

USA M14 Rifle

The M14 rifle, officially the United States Rifle, Caliber 7.62 mm, M14, is an American select-fire battle rifle that fires 7.62×51mm NATO (.308 in) ammunition. It became the standard-issue rifle for the U.S. military in 1959 replacing the M1 Garand rifle in the U.S. Army by 1958 and the U.S. Marine Corps by 1965 until being replaced by the M16 rifle beginning in 1968. The M14 was used by U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps for basic and advanced individual training (AIT) from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s.

The M14 was developed from a long line of experimental weapons based upon the M1 Garand rifle. Although the M1 was among the most advanced infantry rifles of the late 1930s, it was not an ideal weapon. Modifications were already beginning to be made to the basic M1 rifle's design during the last months of World War II. Changes included adding fully automatic firing capability and replacing the eight-round en bloc clips with a detachable box magazine holding 20 rounds. Winchester, Remington, and Springfield Armory's own John Garand offered different conversions. Garand's design, the T20, was the most popular, and T20 prototypes served as the basis for a number of Springfield test rifles from 1945 through the early 1950s

Production contracts

Initial production contracts for the M14 were awarded to the Springfield Armory, Winchester, and Harrington & Richardson. Thompson-Ramo-Wooldridge Inc. (TRW) would later be awarded a production contract for the rifle as well. 1,376,031 M14 service rifles were produced from 1959 to 1964.



A U.S. soldier with an M14 watches as supplies are dropped in 1967 during the Vietnam War.



A standard issue M14

Deployment

After the M14's adoption, Springfield Armory began tooling a new production line in 1958, delivering the first service rifles to the U.S. Army in July 1959. However, long production delays resulted in the 101st Airborne Division being the only unit in the army fully equipped with the M14 by the end of 1960. The Fleet Marine Force finally completed the change from M1 to M14 in late 1961. Springfield Armory records reflect that M14 manufacture ended as TRW, fulfilling its second contract, delivered its final production increment in fiscal year 1965 (1 July 1964 – 30 June 1965). The Springfield archive also indicates the 1.38 million rifles were acquired for just over \$143 million, for a unit cost of about \$104.

The rifle served adequately during its brief tour of duty in Vietnam. Though it was unwieldy in the thick brush due to its length and weight, the power of the 7.62×51mm NATO cartridge allowed it to penetrate cover quite well and reach out to extended range, developing 2,560 ft.lbf (3,463 J) of muzzle energy. However, there were several drawbacks to the M14. The traditional wood stock of the rifle had a tendency to swell and expand in the heavy moisture of the jungle, adversely affecting accuracy. Fiberglass stocks were produced to resolve this problem, but the rifle was discontinued before very many could be distributed for field use. Also, because of the M14's powerful 7.62×51mm cartridge, the weapon was deemed virtually uncontrollable in fully automatic mode, so most M14s were permanently set to semi-automatic fire only to avoid wasting ammunition in combat.

The M14 was developed to replace seven different weapons—the M1 Garand, M1903 Springfield, M1917 Enfield, M1 carbine, M3 submachine gun, M1928/M1 Thompson, and M1918 Browning automatic rifle (BAR). The intention was to simplify the logistical requirements of the troops by limiting the types of ammunition and parts needed to be supplied. However, it proved to be an impossible task to replace all these weapons. The M14 was also deemed "completely inferior" to the World War II M1 Garand in a September 1962 report by the U.S. Department of Defense comptroller. The cartridge was too powerful for the submachine gun role and the weapon was simply too light to serve as a light machine gun replacement for the BAR.

Rifle design

The M14 rifle was first furnished with a walnut stock, then with birch and finally with a synthetic (fiberglass) stock, which was adopted for use in damp jungle environments in Vietnam, since the wood versions would often become warped and swollen with moisture. The stock was also fitted with a hinged shoulder rest for improved user comfort when firing from a prone position. Original equipment walnut and birch stocks carry the Department of Defense acceptance stamp or cartouche (an arc of three stars above a spread-winged eagle). These stocks also carried a proof stamp, a P within a circle, applied after successful test-firing.

Rifles manufactured through late 1960 were provided with walnut handguards. Thereafter synthetic, slotted (ventilated) hand guards were furnished but proved too fragile for military use. These were replaced by the solid synthetic part still in use, usually in dark brown, black or a camouflage pattern.

