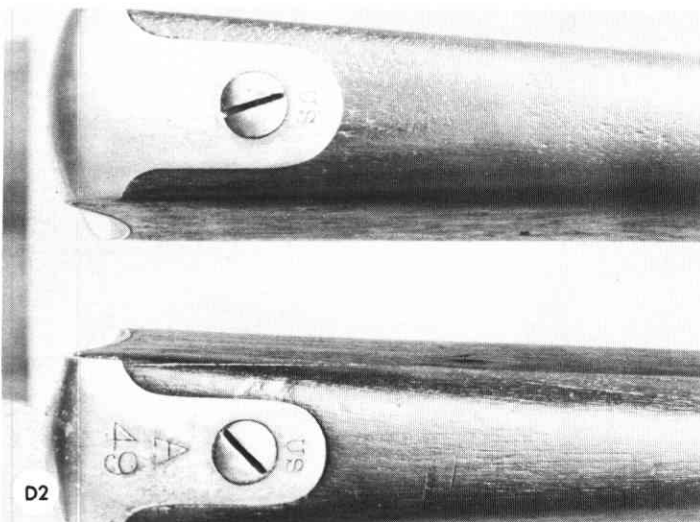


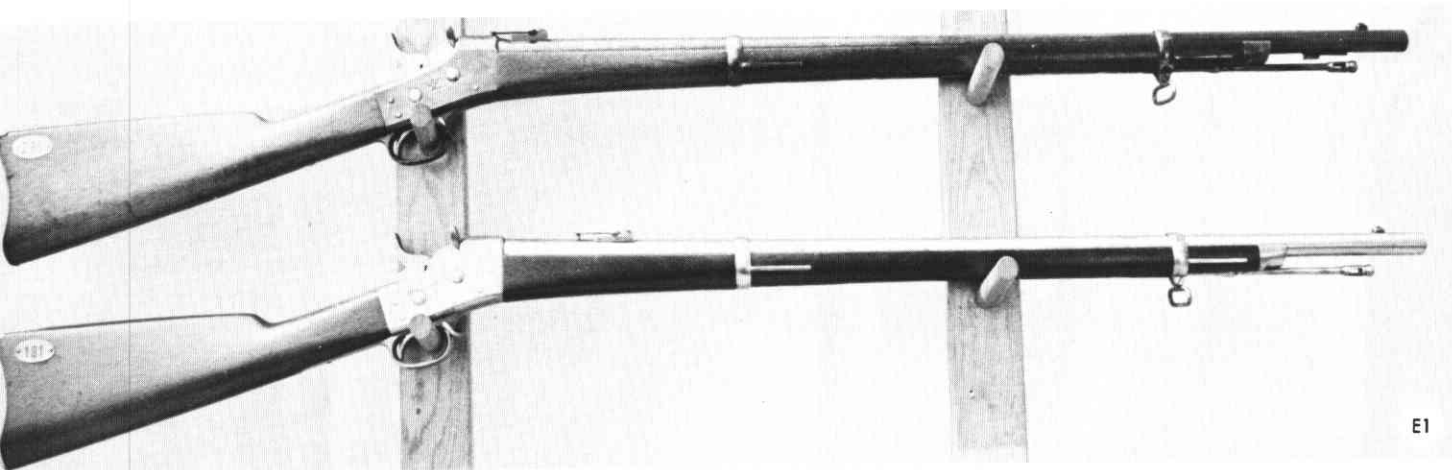


numbers, size and weight of the special arms designed for this specific use. The 1858 cadet is the largest of the entire group from the cadet modification of the 1807 carbine to the 1896 Krag cadet. Correspondence on its development first appears in the spring of 1858 when the Superintendent of the Springfield Armory was cautioned to produce the arm with as few special tools, parts and changes from the standard weapon as possible.<sup>13</sup> Even with such direction, it was still necessary to accept significant changes in the stock, the barrel and the rammer. The guns are the same between the trigger guard and the rear band. Exterior to this area, everything is different. The accompanying photographs show this most clearly, including the reduction in the size of the butt. (Photos D2 and D3.) The total length has been reduced six inches with both the stock and the barrel being appreciably shortened. There is no way that one of these guns could be “phonied up”, short of making an entirely new stock and performing major surgery on the barrel. The bayonet is also special and is two inches shorter than the service arm. The records at Springfield show that production commenced in 1859 with 1,502 cadet muskets manufactured and con-

