

# U.S. MILITARY SHOTGUN 1881 – 1945

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Shotguns or firearms firing multiple projectiles simultaneously, in one form or another, have been used by American colonial militia and U.S. military forces from at least the French and Indian War (1754 – 1763) to current U.S. military actions. Colonial and early U.S. militias were armed with smooth bore muskets and fowlers which commonly used buck and ball loads (Figure 1). When employed with buck and ball loads these firearms can be considered early forms of the shotgun. In addition, artillery was often used to fire canister, grape and other forms of small shot (Figure 2). This article will primarily focus on the various types of shotguns, bayonets, ammunition and accoutrements used in World War I and World War II. For additional information on U.S. military shotguns of all eras, the reader is encouraged to refer to the comprehensive book *Complete Guide to United States Military Combat Shotguns* by Bruce N. Canfield.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1. Buck and ball load. Found in .69 caliber with the usual configuration of three buckshot over a .69 caliber round ball. The buck and ball load was used, mostly in .69 caliber smoothbore percussion muskets, through the Civil War. A .58 caliber buck and ball load is shown. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are by the author and are of items in his collection.

During the Civil War, Union forces primarily made use of buck and ball loads in their issued percussion smooth bore muskets, Confederate cavalry and infantry regularly used shotguns, usually

brought from their home (Figures 3). Some of the shotguns were modified to take bayonets. *Confederate Southern Agent Marked Shotguns* by Russ A. Pritchard, Jr. and John W. Ashworth, Jr.<sup>2</sup> provides an excellent overview of these interesting weapons.

Army use of shotguns began in 1881 with the development and issuance of purpose-built 20-ga. Springfield Armory Model 1881 Trapdoor “Forager” shotguns (Figure 4). They were used by troops to augment Army rations with small game. The first repeating shotguns were 354 Spencer 12-ga. pump action shotguns purchased between 1886 and 1893 for Army prison guards. In addition, a few 12-ga. Parker and English J.P. Clabrough & Bros. double guns were acquired for the same use. In the 1890’s the Army tested a few Winchester Model 1893 and 1897 12-ga. pump action shotguns.<sup>5,6</sup>

The first U.S. military use of the modern combat shotgun was during the 1900-1912 Philippine insurrection. The issued Krag rifles and .38 caliber revolvers did not provide adequate stopping power against the Moros. In the early 1900s, several hundred commercial production Winchester Model 1897 riot shotguns were purchased for Army use in the Philippines. These shotguns, along with improved tactics, proved to be effective. The Philippine insurrection 12-ga. 1897 riot shotguns have a plain 20-inch cylinder choke barrel, a solid (non-takedown) frame, forend attached by three screws and a thin wrist, high comb stock with a round pistol grip. The approximate serial number range is C150000 to C200000. It is possible a few were stamped with a “US” and “flaming bomb” on the receiver and a “flaming bomb” on the barrel. The stocks were not inspected. Very few have survived.<sup>8</sup>

U.S. military shotguns from the 20th century and later can be placed in four categories:



Figure 2. Artillery projectiles. An unfired U.S. stand of “grapeshot” for 12-pounder guns with a 4.62” bore. These were commonly used as naval rounds to destroy ship’s rigging and were mostly obsolete by the Civil War. However, some have been found at Civil War sites. The second is a stand of 1.5” quilted grapeshot. The third is an unfired U.S. 4.62” 12-pounder smoothbore canister widely used as an anti-personnel round. The thin-walled canister contains many lead or iron balls, which are much smaller than grapeshot, packed in sawdust. The canister bursts upon firing and the balls spread. The fourth is a Vietnam War era U.S. 105mm “Beehive” anti-personnel canister round designed and used for direct fire on enemy troops. Several of these rounds were placed with each cannon for quick reaction direct fire. They used 8,000 tiny steel dart-like flechettes, ejected by a mechanical time fuse. Flechette rounds with similar small darts were also used in 12-ga. combat shotguns, 40mm grenade launchers and 90 and 152mm rounds during the Vietnam War.



Figure 3. Left, two Confederate soldiers proudly displaying their shotguns for the photographer; center, a Confederate soldier with his dog and shotgun<sup>3</sup> and right, Sgt. A.M. Chandler of Company F, 44th Mississippi Infantry Regiment and Silas Chandler, family slave, with a double barrel percussion shotgun and two large fighting knives.<sup>4</sup> (Library of Congress, Liljenquist Photo Collection)

1. Combat shotguns with a bayonet attachment and a 20 or 23-inch barrel. While the Army called them riot guns with bayonet adapters, these guns were called Trench Guns by their manufacturers, by military personnel who used them and by today's collectors. The term trench gun will be used in this article.
2. Guard and riot shotguns with (usually) a 20-inch cylinder choke barrel.
3. Training shotguns. Commercial style sporting shotguns used mainly for training gunners to hit aerial targets.
4. Foraging/Survival weapons for hunting and aircrew survival.

This article will discuss military shotguns in the above order. Sections on bayonets, ammunition and accoutrements will follow.

## COMBAT SHOTGUNS

**World War I trench guns** are rarely encountered today. While there has been extensive speculation on the types of World War

I trench guns (Figure 5), it is virtually certain that only two, the Winchester Model 97 (Figures 6 and 7) and Remington Model 10 (Figure 8) were actually used. The rarely-seen *Handbook of Ordnance Data, November 15, 1918*,<sup>9</sup> published in 1919, which can be considered a definitive source states:

**Repeating shotguns riot pattern.** – *The repeating shotguns adopted for the American Expeditionary Forces in France are of the ordinary commercial type manufactured by the Winchester Repeating Arms Co. and the Remington Arms Union Metallic Cartridge Co. In times of peace they are manufactured for the use of sentries, police officials, express messengers, watchmen, prison guards, train hands, and are supplied also to people for home defense. For illustration see plate No. 132 on opposite page. [Figure 5]*

**Winchester riot shotgun.** – *This is a pump-action gun of the hammer type, identical with commercial guns of this type in all respects, but with the addition of the bayonet*



Figure 4. U.S. Springfield Model 1881 20-ga. Forager shotgun. The Springfield Armory built 1,376 Model 1881 26" barrel shotguns between 1881 and 1885. The serial numbers, receiver, 1881-dated breechblock and barrel are unique to this gun. As many earlier condemned parts were used in their assembly, the lock plate may or may not have the "1873" stamping and the hammer can have either coarse or fine knurling. The last use was in Alaska in 1906. The standard cartridge was a brass shotshell manufactured by the Frankford Arsenal. The shells were intended to be reloaded at the unit level in the field. The Model 1881 could be purchased by military personnel for \$8.45.<sup>7</sup>



attachment. The barrel is 20 inches long, 12 gauge cylinder bore. The bayonet attachment is a bracket to receive the model of 1917 bayonet. It is provided with a split sleeve which clamps around the muzzle of the barrel. A perforated metal hand guard is mounted over the barrel and connected with the clamping sleeve of the bayonet bracket.

