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Featured Rifle

SA 1143576

A Guam Garand

By Mike Popernack



Many collectors have inquired about the rifles pictured on the www.popernack.com website. The “star of the show” M1 in the USMC display is a rifle documented to the battle of Guam. This article is an examination of this substantially original battle rifle.

Guam is a U.S. territorial island in the western Pacific Ocean. A member of the Marianas chain, it was ceded to the United States in 1898 by the Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish-American War. In the autumn of 1941, a lightly armed force of 153 U.S. Marines, 271 U.S. Navy personnel, and an 80-member Guamanian Insular Patrol Force defended Guam. On 10 December 1941, Guam was attacked by Japanese naval forces launched from the neighboring island of Saipan. After a heroic defense, with no hope of relief from the U.S. fleet shattered at Pearl Harbor, U.S. forces surrendered.

By the summer of 1944, the tide of war had turned and US forces were on the offensive. The liberation of Guam was planned to

provide an air base for B-29 bomber operations against the Japanese home islands leading to the planned invasion of Japan. On 21 July 1944, the Third Amphibious Corps, consisting of the 3rd Marine Division and the Army's 77th Infantry Division, landed on Guam. The 30-mile long, eight-mile wide island is mountainous and covered with dense jungle. In the high ground were numerous fortified limestone cave complexes. Fanatical resistance from 18,000 Japanese soldiers, coupled with the rough terrain, exacted a high price in American casualties. On 10 August 1944, organized resistance ceased and Guam was, from an operational standpoint, declared secure. In reality, thousands of Japanese soldiers refused to surrender and retreated deep into the mountains to continue the resistance.



In late August 1944, Admiral Nimitz, the area commander, directed that a Local Security Patrol Force be organized to hunt down and capture or kill the Japanese holdouts. The unit was comprised both of U.S. Marines and Guamanians. These patrols were credited with killing up to 80 Japanese soldiers per day. The Guamanian volunteers performed with distinction; one man was awarded the Silver Star and 28 others were awarded the Bronze Star. By September 1945, most Japanese soldiers had laid down their arms and surrendered. The last combat with Japanese soldiers occurred on Guam during 10-15 December 1945, when the Security Patrol Force engaged a group of holdouts. During this incident, six Japanese soldiers were killed and 20 were captured. The Bushido spirit of the Japanese soldier was evident as late as



1960 when two holdouts surrendered and again on 24 January 1972, when the last Japanese soldier on Guam was captured.

After liberation in 1944, Guam and the neighboring island of Tinian served as bases for American bombing raids on the Japanese home islands. Both atom bomb attacks on Japan were launched from Tinian. Today the Guamanians have U.S. citizenship and Guam is the major U.S. military base in the western Pacific. The airstrips on Guam were used in B-52 bombing operations during the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars.

The Garand

In the mid-1990's, the Guam Police Department was armed with a wide variety of obsolete small arms. Included in their inventory were 30 World War II era M1 rifles. To update and standardize their small arms inventory, they negotiated a trade agreement with a licensed firearms dealer in the continental United States and exchanged their mixed small arms inventory for new firearms. Guam's small arms inventory was shipped to the United States in July 1996. The dealer who arranged the trade commissioned Scott Duff to write up the story and sell the 30 M1 rifles.

These 30 Garands are the only known group of M1 rifles documented to a specific World War II battle. Aside from minor parts replacement at field service level, all remain in circa 1944 configuration. Since Guam is part of the United States, their firearms are regulated by the same laws as the rest of the country; there are no "import stamps." For a Garand collector, there isn't any better provenance. The Featured Rifle, Springfield s/n 1143576, was among that group.



The "paper trail" of the rifle may be deduced from research of the battle and its aftermath. The thousands of Japanese troops holding out on the island presented a constant hazard to the troops constructing airfields, as well as the native Guamanians. Patrols with local guides constantly worked to ferret out the Japanese. Eventually a Local Security Patrol Force, a combination of Marines and Guamanian volunteers supplied with arms and equipment, was formed. The head of this organization was a Marine officer from the division military police detachment. In addition to their normal policing functions, the Patrol Force conducted anti-Japanese patrols. Attacks on Marines and Guamanians continued after the Japanese surrender in September 1945. It is highly likely that M1 rifles used by the Local Security Patrol Force were transferred to the new Guam Police to support continued anti-Japanese activity.

During the Second World War, Springfield Armory shipped rifles in the order they were assembled, test fired, inspected and accepted by Army Ordnance. It is important to note this was not in exact serial number sequence. On any given day there were sev-

eral thousand serial numbered receivers in varying stages of production at the armory, and there was no ordnance requirement to keep the rifles in exact numerical order through the various stages of machining, heat treatment, assembly, inspection, test firing, acceptance or rejection, modification or repair, re-inspection, and shipping. Serial numbers used on receivers that failed quality control inspections were scrapped and not re-used. Barrels were stockpiled against steel shortages and their dates of manufacture may precede receivers by several months. Much to the chagrin of modern day collectors, these factors make it impossible to determine which specific day a given rifle was manufactured or even the exact total number of rifles produced. Nevertheless, rifles shipped in groups with generally close serial numbers. The 30 Guam Garands fit mostly into three serial number groups: 1.14 to 1.15 million (January 1943 production), 1.55 to 1.56 million (May 1943 production), and 1.74 to 1.75 million (July 1943 production). In most cases the serial numbers are from several hundred to fewer than 2,000 numbers apart. In two instances they are less than 100 numbers apart.