cluded the following year upon completion of another 1,000 stands.<sup>14</sup> What happened to these 2,500 guns? We do not know. They arrived on the scene just in time for a desperate struggle, during the early stages of which they would have represented the latest and most modern shoulder weapons available. Without doubt most of them were used up in this fashion. The survivors and any which had remained at West Point were probably included in one or another of the many sales to individuals abroad which occurred at the end of the war. Certainly, at least one of them found its way to Paris where it was well treated and suffered only the indignity of being discovered as a collateral effort to the search for perfume and lace handkerchiefs.

I have already elaborated on the joys and perils of being an aide. There is no experience like it, though I suspect that there is a close parallel with being one of Howard Hughes' male nurses. There is, amongst aides of all services and nations, a close brotherhood, called “The Aides Protective Association” and it was as a member of this organization that I came upon the next two pieces.

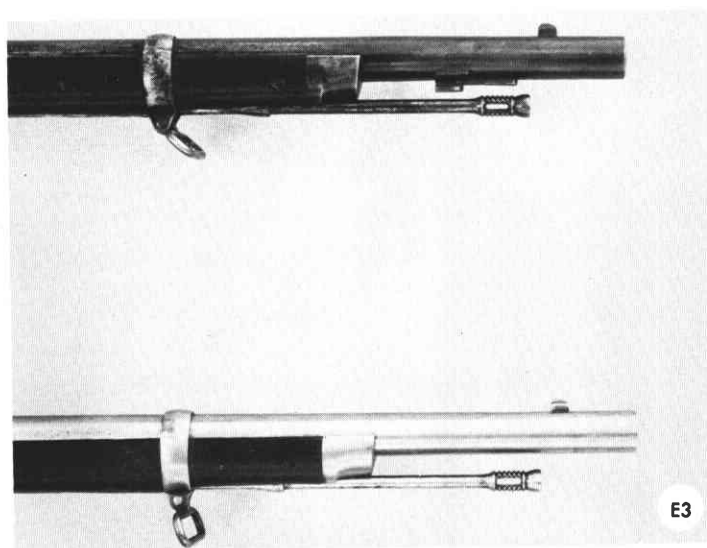
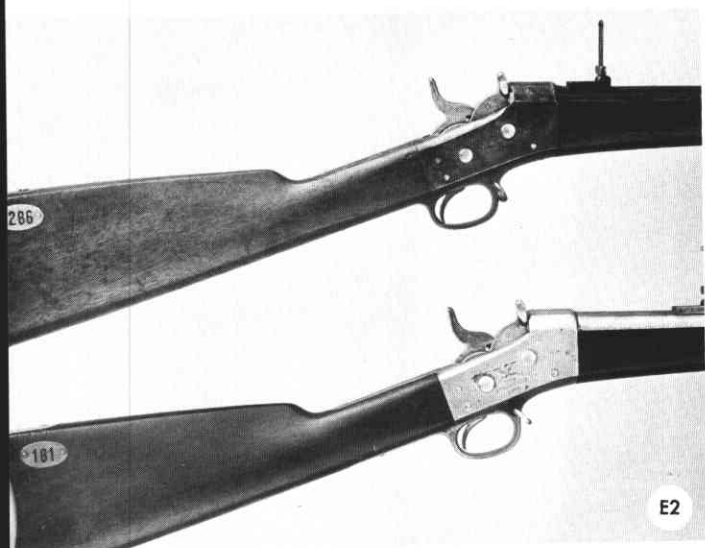




Carrier Division Four's flagship was MIDWAY, and I was the CARDIVCOMMANDER'S Flag Lieutenant. We had completed six months in the Mediterranean and were to be relieved by Carrier Division Six at Mers-El-Kebir, the naval port of Oran, Algeria. In those days — 1953 — France had not yet been humbled in South East Asia nor in Algeria, and the Foreign Legion had not suffered the blows which fell upon it in later years. Consequently, one of those senior military officials visited by flag officers touching at Oran was the Commander of the Legion at his headquarters in Sidi-Bel-Abbes, a medium size city forty miles inland. This time I was not at all unhappy to be making such a call because when I had made it upon our arrival in the Mediterranean with my own Admiral, I had seen in the decorative racks of arms which literally covered all the white washed walls, a pair of very interesting guns. Subsequently, when the Legion Commander repaid the call, I helped his aide locate and obtain some items in the ship's store which the General wanted very badly. When asked how could I be repaid, I asked him to see if — without embarrassment or breaking the law — there would be any way for me to obtain the guns at racks number thus and so. The hopeful answer had been that he

believed these were to be taken down soon and if this were the case, he would try to pull them out of the pile. That had been six months before and I had heard nothing since.