**Remington riot shotgun.** -This is a hammerless pump-action gun, conforming to commercial standard. The barrel is 12 gauge cylinder bore and 20 inches long [actually 23 inches]. The bayonet attachment consists of a bracket adapted to receive the model of 1917 bayonet. It is held on the end of the barrel by means of a split sleeve which clamps around the muzzle of the barrel. A wooden hand guard is provided.

**Ammunition for riot shotgun,** - These are **metal base paper shells** [emphasis added], loaded with nine buckshot in three layers, three shots to the layer. The shells are commercial grade ammunition.<sup>10</sup>

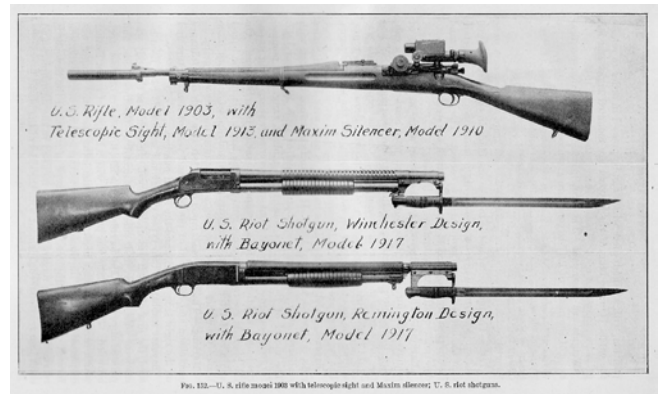


Figure 5. Plate 132 showing, top, the U.S. Model 1903 rifle equipped with the Model 1913 Warner & Swasey telescopic musket sight and Model 1910 Maxim Silencer, middle, the Winchester Model 1897 trench gun with the Bayonet, Model of 1917, and, bottom, the Remington Model 10 trench gun also with the Model of 1917 bayonet.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 6. World War I Winchester Model 97 trench gun. Winchester delivered 19,196 “Winchester Trench Guns” to the U.S. Government during World War I.<sup>12</sup> Other internal Winchester correspondence breaks out production as 1,473 Model 1897 shotguns (most likely long barrel training shotguns) and 17,820 Model 1897 riot shotguns.<sup>13</sup> The great majority (15,000?) were trench guns. The key features of this six-shot (five in the magazine and one in the chamber) trench gun are its solid frame, thin wrist, high comb stock, sling swivels, and six-hole handguard/bayonet adapter. The World War I serial number range is from E613000 (~1914) to E705000 (~1918).<sup>14</sup> This Model 97, serial number E688589, is an original World War I trench gun which was found with a Cutts compensator installed. Fortunately, the handguard/bayonet adapter was still with it. The Cutts was removed and the handguard/bayonet adapter reinstalled. It is HAND-STAMPED “US” and “ordnance bomb” on the right side of the receiver. It appears that during World War I only those trench guns that were issued were marked by the Army.



Figure 7. Unissued World War I Winchester Model 97 trench gun. This trench gun, serial number E681261, is typical of those that were not issued. It has NO military markings and can only be identified by its serial number. These are more common than issued U.S.- marked guns and are still somewhat underappreciated by today’s collectors. After World War I, many Model 97 trench guns were transferred from the Army to state and local police forces.



Figure 8. Remington Model 10 trench gun. The Model 10 trench gun is rarely seen today. The key features of this six-shot trench gun are its takedown, hammerless design, sling swivels, 23-inch barrel, wood handguard and separate bayonet adapter. Remington delivered 3,500 Model 10 trench guns during World War I.<sup>15</sup> Some were lost during World War I and post- World War I actions in Central America and the Caribbean islands, and many more were altered to riot gun configuration, but most were just worn out due to their poor mechanical design. Many were scrapped in the inter-war period. The Model 10 serial number range is from U117731 to U165566 with the majority being found between U160000 and U165000.<sup>16</sup> The serial number is found in two places, on the bottom of the receiver and on the left side of the barrel. On issued guns, these numbers are rarely matching. The illustrated gun bears serial number U164493 on the receiver and U159612 on the barrel. The left side of the receiver is stamped with the ordnance “flaming bomb” over “US”. The bottom of the pistol grip on this gun has the circle “P” inspection stamp which is a sign of later depot maintenance. There’s a good chance that this gun saw service in World War II as well as World War I.

Collectors should be cautious when acquiring a World War I trench gun. Thoroughly review the literature and seek expert advice prior to any purchase. Modern reproductions and reproduction parts, especially the heat shield/bayonet adapter, are available. At a recent national gun show this writer attended there were at least a dozen “trench guns” with not even one being completely correct. Some were priced to reflect their shortcomings, and some were not.

When considering either the Model 97 or Model 10 the first thing to do is to determine if it “looks right”. Just this simple evaluation will eliminate many pretenders. Next, check the barrel to ensure a front sight has never been installed as all trench guns have the front sight on the bayonet adapter. Also, check the buttstock sling swivel to ensure the inletting is factory work. Key features to examine on the Model 97 are the serial number, the stock (many have World War II replacements), the buttplate (hard rubber with Winchester logo; a metal buttplate is not original), the heat shield/bayonet adapter (is it an early 6-hole and not a reproduction) and, if marked, are the markings hand stamped and in the correct place. The Model 10 is similar. Check the serial numbers, the stock and

handguard (especially the handguard to see if it has been added), the buttplate (hard rubber with Remington logo; not steel) and receiver markings (hand stamped but more even than those found on the Winchesters). This writer recently viewed an interesting Model 10 “trench gun” for sale on the internet. It had sling swivels but was in riot gun configuration and the “US” and “flaming bomb” on the receiver were modern additions. The barrel was not matching but a new set of numbers had been added to match the receiver. It was presented as a World War I Model 10 trench gun that had been modified (by a depot) to riot gun configuration. A better evaluation would have been that the rear of the gun was from an original trench gun and the front of a later commercial riot gun was added and force numbered to match. Look at all the features carefully.

