

# **Marine Corps World War I Weapons: Description**

## **Rifles, Shotguns and Automatic Weapons**

### **Model 1903 Springfield Rifle**

The standard U.S. service rifle at the time of America's entry into the war, the "03 Springfield" was an accurate and trusted companion. All combat Marines serving in Europe used this type of rifle. The M1903 Springfield was officially adopted as a military bolt-action rifle on 19 June 1903. World War I was the first major conflict that the weapon saw service. It was officially replaced as the standard infantry rifle by the faster-firing semi-automatic eight-round M1 Garand starting in 1936.

### **Model 1897 Winchester Shotgun**

Many of the senior officers serving in the American Expeditionary Forces remembered the effectiveness of the short-barrel shotgun against the Moro tribesmen in the Philippines. When the U.S. entered the war in Europe, the Ordnance Department selected a variation of the M1897 Winchester capable of being used with a bayonet. Very effective in the trenches, the M1897 shotgun was modified to utilize the M1917 bayonet. A ventilated metal hand guard allowed air circulation and provided protection from the hot barrel. On 14 September 1918, the German government lodged an official diplomatic protest against the use of shotguns.

### **Model 1917 U.S. Enfield Rifle**

Manufactured by Winchester, Remington, and Eddystone Arsenal, the .30 caliber M1917 rifle was rugged and dependable. Although it was the predominant American rifle by the end of the war, Marines used the M1917 for training purposes only.

### **Model 1915 Chauchat Automatic Rifle**

The Chauchat was first used by the French in 1915, along the Western Front. When the U.S. entered the war in 1917, large quantities of the weapon were purchased to equip American forces heading to the battlefields of France. Poorly constructed, the Chauchat proved highly unsatisfactory. Upon arrival in Europe, Marines were forced to trade in their beloved Lewis guns for the French M1915 Chauchat Automatic Rifle. Poorly manufactured and unreliable, the Chauchat was the standard light automatic rifle of the American Expeditionary Forces for the entire war.

### **Model 1914 Hotchkiss Machine Gun**

Manufactured by the French arms company Hotchkiss & Co., the M1914 Hotchkiss was the standard machine gun for the French Army during World War I. The American Expeditionary Forces in France also used the Hotchkiss extensively throughout 1917 and 1918.

### **Model 1917 Colt Revolver**

Because the M1911 pistol was in short supply, the Ordnance Department contracted with Smith and Wesson and Colt for the production of large-frame double-action revolvers chambered in .45 caliber. Initially restricted to noncombatant personnel, a number of M1917s was issued to front line troops.

### **Colt Model 1911 Pistol**

The M1911 .45 caliber pistol was the standard issue handgun for all branches of service when the U.S. entered World War I. Arguably the best combat pistol ever designed and manufactured, the M1911 was rugged and reliable, with effective stopping power. More than 643,000 were manufactured during World War I.

### **Model 1918 Lewis Aircraft Gun**

Manufactured by the Savage Arms Company, the Model 1918 utilized a 97 round drum magazine and an early form of recoil reducer, officially labeled the "Recoil Check."

### **Marlin Aircraft Machine Gun, Model 1918**

Developed by Carl Gustave Swedilius, the Model 1918 was a modification and refinement of the Colt Browning Machine Gun. Dependable under even extreme circumstances, it was greeted enthusiastically by pilots. By November 1918, 22 American Expeditionary Forces squadrons at the front were partially or fully equipped with Marlin 1918s.

## **Grenades, Bayonets and Knives**

### **Mills Bomb Grenade**

When the U.S. entered the war, it had no satisfactory grenades in its arsenal. The British Mills Bomb, the first modern fragmentation grenade, was an explosive-filled steel canister with a triggering pin and distinctive notched "pineapple" surface. The U.S. Mark 1 "defensive" grenade, which began production in 1917, was based on this design.

### **Model 1905 Bayonet**

When the United States adopted the M1903 rifle, the design featured an ineffective rod bayonet that proved unsatisfactory. In 1905, the government standardized a newly designed 16-inch knife-bayonet for manufacture by both Springfield Armory and Rock Island Arsenal.

### **Model 1917 Bayonet**

Made and issued in larger numbers than any other U.S. bayonet in World War I, the M1917 was authorized for use with both the M1917 rifle and with combat shotguns, including the Winchester M1897. More than 2.5 million M1917 bayonets were manufactured between 1917 and the end of the war.

### **M1897 Winchester Shotgun Bayonet**

Very effective in the trenches, the M1897 shotgun was modified to utilize the M1917 bayonet. A ventilated metal hand guard allowed air circulation and provided protection from the hot barrel. On 14 September 1918, the German government lodged an official diplomatic protest against the use of shotguns.

### **M1918 Mk 1 Trench Knife**

A very effective and functional close combat weapon, the M1918 Mk 1 was produced by both French and American companies. It replaced the M1917 trench knife.

### **Model 1917 Trench Knife and Scabbard**

Designed for close-quarter combat in the trenches, the M1917 trench knife featured a triangular blade. It was subsequently replaced by the M1918 Mk 1 knife.