Sidi-Bel-Abbes, headquarters of the Foreign Legion, had to be seen to be appreciated. Multiply your best "Beau Geste" Foreign Legion fort by a thousand and you approach the headquarters with its tall, crenelated walls and towers, double portcullised gates, firing platforms, vast parade ground, and precision of the legionnaires; and there, standing to the left and rear of the Commander was that same aide. I think we were both a bit surprised to see each other, and no, he had not forgotten. When we departed, snugly in the trunk lay two Springfield-Remington navy rifles, model of 1870, type I and type II. (Photo E1.) There is nothing glamorous about either of these pieces, as you can plainly see — just two rolling blocks. The first difference you will note is the location of the rear sights (Photo E2) and the shape of the breech ends of the barrels; the second difference lies in the presence/absence of a sabre bayonet lug (Photo E3). They were both constructed in the Springfield Armory for naval use.<sup>15</sup> Those with sword bayonets were for the Navy and those with the



standard 1870 socket bayonet for the Marines. Ten thousand were manufactured in the first group — these can be identified by the concave shape of the barrel at the receiver and the close location of the sight to the receiver. The Navy thrashed around for a year coming up with this design, stood to one side and watched Springfield build 10,000 of them, and only then decided that the rear sight was in the wrong place and could not be relocated without weakening the barrel. Conspicuous by its absence was any suggestion in the name of economy to redesign the rear sight or leaf and just as conspicuous was the happy situation whereby Messrs. Poultney and Timble of Baltimore agreed to buy the lot, without bayonets, for sixteen dollars apiece. This price was sufficient for the Navy to turn around and immediately order 12,000 more built with the rear sight located further forward and without the peculiar barrel concavity. That the whole thing was contrived is supported by the ease and rapidity with which Springfield "ground out" another 12,000 arms. As usual it seems that the taxpayer probably took it in the ear.

Poultney and Trimble shipped these 10,000 guns to France where they were used in the Franco-Prussian War. Thereafter, they seem to have vanished from the face of the earth. I have seen no more than five or six in all the years of my collecting. Probably they were destroyed en masse — melted down for scrap or perhaps shipped to the French African colonies. The companion piece is of interest because it was never made for the sword bayonet. One often sees these type IIs with the bayonet stud removed but those originally manufactured for the angular bayonet and therefore, clearly of the group destined for Marine use, are rarely encountered.

It is not hard to guess how the earlier piece reached Sidi-Bel-Abbes, but the presence of the second rifle is a mystery. Perhaps, sold out of the United States service, it was exported and found its way to some robber band or wandering Tuareg group which was apprehended and disarmed by a patrol of Legionnaires.