**World War II trench guns**, with one exception, can be fairly easily (but not cheaply) obtained. Many collectors fail to recognize that most of the trench guns we identify as World War II guns weren’t delivered until 1943 and later. The technical manual *Shotguns, All Types* (TM 9-285) dated September 21, 1942,<sup>17</sup> lists only three trench gun types: the World War I solid frame Winchester Model 97, the early World War II takedown Winchester Model 97,



Figure 9. The World War II Winchester Model 97 trench gun has several features that are different from its World War I parent: it is takedown, has a shorter fluted comb and thicker wrist military-inspected buttstock, has factory-applied military markings on the receiver and the 20-inch barrel end extends beyond the bayonet lug. World War II Model 97 trench guns are found in the E921300 to E986300 serial number range.<sup>22</sup> This gun, serial number E927878, is one of the guns delivered on the November 1941 contract. The key identifying features are the serial number, the 42 barrel date, the boxed W.B. inspection stamp, and the six-hole heat shield which was changed early on to the more common Winchester World War II four-hole configuration. The buttstock has a hard rubber buttplate with the Winchester logo and is inspected on the left side with the boxed W.B. over the “crossed cannon” Ordnance Department stamp. Most World War II Winchester trench guns have the later boxed G.H.D. inspection mark. The lower left rear of the receiver is factory-marked with a large “U.S.” followed by the Ordnance Department bomb. The top center of the barrel just forward of the receiver has the Winchester proof mark and the ordnance bomb stamp.



Figure 10. a. W.B. stock inspection stamp found on very early Model 97 trench guns. b. G.H.D. stock inspection stamp used on most Model 97 trench guns. c. Factory-applied receiver markings. d. Barrel markings. e. Barrel dated 40 (On the bottom center at the receiver extension and usually hard to read). f. Early 6-hole (6 rows of ventilating holes) heat shield. g. Late Winchester 4-hole heat shield.

and the World War I Remington Model 10. Obviously, some of the World War I guns were still in inventory at the start of the war.<sup>18</sup> The next edition, now TM 9-1285 dated November 25, 1942, drops all mention of the Remington Model 10. From this, it can be inferred that all forms of the Model 10<sup>19</sup> were no longer considered standard issue sometime between September and November 1942.

World War II trench guns were manufactured by Winchester, Ithaca and Savage/Stevens. Winchester received its first contract for new **Model 97 trench guns** just prior to the U.S. entry into World War II in November 1941. A total of 1,494 trench guns were delivered on this contract in early 1942.<sup>20</sup> The gun shown in Figures 9 is one of these early deliveries. A total of 25,020 Model 97 trench guns were delivered between January 1942 and March 1943.<sup>21</sup>



Figure 11. This is an as-issued World War II Winchester Model 12 trench gun. Key features are the barrel end is almost flush with the bayonet adapter, the four-hole heat shield and the G.H.D.-inspected buttstock. This gun, serial number 999061, has a 43 barrel date. The right side of the receiver below the ejection port has the factory-applied "U.S." followed by the Ordnance bomb. The top rear of the barrel has the Winchester proof mark with an Ordnance bomb stamp forward of that. Authentic, original Model 12 trench guns are very hard to find.



The Ordnance Department purchased 61,014 **Winchester Model 12 trench**, riot, and training shotguns between April 1942 and March 1944.<sup>23</sup> Many of these were trench guns (Figure 11). This author has seen Model 12 trench gun estimates ranging from 6,800 to 50,000. 35,000 is most likely closer to reality. World War II Model 12 trench guns should be in the 940000 to 1036000 serial number range. An important thing to note is that, with one exception, ALL World War I and World War II trench guns were rust blued. The sole exception is that a small number of Model 12 Trench guns with a serial number above 1030000 were factory parkerized.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that neither the Model 97 nor the Model 12 has a disconnecter. Each can be "slam-fired" by holding the trigger back and operating the action. Some soldiers felt this gave them added firepower. The six-shot (5+1), pump-ac-

tion hammerless, takedown Model 12 trench gun was used through World War II, especially in the Pacific. Many were rebuilt and subsequently reissued in Korea and Vietnam. Virtually all of the rebuilds will have a parkerized finish.

The **Stevens Model 520-30 Trench Gun** is the most commonly encountered World War II trench gun. Stevens manufactured 35,306 trench, riot, and training shotguns during World War II. It appears that about 10,000 to 15,000 were trench guns. The Model 520-30 is a hammerless design with a distinctive square-backed receiver and 20-inch barrel (Figure 12). The bolt locks into the top of the receiver. The estimated serial number range is 38000 to 70000. The serial number is found on the receiver, barrel extension and stock. Disassembly is required to view all but the receiver number. All had a blue finish with the majority having a dull



Figure 12. Stevens Model 520-30 Trench Gun, serial number 66756. Markings include "U.S." just above the trigger on the left side, "P" proof mark and "flaming bomb" on the left side of the receiver near the barrel and on the right and left sides of the barrel just forward of the receiver. These markings are smaller than those found on other World War II military shotguns. Note the purplish color of the bayonet adapter (shown next to a Model 12 bayonet adapter), a sure sign of a Stevens handguard/bayonet adapter.





Figure 13. Stevens Model 620A Trench Gun serial number 26269. All of the World War I and World War II trench guns were configured for the U.S. Model 1917 bayonet which was made by either Remington or Winchester.

brushed blue appearance. Stocks were usually plain but some early guns will have checkering, either on the butt or forearm, or both. The stock was not inspected and the buttplate is unmarked black plastic with horizontal lines on the middle half. The butt stock is equipped with a sling swivel. The Stevens barrel markings were applied to both sides of the barrel and are usually fully visible with the handguard/bayonet adapter in place. The handguard/bayonet adapter is very similar to the 6-hole Winchester and is readily identified by the different configuration of the bayonet adapter and by the distinct “purplish” color of the front portion of the adapter. Some are marked with an “s” on the left side of the bayonet lug. The Model 520-30 trench guns continued in service until well into the Vietnam War. Most were arsenal rebuilt (and parkerized) after World War II so a blued World War II example is getting surprisingly hard to find.<sup>25</sup>

The **Stevens Model 620A Trench Gun** was manufactured concurrently with the Model 520-30. Stevens manufactured 12,174 Model 620A trench, riot and training shotguns with about 5,000

being trench guns. With the exception of the streamlined receiver, the Model 620A looks and functions the same as the Model 520-30 (Figure 13). Trench guns are found in two serial number ranges: 7100-9200 and 17000-33000 with most being in the second range. With a few exceptions, the characteristics and markings are the same as the Model 520-30 trench gun described above. The model number marking can be either “620A” or “620” and the Stevens Arms Co. and other factory markings are stamped on the left side of the barrel only with the result that the handguard/bayonet adapter partially covers them. The Model 620A trench guns also continued in service after World War II. Most were arsenal rebuilt (and parkerized) so correct blued World War II examples are getting hard to find.<sup>26</sup>