Rifling

Standard M14 rifling has right-hand twist in 1:12 inches with 4 grooves.

Accessories

Although M14 rifle production ended in 1964, the limited standard status of the weapon resulted in the continued manufacture of accessories and spare parts into the late 1960s and beyond.

- M6 bayonet with M8A1 sheath
- M2 Bandoleer (Has 6 pockets, each containing 2 × 5-round Mauser-type clips for a total of 60 rounds, and a pouch for a magazine filler. The sling was adjustable and was held in place with a matte-black steel safety pin). Standard Operating Procedure was for the operator to use up the ammunition in the bandoleers before using the loaded magazines in the ammo pouches. The pockets' stitching could be ripped out to allow the bandoleer to carry 6 pre-loaded 20-round magazines.
- Sling [The service rifle used a one-piece cotton or nylon webbing sling and the competition and sniping variants use the standard M1907 two-piece leather sling]
- Cleaning kit (contained in the stock's butt-trap) included: a combination tool, ratchet chamber brush, plastic lubricant case, brass bore brush, four cleaning rod sections, cleaning rod case, and a cleaning rod patch-holding tip.
- M5 winter trigger and winter safety
- M12 blank firing attachment and M3 breech shield
- Cartridge charger clip (holds five cartridges)
- Magazine filler (or "spoon") for charging detached magazines externally. (The M14 has a groove over the action that allows the operator to place a loaded clip and top off the attached magazine internally through the open action).
- M1956 Universal Small Arms Ammunition Pouch, First Pattern (could hold 2 × 20-round M14 magazines horizontally).
- M1956 Universal Small Arms Ammunition Pouch, Second Pattern (could hold 3 × 20-round M14 magazines vertically).
- M1961 ammunition magazine pouch. (Could carry 1 × 20-round M14 magazine. The bottom of the pouch contained eyelets for attaching a First Aid Pouch or 3-cell (6 pocket) Grenade Carrier that could tie down around the thigh.)
- M2 bipod
- M76 rifle grenade launcher
- M15 grenade launcher sight
- Mk 87 Mod 0/1 line (rope) throwing kit

Types of sights

Rear peep, front blade, metric

Rear National Match peep with hood, front National Match blade, metric

Military

M15

The **M15 Squad Automatic Weapon** was a modified M14 developed as a replacement for the .30-06 M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle for use as a squad automatic weapon. It added a heavier barrel and stock, two pistol grips (one fixed, one folding) a hinged buttplate, a selector switch for fully automatic fire, and a bipod. The sling was from the BAR. Like the M14, it was chambered for 7.62x51mm NATO.

Firing tests showed that the M14, when equipped with the selector switch, hinged buttplate and bipod, performed as well as the M15. As a result, the M15 was dropped and the modified M14 became the squad automatic weapon. Accuracy and control problems with this variant led to the addition of a pistol grip, a folding rubber covered metal foregrip and a muzzle stabilizer. However, it was a poor suppressive fire weapon owing to 20-round magazines and it overheated rapidly.

The M14 rifle

Rounds: 7.62 x 51 mm ball, armor-piercing and tracer (.308 Winchester)

Magazine: 20 rounds

Weight: 10.7 pounds loaded; 12 pounds with bipod

Overall length: 44.3 inches Barrel length: 22 inches

Maximum rate of fire: 750 rounds per minute

Effective rate (in combat): 60 rpm automatic; 40 rpm semi-automatic

Muzzle velocity: 850 meters (2,801 feet) per second

Maximum effective range: 460 meters (500 yards)

M14E1

The M14E1 was tested with a variety of folding stocks to provide better maneuverability for armored infantry, paratroopers and others. No variant was standardized.

M14E2/M14A1

Selective fire version of the standard M14 used as a squad automatic weapon. Successor to the full-automatic M14 with a bipod and the never issued M15. The developmental model was known as the M14E2. As a conceptual weapon developed by the Infantry School, it was known as the M14 (USAIB) (United States Army Infantry Board). It was issued in 1963 and redesignated as M14A1 in 1966.

It had a full pistol-gripped in-line stock to control recoil, a plastic upper forend to save weight, a muzzle compensator, the BAR sling, an M2 bipod, and a folding metal vertical foregrip mounted under the forend of the stock. Although an improvement over the M14 when in full-auto, it was still difficult to control, overheated rapidly, and the 20-round magazine limited its ability to deliver suppressive fire.