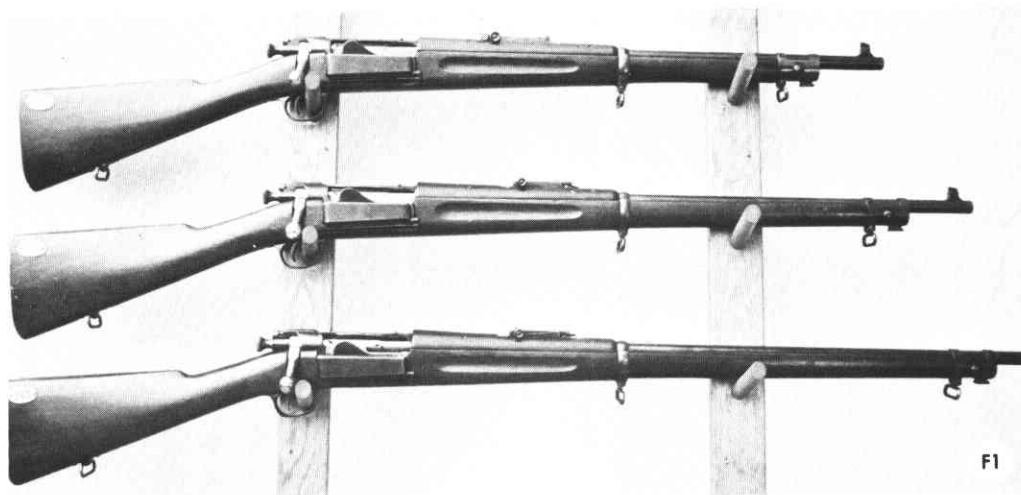
All of these tales of strange places have been associated thus far, with the Atlantic and Mediterranean. I suppose this is natural for in spite of the importance of the Pacific and the fact that we have been involved in three major wars and a variety of lesser conflicts on it, we have never been and are still not a Pacific oriented people. My earliest service was on the China station immediately following Japan's surrender, and I was fortunate to have gotten my nose into every famous Chinese port from Hong Kong to Chin-Wang-Tao where the Great Wall comes down to the sea in the Gulf of Po Hai. I was also into most of the Japanese ports — or what was left of them. In none of these were there old guns of any interest that I could find. I left the Western Pacific in 1948 not to serve there again until the Vietnam War. Things were no different when I returned, except that now most of the fabulous ports were closed or for political reasons not visited. Except for Singapore, Hong Kong, Sasebo and Yokohama it was really a dreary place, the original dullsville; and there still were no old guns!

Then one day my luck changed. I was, by this time, Captain of my own ship, NAVASOTA, one of the big fleet jumbo oilers. We were scheduled for an inport period in Singapore where we were to load to maximum capacity. We arrived and loaded some thirty thousand odd tons of fuel for the fleet and then were ordered to cancel our liberty stay and proceed to the port city of Zamboanga on the southwestern tip of the Island of Mindinao, Republic of the Philippines. Mindinao is the second largest island of the Philippines. It is largely a Muslim land and it is the home of the Moros, the most war-like of the Philippine Malay people. The Spaniards never conquered them and the United States never really did either, although we were obliged to send various punitive expeditions against them. During the Philippine Insurrection, the Moro Jurementado, crazed with a combination of religious zeal, narcotics and blood lust was known to absorb all six rounds of the .38 caliber service revolver then in issue and still be able to kill his opponent with his wavy-edged kris before he fell. If this tough fighter served no other purpose, he assured the reintroduction of the .45 caliber side arm into our armed forces.

The Moros never quit causing troubles and fighting continued against them (as well as against various dissident groups on the other islands) almost throughout the period of the Commonwealth Government. One of the earliest organizations formed to keep the peace and face down these native insurgents was the famed Philippine Constabulary. The Constabulary was comprised of Philippine enlisted and non-commissioned officers commanded by regular U.S. Army officers and senior non-coms seconded to duty with the Constabulary. As you might expect, the question of arming these small but tough troops was early considered and a special version of the Krag rifle was finally developed especially for their use. This weapon has come to be called the Philippine Constabulary carbine.

As the senior officer present afloat at Zamboanga (SOPA), upon arrival I had a number of calls to pay on various officials in the city, one of whom was the Commander of the local constabulary unit. This man was a third generation member of the constabulary and very proud of his family's association with the service. Somehow, our conversation got around to the weapons used in the old days, and he mentioned that he still had two of the guns his grandfather had used. As you might guess this started all my juices flowing and a little gentle questioning established that they were both Krags — one long one and one short one. A little further discussion established the fact that though grandpa had had them, and the family had hidden them from the Japanese, there was really no great attachment for them, and he sure wished he had something that he could shoot to take their place. Make no mistake, though the old song says "Oh, the monkeys have no tails in Zamboanga," those monkeys are smart and I am sure he saw a real live fish long before I knew I was being "chummed". Anyway, I had been carting around a real lemon which I had bought through the *Shot Gun News* —