The Ithaca **Model 37 Trench Gun** is by far the rarest World War II trench gun with a total production of 1,422 guns in 1942. All are in the serial number range of 57820 to 62450. All World War II Model 37 trench guns were manufactured with a bright blue commercial finish (Figure 14). The receivers are plain

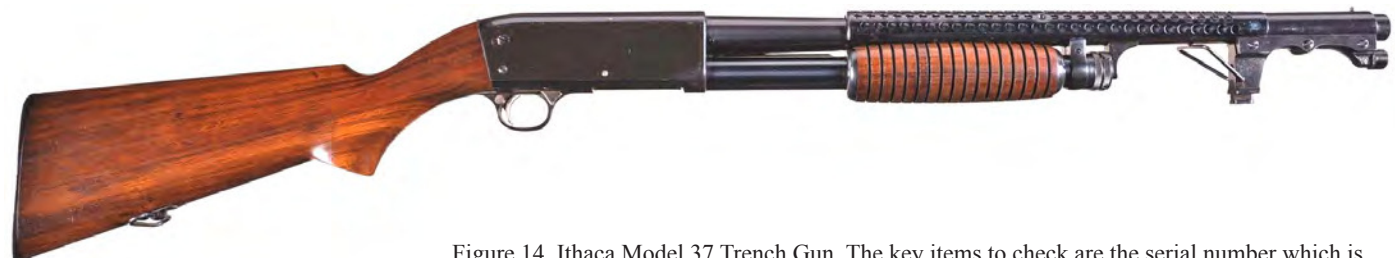


Figure 14. Ithaca Model 37 Trench Gun. The key items to check are the serial number which is found on the right front edge of the receiver, the barrel just forward of the receiver serial number and the stock (disassembly required), the blue finish, the handguard/bayonet adapter, and overall correct configuration. Ithaca made a limited number of Model 37 trench guns during the Vietnam war. These have serial numbers with an “S” prefix or are in the 900000 range. These were followed up by a later police/commercial variant with even higher serial numbers. All these later trench guns are parkerized. (photos courtesy of Rock Island Auction Co.)

without the pre-war “game scene” engraving and are martially-marked with the flaming ordnance bomb and “RLB” inspection on the left side of the receiver near the 20-inch barrel. The barrel has a small “p” proof and is marked “ITHACA GUN CO. INC. ITHACA, N.Y.=PATENT NO. 1849982 MODEL-37” over “12 GA.-2 ¾ CHAMBER”. These markings are visible with the handguard/bayonet adapter in place. The blued six-hole handguard/bayonet adapter is very similar to those found on early Winchester trench guns. Besides minor dimensional differences, they can be identified by the unique hole in the back of the bayonet lug. Note that a very similar PARKERIZED handguard/bayonet adapter was manufactured by Ithaca for Model 37 trench guns they supplied during the Vietnam era including some for sale to police departments. The stock is plain with a sling swivel and no inspection stamps. The black plastic buttplate has horizontal lines between the screws with “ITHACA GUN CO. INC.” just above the bottom screw.<sup>27</sup>

### RIOT/GUARD SHOTGUNS

Riot/guard shotguns were used in both World War I and World War II, and later. The government and most collectors and manufacturers called them riot guns. The riot gun is best described as a 12-ga. repeating shotgun with 20-inch cylinder choke barrel, NO sling swivels, and no provision for a bayonet. They were widely used for guarding prisoners and facilities, MP duties and for other tasks where a handy shotgun was desirable.

**World War I military riot guns** included the Winchester Models 1897 and 1912 and the Remington Model 10. The **Winchester Model 1897 riot guns** are found around serial number E650000, and appear to be factory-stamped with a small “U.S.” on the left side of the receiver. They also have a very small “flaming bomb” stamped on the 20-inch barrel and below the receiver serial number. Original guns have the bright factory blue finish. There is no provision for a handguard/bayonet adapter and there are no sling swivels. The bead front sight is mounted on top of the barrel at the muzzle and the rear left of the barrel is marked “CYL”. Other characteristics are the same as the World War I Model 1897 trench gun. Far fewer, possibly around 3,000, were produced than the Model

1897 Trench Gun but the demand (and value) is considerably less than for the trench guns.<sup>28</sup>

Winchester delivered 600 **Model 1912 riot guns** to the Army during World War I. Contrary to the solid frame Model 1897s, the Model 1912s were takedown. It is very likely that, like the Model 97 trench guns, they were delivered unmarked and markings, if any, were then added. The serial number range should be between 146500 and 190500. The 20-inch barrel is CYL bore with a bead front sight. The barrels have the standard Winchester factory markings. The stock, with its Winchester logo hard rubber buttplate, has a thin wrist and high comb and is sometimes inspected “JSA”. There are no sling swivels and no provisions for a bayonet.<sup>29</sup>

Remington delivered 1,150 **Model 10 riot guns** to the Army during World War I.<sup>30</sup> A major difference from the Model 10 trench guns is that the barrel is 20 inches versus the 23-inch barrel of the trench gun. It does not have a handguard and bayonet adapter and the receiver extension will not have the screw holes for the metal trench gun handguard retaining flange. The serial numbers are in about the middle of the Model 10 trench gun range. Unlike the Model 10, the “US” and “flaming bomb” are on the top of the barrel. The Army altered many Model 10 trench guns to riot gun after World War I. The barrels were shortened to 20 inches and the handguard and bayonet adapter were removed while the sling swivels were left intact. In addition, the receiver extension will have the screw holes for the handguard flange and the markings will be as stated for the Model 10 trench gun. Either variant of the Model 10 riot gun is very desirable.<sup>31</sup>

There are several makes and models of **World War II riot guns**. With few exceptions, which will be noted, they are military-marked 5-shot (4 in the magazine and one in the chamber) 12-ga. guns with plain 20-inch cylinder bore barrels and no sling swivels. The most common World War II riot gun is the **Remington Model 11** (Figures 15-17). Remington delivered 60,006 riot and training Model 11 and Sportsman shotguns during World War II. The majority of these were long barrel training shotguns. Model 11 deliveries started with 41 guns in 1940 and 1941 with the remainder being delivered from 1942 through 1944. Model 11 riot guns are



Figure 15. Remington Model 11 riot gun serial number 478386 with early features. It has the commercial checkered forend and game scene on the receiver. The matching barrel is dated May 1943. The bolt is marked “MODEL 11”.



Figure 16. Remington Model 11 riot gun serial number 484097. This gun is almost identical to the gun in Figure 15 except that now the forend is smooth. The matching barrel is dated March 1943. The barrels were dated when they were manufactured so some variance is to be expected.