M14M (Modified)/M14NM (National Match)[edit]

The M14M is a semi-automatic only version of the standard M14 that was developed for use in civilian rifle marksmanship activities such as the Civilian Marksmanship Program. M14M rifles were converted from existing M14 rifles by welding the select-fire mechanism to prevent full-automatic firing. The M14NM (National Match) is an M14M rifle built to National Match accuracy standards.

The M14M and M14NM rifles are described in a (now-obsolete) Army regulation, AR 920-25, "Rifles, M14M and M14NM, For Civilian Marksmanship Use," dated 8 February 1965. Paragraph 2, among other things, stated that the Director of the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Division, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury (predecessor to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives) had ruled that M14M and M14NM rifles so modified would not be subject to the 1934 National Firearms Act (NFA) and, as such, could be sold or issued to civilians. However, with the passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968, the NFA was amended to prohibit sales of previously modified automatic weapons such as the M14M and M14NM to civilians.

M14 SMUD

Stand-off Munition Disruption, used by Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel to destroy unexploded ordnance. Essentially an M14 National Match rifle with scope.

Mk 14 EBR

The Mk 14 Enhanced Battle Rifle is a more tactical version of the M14, with a shorter 18-inch barrel, a retractable stock and multiple rails for more accessories.

M14 Tactical

Modified M14 using the same stock as the Mk 14 but with a 22-inch barrel and a Smith Enterprise muzzle brake, used by the U.S. Coast Guard.

M14 Designated Marksman Rifle

Designated marksman version of the M14, used by the U.S. Marine Corps. Replaced by the M39 Enhanced Marksman Rifle.

Modified M14 DMR fitted with the same stock as Mk 14, used by the U.S. Marine Corps. Being replaced by the M110 Semi-Automatic Sniper System.

M89SR Model 89 Sniper Rifle

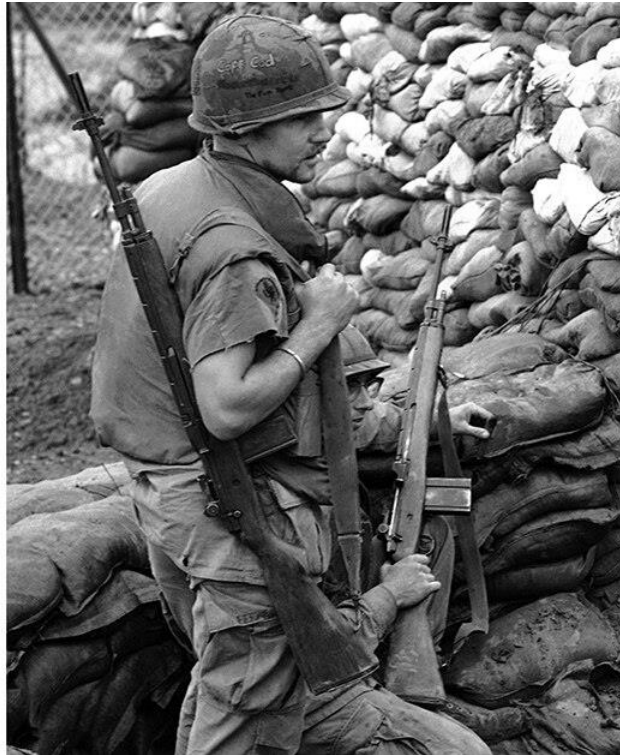
The M89SR is an M14 in bullpup configuration first introduced by Sardinus in the 1980s. Later produced by Technical Equipment International (TEI) for the Israel Defense Forces

AWC G2A Sniper Rifle^[edit]

AWC G2A Sniper Rifle is a modified M14 with bullpup stock designed by Lynn McWilliams and Gale McMillian in the late 1990s. Produced and delivered for testing at the Fort Bragg sniper school.

M21, M25 sniper rifles^[edit]

The M21 and M25 are accurized sniper rifle versions, built to closer tolerances than the standard M14. These are the more standard sniper rifle variants of the M14.



Original caption from 1969: "SP4 Michael Ferreira, left, Dallas, Tex., and SP4 David Booker, Geneva, Indiana, keep close watch during their guard duty tour on the Dak To perimeter with their M14 weapons in Vietnam on June 11, 1969. American defenders have beaten off enemy attacks in the area on 24 of the last 31 nights. (Cornu/AP)"



M21 Sniper rifle