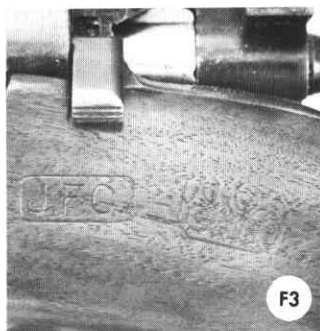




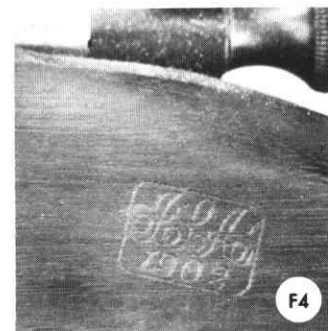
F1



F2



F3



F4

a rewelded M1 rifle. It shot fine, but the welding was bad, and because of time involved in receiving it, the owner would not take it back and I was stuck. The obvious soon occurred; down to the ship, in full uniform to repay the call, came the Commander with two cased rifles under his arm; twenty minutes later, the amenities paid, he departed with one cased rifle and the other case filled with a broomstick and some paper to camouflage the absence of the original contents. He was happy; I was ecstatic; for not only was one of the guns a real, honest, Constabulary carbine, but the other, though longer than the carbine was something much, much grander than the regular long rifle.

The accompanying picture clearly shows the size relationships between the standard length rifle, the shorter example and the carbine. (Photo F1.) The carbine is one of 350 pieces modified at the Springfield Armory in late 1905 or early 1906,<sup>16</sup> upon the urging of General Allen, Chief of the Constabulary at that time.<sup>17</sup> The sale was for 5,000 new Krag carbines, model 1899 equipped with full length stocks, bayonets, scabbards, and sling swivels at a price of six dollars each.<sup>18</sup> The only new piece required which was manufactured at Springfield was a modified rifle front band resized to fit the thicker carbine barrel. Stocks were cut down rifle stocks with the lightening groove in the bed of the fore end filled with a wood plug. Others exist, however, which are completely new, not cut down. The muzzle was turned down to accept the model 1905 knife bayonet.<sup>19</sup> (Photo F2.) It is known that the Benicia Arsenal did the majority of the conversion work and it has been my observation that Benicia's work was much inferior to Springfield's, especially in the reworking and tapering of

the fore end. The Springfield arms were proofed by the same men who were proofing the 03 rifles at that time and I have seen the cartouches of "C.C.V." and "J.F.C." on these guns. (Photo F3.) The majority of these arms never returned home. Constabulary officers could purchase them but were required to sign an agreement to resell them to the constabulary or sell them to another constabulary officer should they leave the service at some later date.<sup>20</sup> I know of a few which were used in a small military school in the Shenandoah Valley some years ago; in fact, I own one of these. This is probably a Benicia piece for the fore end does not show the sweet taper of the Springfield piece and there are no 1906 era Springfield inspector cartouches on the stock.

The Zamboanga rifle is one of 100 weapons made in 1902 with a twenty-six inch barrel. It was another effort towards arriving at a single rifle for all branches. The stock is of new construction, not a cut down stock, with no lightening groove in the front eight inches of the barrel bed. The muzzle is larger in diameter (.632) than the standard rifle and requires a reamed barrel loop for a standard bayonet to fit this larger diameter. The known serial number range for these rifles falls between 387,700 and 389,223; all of them were made and inspected in 1902. All have specially calibrated and hand stamped revisions of the 1901 rear sight.<sup>21</sup>