Figure 17. Remington Model 11 riot gun serial number 491019. This can be called the standard World War II configuration as it has no game scene on the receiver and plain stocks. The matching barrel date is July 1943.

found in two serial number ranges: 455000 – 500000 and 700000 – 712000 with most guns being in the first block. The serial number is usually found in three places: the receiver, the barrel lug and the stock with the latter two being visible upon disassembly. Early guns had blued finish commercial production receivers with engraved game scenes while later receivers were plain with a duller brushed blue finish. The majority of the brushed blue finish receivers were marked “MILITARY FINISH” by Remington. The upper left of the receiver and the top of the barrel were stamped “U.S.” followed by the ordnance “flaming bomb”. The buttstocks were stamped with the ordnance crossed cannon “wheel” followed by “FJA” (the inspector was Col. Frank J. Atwood). The barrel markings also include the standard Remington factory information, the choke (CYL), and a three-letter date code. Early stocks are varnished and checkered commercial types while later stocks were plain. All are fitted with a Remington-marked brown plastic buttplate.<sup>32</sup>

The **Remington Sportsman** riot gun is virtually identical to the Model 11. The approximate serial number range is 529000 to 557000. The Sportsman is three-shot (2+1) and has a tapered forearm and smaller magazine cap than the Model 11. The bolt is stamped “SPORTSMAN”. All other features are the same as the Model 11.<sup>33</sup>

A small number of **Winchester Model 97** riot guns were delivered to the Army early in World War II. In addition to these purchases, solid frame World War I Winchester riot guns were also in the inventory. The November, 1942 manual, *Shot Guns All Types*<sup>34</sup> illustrates the solid frame World War I Model 97 on one page and a World War II era takedown Model 97 on the facing page.<sup>35</sup> Most World War II Winchester Model 97 riot guns will be found in the 912000 to 928000 serial number range with some late guns being on the 930000 to 950000 range. With the exception of the hand-guard/bayonet adapter and swivels, the World War II Model 97 riot guns are configured the same as the World War II Model 97 trench guns. However, a few very early Model 97 riot guns were delivered with sling swivels. These guns will have 41-dated barrels, “U.S.” with no flaming bomb on the left side of the receiver and the “flaming bomb” stamp on the top rear of the barrel. Most Model 97 riot guns will be found in the 914000 to 928000 serial number range. These will have no sling swivels, “W.B.”-inspected stocks, 42-dated barrels and the factory-applied “U.S.” followed by the ordnance “flaming bomb” stamp on the left side of the receiver (Figures 18-20).<sup>36</sup>



Figure 18. Military-marked Winchester Model 97 riot gun serial number 923463. This gun has a 1940 barrel date and the “U.S.” and ordnance “flaming bomb on the left side of the receiver. The stock is correctly “W.B.” inspected. This gun has a post-military refinish. Most collectors agree that only about one out of three or four Model 97 riot guns received military markings.



Figure 19. Winchester Model 97 riot gun serial number 919132. This gun has a 40-dated barrel and no military markings. The buttstock is stamped “PROPERTY OF VIRGINIA STATE POLICE”. This is most likely an early military commercial off the shelf purchase which was never inspected and then was later turned over to the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Figure 20. Winchester Model 97 riot gun serial number 948531. This gun is from the second block of Model 97 serial numbers, 930000 to 950000. It has a 42-dated barrel, and it, for some reason, escaped U.S. property markings. Note the deluxe buttstock. Sometimes there is no logical explanation for guns that one encounters.

Winchester delivered several thousand **Model 12 riot guns** to the Army during World War II. With the exception of the absence of the handguard/bayonet adapter and sling swivels, they conform to the previously discussed Model 12 trench gun configuration and serial number range (Figure 21). Interestingly, 7,636 Model 12 riot guns chambered in 16-ga. were delivered in 1942 and 1943. It appears that these were used to guard dams, power plants, and

other high value facilities. The great majority of Model 12 riot guns encountered today are chambered in 12-ga. have “W.B.”-inspected stocks and 42-dated barrels (Figure 22). Many Model 12 riot guns were retained by the Army with many being rebuilt, including parkerizing and, sometimes, the addition of sling swivels. They were in use into the Vietnam War.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 21. Winchester Model 12 riot gun serial number 976670. Most riot guns were manufactured prior to the trench guns. This early gun has a 41-dated barrel which had “MOD” struck out and “CYL” added when the factory shortened the barrel to 20 inches. As it does not have the usual “W.B.” final acceptance stamp, the stock is most likely an unmarked replacement to which someone added the postwar Defense Acceptance Stamp to make it look more authentic.



Figure 22. Model 12 riot gun serial number 983148. It has a 42-dated barrel, “W.B.” stock inspection, correct “U.S.” and ordnance “flaming bomb” on the right side of the receiver.

Ithaca delivered 5,175 **Model 37 riot** and training shotguns during World War II. Probably no more than a third were riot guns. With the exception of the absence of the handguard/bayonet adapter and swivels and the fact that most have 22-inch barrels, the Model 37 riot gun is similar to the Model 37 trench gun. Most fall into the 48000 to 51000 serial number range. They usually have a “US” stamped on the left side of the receiver next to the barrel and the ordnance “flaming bomb” stamp sideways on the left side of the barrel just in front of the receiver. The barrels do not have a choke marking and the stocks are not inspected. All Ithaca Model 37 riot guns have a blue finish with most showing various commercial features such as checkering and game scenes on the receiver.<sup>38</sup>

Remington sold 8,992 **Model 31 riot** and training pump shotguns to the government during World War II with the majority being shotguns for aerial gunnery training.<sup>39</sup> The Model 31 riot

gun serial number range runs from 51000 to 63000. They have a blue finish with a plain unadorned receiver. The serial number is on the left side of the receiver and the left rear side of the 20-inch barrel. The barrel is marked “CYL” with some markings being defaced by the factory (vice the neat line through that Winchester used) when a longer barrel was cut to riot length. Early production guns below approximately serial number 57000 have the ordnance crossed cannon inspection stamp only on the buttstock. Slightly later Model 31 riot guns are stamped “RLB” along with the “flaming bomb” on the receiver. About serial number 60000 the left side of the receiver and top of the barrel were stamped “U.S. PROPERTY”. The buttstock, with its brown plastic Remington-marked buttplate, is plain and, with the exception of the early guns with the “ordnance wheel” stamp, is not inspected. The buttstocks were serial numbered but disassembly is required to view the number. Model 31 riot guns are very hard to find today.<sup>40</sup>

Stevens delivered several thousand **Model 520-30** riot guns to the Ordnance Department during World War II. With the exception that they do not have the handguard/bayonet adapter and sling swivels, they are virtually identical to the Model 520-30 trench gun. One difference is that all the barrel markings, including the martial stamps, are on the left side of the 20-inch barrel. The serial numbers are usually under 50000. Collectors should ensure that they are not acquiring a Model 530-30 trench gun that is missing the handguard/bayonet adapter. A correct riot gun will not have the three transverse cuts for the handguard/bayonet attachment on the bottom of the barrel, will have barrel markings on the left side only and will have a stock with no inletting for a sling swivel.<sup>41</sup>

Stevens delivered several thousand **Model 620A** riot guns during World War II. Once again, the Model 620A riot gun is basically a Model 620A trench gun less the handguard/bayonet adapter and sling swivels (Figure 23). The major variations within this model revolve around a combination of markings which ranged from “UNITED STATES PROPERTY”, to the ordnance “flaming bomb”, to “GHS” in an oval, to a “P” on the left side of the receiver above the trigger, to a small “US” on the left side of the receiver above the trigger and to a small “US” on the left above the trigger and a small “flaming bomb” and “P” just behind the barrel. Early wood was often checkered while later stocks were plain.<sup>42</sup>

Stevens/Savage delivered 14,527 **Savage Model 720 riot** and training shotguns in 1943 and early 1944. The great majority were the long-barreled training shotguns. The Model 720 is nearly identical to the Remington Model 11. These guns are in the serial number range of 69400 to 88250. Early guns have a commercial bright blue finish while later guns have a duller brushed blue finish. Early guns had commercial game scene engraving on the receivers while later guns were plain. Martial markings were a small “U.S.”, ordnance “flaming bomb” and “P” proof on the left side of the receiver. The barrel has a small “flaming bomb” and “P”. The stock was not inspected. The 20-inch cylinder bore barrel has a distinctive ramped bead front sight. In addition, original riot gun barrels will have a three asterisks code marking for the cylinder bore. Training shotguns will have four asterisks. Buttstocks are not inspected and

have an unmarked black plastic buttplate. Early stocks and fore-arms may have commercial checkering while later they were plain. A correct Savage Model 720 riot gun is very hard to find.<sup>43</sup>

Collectors should be cautious when acquiring a World War II trench or riot gun. Thoroughly review the literature and seek expert advice prior to any purchase. When considering any trench or riot gun the first thing to do is to determine if it “looks right”. This simple evaluation will eliminate many pretenders. Modern reproductions and reproduction parts, especially the heat shield/bayonet adapter, are available. Attesting to their popularity, reproductions of the World War II Winchester Model 97 and Ithaca Model 37 trench guns are on the market. The Model 97 is from China and the Model 37 is U.S.-made. In addition, individuals on the internet advertise that they will create look-alikes of any of the World War II trench guns using modified riot or sporting shotguns. Ensure that the gun is in the correct serial number range. Do the receiver and barrel serial numbers match? The Winchester Models 97 and 12 are the easiest as the numbers are next to each other and almost always match. The Stevens and Itahca models have more numbers but they’re not obvious. Mismatched guns are often encountered as most soldiers didn’t know to look for matching numbers upon reassembly. If the mismatched numbers are in the correct range, it’s still a desirable gun with the value being slightly less than that for a matching gun. Mismatched riot guns should be avoided. Check that the barrel is the correct length and that it hasn’t been shortened. For trench guns, check that the barrel does not have any provision for a front sight as the front sight is on the bayonet adapter and that the heat shield/bayonet adapter is the correct style (6-hole, 4-hole) and make. Ensure you aren’t looking at a trench gun less the handguard/bayonet adapter or a riot gun that has been altered to trench gun configuration. Choke and other markings can help validate authenticity. Also, for riot guns, check the buttstock to ensure that there has never been a sling swivel. For trench guns, the barrel should have three transverse grooves for the bayonet adapter retaining screws and the sling swivel inletting should be factory quality. The buttplate should be the correct hard rubber/plastic; a metal buttplate is not original. Look at all the features carefully. Caveat emptor



Figure 23. Stevens Model 620A riot gun serial number 17408. Note the early checkered wrist. The markings include a small “US” on the left above the trigger and “P” over “flaming bomb” on the left front of the receiver and left rear side of the barrel. The left side of the buttstock has a boxed “U.S. PROPERTY” stamp.

## TRAINING SHOTGUNS

In World War I, a small number of training shotguns and Winchester Model 1903 rifles were used by the Army Air Service to train aerial gunners. These included Winchester Model 1897s and Model 1912s and Remington Model 10s and Model 11s. A count in October 1919, showed shotguns on hand included 4,500 Remington (probably Model 10s), 16,384 Winchester Model 1897s and 600 Winchester Model 12s.<sup>44</sup> There is no mention of the Remington Model 11. These shotguns continued to be used for gunnery practice in limited numbers by the Army and Navy during the inter-war period (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Posed photo circa 1920 of U.S. Navy sailors aboard the USS *Utah*, BB-31, preparing for gunnery training. Note that there are three double barrel shotguns and one Remington Model 10 shotgun in use. The sailor on the left appears to be holding a clay target thrower. (Naval History & Heritage Command, NH #119234).

During World War II, many thousands of training shotguns were used for aerial gunnery and anti-aircraft gunnery training. Early in the war many guns were bought in small numbers “off the shelf” from dealers and distributors. Some of these guns are martially-marked and some are not. There were many makes, models and types ranging from single barrel break-open shotguns, to double barrel shotguns, to pump-action repeating shotguns, to semiauto-

matic shotguns. The overwhelming majority of the training shotguns were long barrel variants of the makes and models of riot guns discussed above. The War Department classified shotguns by barrel length with any gun having a 20-inch cylinder barrel being classified as a riot gun (with no differentiation at this level between riot and trench guns); any gun with a 26-inch improved cylinder barrel being classified as a skeet gun; and any gun with a 30-inch full choke barrel being classified as a sporting gun which was used primarily for trapshooting.<sup>45</sup> Skeet shooting is similar to shooting at a moving aircraft. To simulate the movement of the aircraft or ship from which the gunner was firing, gunnery training was often conducted from the beds of moving trucks (Figure 28). As trench and riot guns get scarcer and more expensive, interest in military training shotguns is increasing. Training shotguns can be found in a variety of makes, grades and configurations as shown in Figures 25-30.

## FORAGER AND SURVIVAL GUNS

Forager and survival guns are an interesting subcategory of U.S. military shotguns. The Springfield Armory Model 1881 20-ga. forager shotgun has been previously discussed and illustrated. Survival guns can be in two categories: 1) a standard issue gun that has a shotshell adapted to it for survival use, and 2) a purpose-built survival gun. These were not intended for combat. The following illustrations show an example of each (Figures 31 and 32).