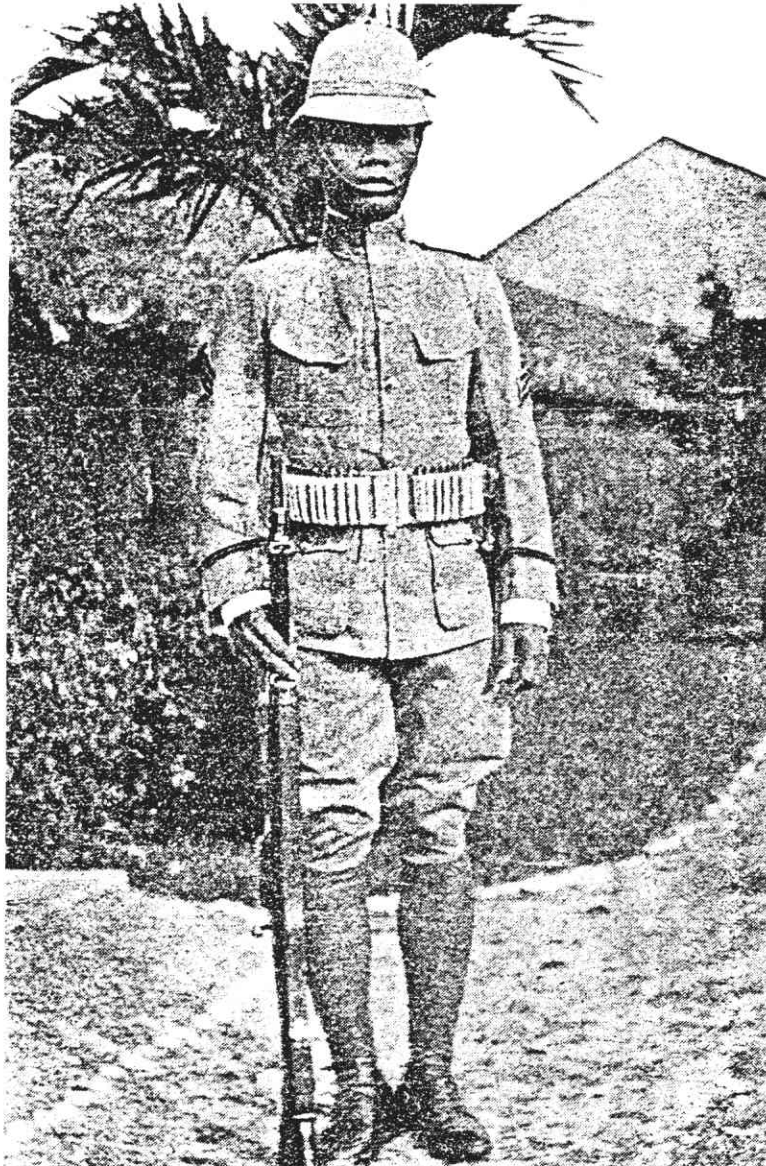
There is no question how the carbine got to Zamboanga, but how about the short rifle? It could not have been mistaken for a carbine during packing, consequently, its presence must have been a planned event and perhaps it had been sent out to General Allen in 1903 or 1904 to see if it

would meet the requirements of the "monkeys". Whatever the explanation might be it was there, it had been used, and treasured. And though I do not propose to use it, I assuredly will continue to let it know that it is still treasured.

### NOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> Hicks, James E., *Notes on United States Ordnance, Volume I, Small Arms, 1776 to 1940*. James E. Hicks, Mount Vernon, N.Y., 1940; p. 16.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 16.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 17.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 17.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 16.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 17.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, pp. 17, 18.
- <sup>8</sup> Gluckman, Arcadi, *United States Muskets, Rifles, and Carbines*. Otto Ulbrich Co., Buffalo, N.Y., 1948. p. 134.  
Fuller, Claud E. and Steuart, Richard D., *Firearms of The Confederacy*. Standard Publications, Huntington, West Virginia, 1944. p. 32.  
Fuller, Claud E., *The Whitney Firearms*, Standard Publications, Hunt-

- ington, West Virginia, 1946. p. 182.
- Reilly, Robert M., *United States Military Small Arms, 1816-1865*. Eagle Press, 1970. pp. 4-11.
- Fuller, Claud E., *Springfield Shoulder Arms, 1795-1865*. Francis Bannerman Sons, N.Y., N.Y., 1930. p. 48.
- <sup>9</sup> Fuller, *Firearms of The Confederacy*, op. cit., p. 54.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Hicks, *Notes on United States Ordnance, Volume I*, op. cit. p. 54.
- <sup>12</sup> Texas Gun Collectors Association, *The Texas Gun Collector*, Issue 65, December 1955, p. 31.
- <sup>13</sup> Hicks, *Notes on United States Ordnance, Volume I*, op. cit., p. 86.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid, pp. 92-95 ff.
- <sup>16</sup> Annual Report, Springfield Armory, fiscal year ending 30 June 1906, p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> Personal, confidential letter written by a retired Army Lt. Colonel who had served as a Major with the Constabulary in the period 1910-1917.
- <sup>18</sup> Annual Report, op. cit., p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Personal, confidential letter, op. cit.
- <sup>21</sup> DeChristopher, J., *Catalogue of United States Military Equipment and Firearms Parts*, 1974. p. 49.



F8. A member of the Philippine Constabulary with his special carbine, from *Arms & The Man*, 25 July 1912.