## BAYONETS

Aside from the early smoothbore muskets and a few Confederate shotguns, the only U.S. military shotguns that utilized a bayonet were the various World War I, World War II, and later trench guns. World War I and World War II trench guns were designed for and used the U.S. Model 1917 “Enfield” bayonet (Figures 33 and 34). The Model 1917 bayonets were a continuation of the British Pattern 1913 bayonet made for the Pattern 14 Enfield rifle which was manufactured by Remington, Eddystone (managed by Remington) and Winchester. These three facilities manufactured the U.S. Model 1917 rifle which was a continuation of the Pattern 14 rifle altered slightly for the U.S. .30-06 cartridge. The Model 1917 rifles were made in far greater quantities (2,193,429) than the Springfield Armory and Rock Island Arsenal-manufactured U.S. Model 1903 rifles (312,878).<sup>50</sup> Obviously, there were more Model 1917 bayonets available than the Model 1905 bayonet utilized on the Model 1903 rifle.



Figure 25. Stevens Model 530 double barrel 12-ga. training shotgun. This is an example of one of many training shotguns that were bought early in World War II. The Model 530 is not serial numbered. This gun has 28-inch barrels. The receiver is marked with the “U.S.” and ordnance “flaming bomb.” Note the commercial finish and game scene.

## AMMUNITION

World War I ammunition was procured from several commercial manufacturers. Only metal base paper shells were supplied, most likely in commercial packaging without U.S. military property identification.

Several commercial companies supplied World War II combat, training and survival ammunition (Figures 35-38). Most of it was in standard commercial boxes marked "U.S. PROPERTY". The War Department classified ammunition based on its intended use: "(1) Guard or combat - contains 1 ½ ounces of 00 buckshot; (2) Trap load - contains 1 1/8 or 1 ¼ ounces of No. 7 ½ chilled shot;

Figure 26. Remington Model 31 skeet shotgun. This is a typical example of an early World War II training shotgun purchase. This Model 31, serial number 39967, is a commercial gun with a solid rib and 26-inch Improved Cylinder choke barrel. It is stamped "RLB" and "flaming bomb" on the receiver.



Figure 27. Remington Model 11 skeet shotgun. The Navy used many Model 11 riot and training shotguns. This gun, serial number 475115, has checkered wood, a factory-installed Cutts compensator and the commercial game scene on the receiver. It is U.S.- marked and has the "FJA" and ordnance "wheel" stamp on the stock.





**MOUNT, SHOTGUN, FLEXIBLE, COMPLETE WITH MODIFIED REMINGTON SPORTSMAN SHOTGUN**

Figure 28. Mount, Shotgun, Flexible complete with modified Remington Sportsman shotgun. This mount was used by the Aviation Free Gunnery Training Program to instruct gunners in the handling of machine guns while shooting at moving targets. The Sportsman's stock was removed and spade grips linked to the trigger and machine gun sights were added.<sup>46</sup>

(3) Skeet load - contains 1 1/8 ounces of either No. 7 1/2 chilled shot or No. 9 chilled shot; and (4) Hunting load - contains any of the above-mentioned loads."<sup>52</sup> The all brass shotshells were usually reserved for combat.

### ACCOUTREMENTS

Accoutrements included manuals, cleaning equipment and shotshell carrying pouches. Manuals are listed in the bibliography. Cleaning equipment was commercial of the period with no features (except packaging) that distinguish it as military. Shotshell carrying pouches were first fielded in World War I and were in use at least through Operation Iraqi Freedom, and probably later. While there were several models of carrying pouches, it appears that most soldiers elected to carry shotshells in their pockets or in various other pieces of carrying equipment such as bandoliers and grenade pouches. As a result, military shotshell pouches are relatively scarce today. Several are shown in Figures 39-44.

### SUMMARY

U.S. military shotguns are an interesting and challenging collecting area. As pointed out above, there are many models, types, and variations for the collector to consider. In relative terms to other military firearms, there were very few manufactured and even fewer correct examples are available today. About 2.5 million Models of 1903 and 1917 rifles were delivered in World War I. Compare this to the approximately 25,000 shotguns of all types delivered during the same period. The same trend holds for World War II. About 11.7 million M1 Garands, M1 Carbines, and Models 1903/03 A3 rifles were manufactured during World War II. Contrast this to the approximately 230,000 shotguns of all types delivered during the same period. Good luck on your collecting and be a smart buyer!



Figure 29. Stevens Model 620 skeet shotgun. This skeet gun, serial number 107458U, has a 28-inch barrel choked for skeet. It is marked "UNITED STATES PROPERTY" and "flaming bomb" on the receiver and barrel and has seen a lot of use.



Figure 30. Ithaca Model 37 sporting (trap) shotgun. This Model 37, serial number 51530, is one of only 6,597 Ithaca trench, riot, and training shotguns delivered in 1942. Of these, 1,422 were trench guns with the remaining 5,175 being riot and training shotguns. Note the commercial checkering and receiver game scene. The left side of the receiver has "RLB" over the "flaming bomb" with "P" and "U.S." to either side. The barrel has a "P" on the left next to the receiver. There is no stock inspection. Any military Model 37 is a prize.

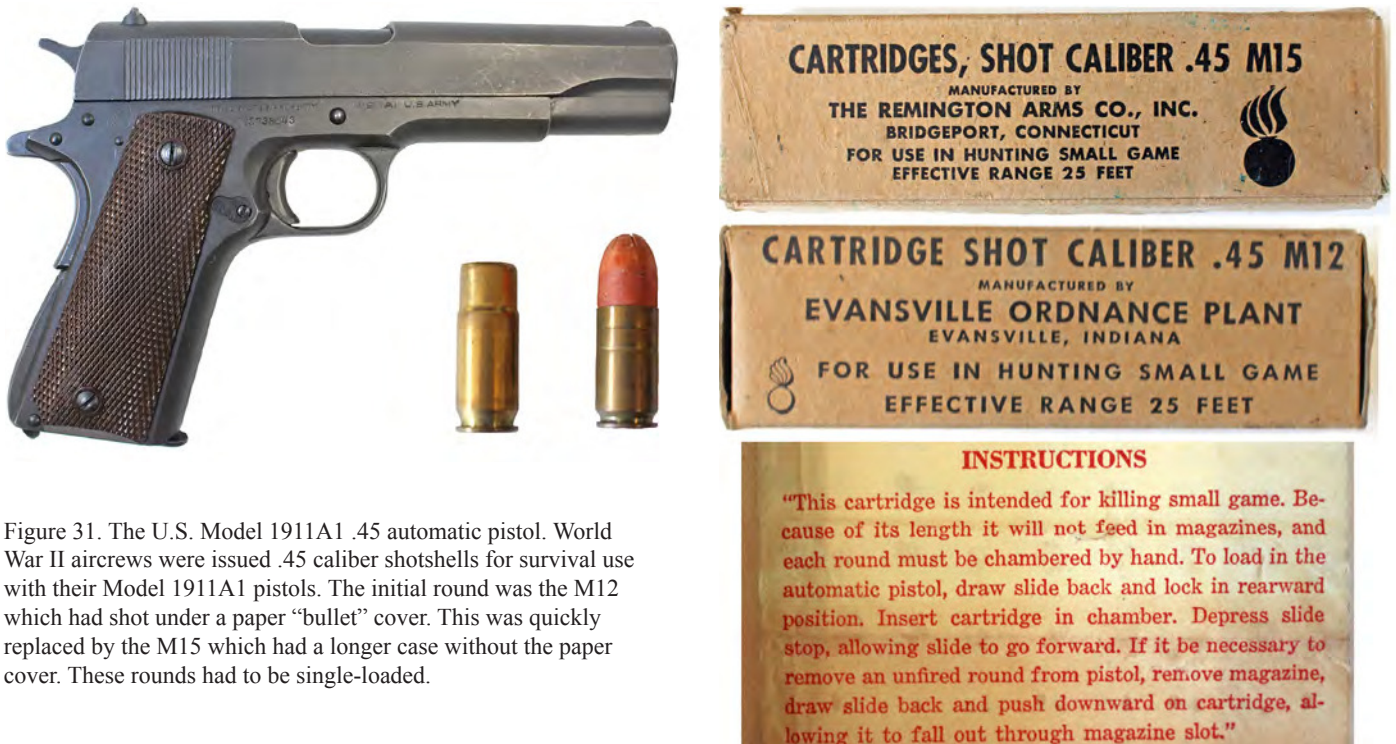


Figure 31. The U.S. Model 1911A1 .45 automatic pistol. World War II aircrews were issued .45 caliber shotshells for survival use with their Model 1911A1 pistols. The initial round was the M12 which had shot under a paper “bullet” cover. This was quickly replaced by the M15 which had a longer case without the paper cover. These rounds had to be single-loaded.



Figure 32. Ithaca M6 Aircrew Survival Weapon. The M6 was adopted by the Air Force in March, 1951. It is an over/under .22 Hornet/.410-ga. combination firearm. It was designated “Cal. .22/.410 Gage Survival Rifle-Shotgun M6”. It folds to fit the survival kit in the seat pack of ejection seats.<sup>47,48</sup> It is a much better firearm than the “piece of junk” .22 Hornet H&R M4 rifle it replaced.<sup>49</sup> Note: because of its 14-inch barrels, the M6 is an NFA item.



Figure 33. Model 1917 bayonets were manufactured by Remington and Winchester. The manufacturer is marked on the reverse ricasso of the blade. Shown here are World War I Remington and Winchester bayonets and their scabbards. The World War I Model 1917 bayonets were manufactured only in 1917 and 1918. None were manufactured during World War II.



Figure 34. In the mid-1960s the U.S. began to run out of the World War I-era Model 1917 bayonets. Trench guns were in use in Vietnam and they needed bayonets. Two companies, General Cutlery and Canadian Arsenals, Ltd. delivered an estimated 8,000 Model 1917 bayonets to the government.<sup>51</sup> These have black plastic grips and manufacturer's marks on the front face of the crossguard. The scabbards were plastic. The overall quality was much lower than the original Model 1917 bayonets.



Figure 35. Guard or combat shotshells. With the exception of the 16-ga. guard loads (12 balls of No. 1 buckshot) for the Model 12 riot guns in that gauge, all loads are 00 buckshot.



Figure 36. Shipping can and crates for guard or combat shotshells.



Figure 37. Training shotshells. Note that tracers were used to aid in gunnery training.

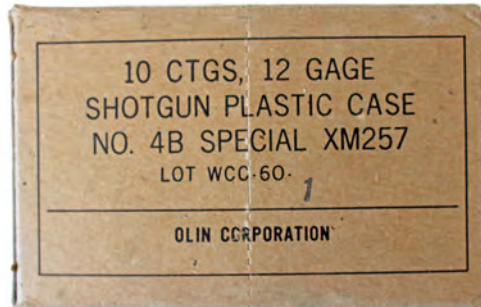
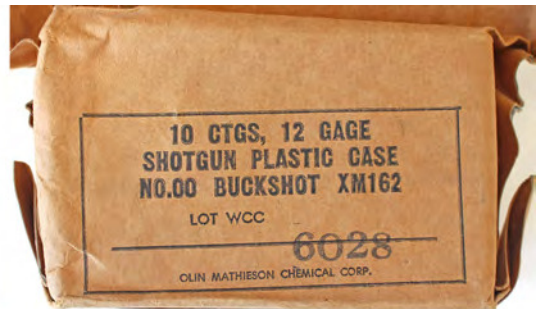


Figure 38. Post-World War II military shotshells



Figure 39. Model 1918 shotshell pouch. This is the first purpose-built combat shotshell pouch. It carries 32 shotshells in four rows with two on the top and two on the bottom. Model 1918 is a collector term. These are very scarce today.



Figure 40. "Model 1921" shotshell pouch. Model 1921 is, again, a collector term. This post-World War I pouch is constructed in a very similar manner to the Model 1918 pouch but with two rows of six shells. Note the reinforcing web around the body, another similarity to the Model 1918. They were manufactured by the Jefferson Quartermaster Depot and are dated 1921. A very few have been noted with "USMC" markings on the front. These are very rarely seen today.



Figure 41. The Model 1938 shotshell pouch was standardized in 1938 but widespread production did not start until 1942. This 12-shell pouch was made by several makers. REPRODUCTIONS EXIST.



Figure 42. Vietnam era pouches. These are very similar to the Model 1938 pouches. They were manufactured by several contractors from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. They are found with belt loops or "Alice" belt clips. All are marked with contract data on the inside front cover. There was also a nylon pouch made by Amer-Excel Corp. Reproductions of the Vietnam era pouches are fairly common.



Figure 43. The enigmatic Vietnam era Hudgins Manufacturing Corporation shotshell pouch. There has been much discussion about the authenticity of these pouches. They are well-made and look real. THEY ARE NOT! They were manufactured in the late 1980s/early 1990s in Fredericksburg, Virginia, for gun show sales. Shown are a complete pouch and two that are under construction.



Figure 44. Operation Iraqi Freedom USMC shotshell pouch. In the early 2000s 200 of these nylon pouches were made for the USMC by London Bridge Trading Inc. of Virginia Beach, Virginia. These are very rare with a sample being held in the manufacturer's reference collection and one or two in collector hands.

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