The Springfield Research Service, operated by the late Frank Mallory, identified thousands of military small arms by serial number, dates, and service location. Most records date from the Civil War through the Philippine Insurrection. During the twentieth century, the sheer scale of warfare and volume of small arms precluded such accurate record keeping and relatively few documented M1s exist. The following serial number table combining SRS documented M1's and the Guam Garands suggests Marine Corps provenance of the Guam rifles.

Serial Number	Date	Location
1143576	-	Featured Rifle
1144142	-	Guam Garand
1144194	4-3-95	USMC Trophy Rifle
1464371	-	Guam Garand
1464413	8-29-47	USMC Pensacola
1563872	6-10-51	USMC Hq Co FMF-PAC
1563887	-	Guam Garand
1566859	-	Guam Garand
1566860	10-12-43	USMC MCAD MIRMAR
1749041	-	Guam Garand
1749124	3-9-49	USMC Camp Lejeune
1749218	-	Guam Garand
1749300	9-19-45	USMC Camp Lejeune
1749457	7-2-47	USMC 1st MAW
1749766	6-10-51	USMC Hq Co FMF-PAC
1752234	-	Guam Garand
1752388	7-21-48	USMC Camp Pendleton
1752885	9-19-45	USMC Camp Lejeune
2121414	4-19-45	USMC Camp Pendleton
2123284	5-31-50	USMC NOB 128
2124330	-	Guam Garand

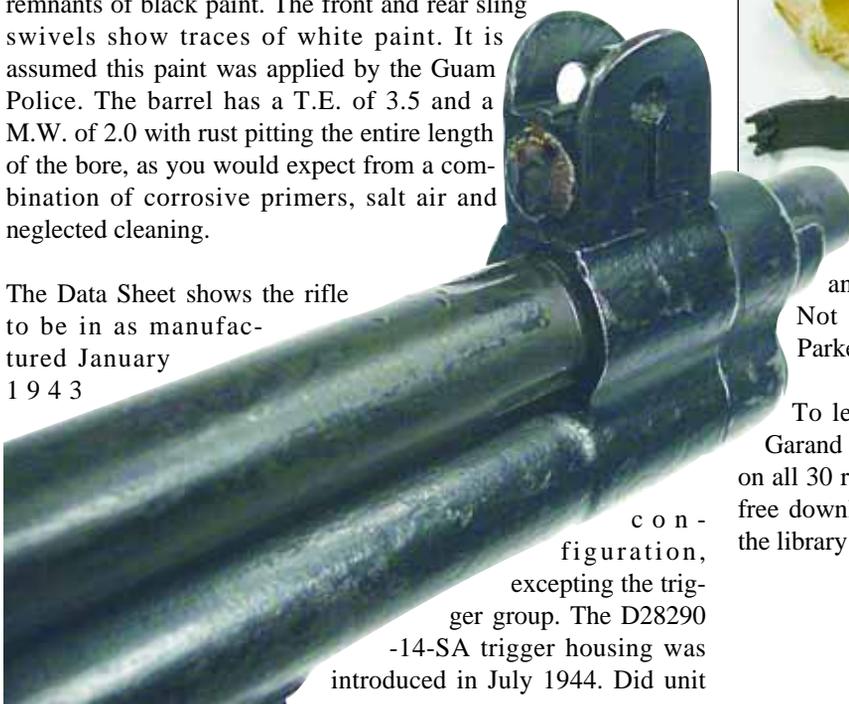
Knowing that rifles were generally shipped in groups with generally close serial numbers, 3rd Marine Division usage is a strong possibility. If the M1's were battlefield recovery weapons, possibly some may have come from the Army's 77th Infantry Division area of operations.

Rifle s/n 1143576 is in remarkably good condition for being likely used in training, invading a beachhead, fighting the Japanese in a tropical jungle, issued to the Local Security Patrol Force, continuing to fight the Japanese even after the end of the war, further use by the Guam Police, then storage in a humid environment for over 50 years. The front sight screw seal is present and slightly smashed. The stock has a faint EMcF cartouche and small ordnance emblem, and the proof P is present on the pistol grip.



There are numerous nicks and dings throughout the stock. Multiple marks from rear sight knobs show the rifle spent some time "stacked like cord wood." The right side of the stock shows faint "bullet tip dings" from tapping a cartridge clip prior to insertion in the rifle. The lower band pin is missing. This common occurrence on WWII rifles lead to the adoption of the roll pin for postwar rifles. The butt plate, rear hand guard clip, lower band, and front end from the front hand guard ferrule forward show remnants of black paint. The front and rear sling swivels show traces of white paint. It is assumed this paint was applied by the Guam Police. The barrel has a T.E. of 3.5 and a M.W. of 2.0 with rust pitting the entire length of the bore, as you would expect from a combination of corrosive primers, salt air and neglected cleaning.

The Data Sheet shows the rifle to be in as manufactured January 1943



configuration, excepting the trigger group. The D28290-14-SA trigger housing was introduced in July 1944. Did unit



armorers replace a broken part or did a buddy's trigger group get swapped during a cleaning session? Men fighting for their lives were probably not concerned with offending collector sensitivities 60 years in the future, and this is a perfect example of an "incorrect" component that should be left alone.

The butt trap contains a WWII style nickel oiler with a blue steel pull through and black fiber bristle brush. A lubriplate "grease pot" was wedged tightly in place with a cotton cleaning patch. Removing this revealed an unmodified M3 combination tool. The only thing the author has done to the rifle was add the Milsco 1944 sling.

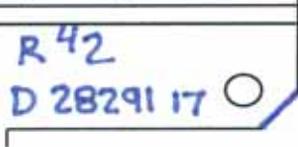
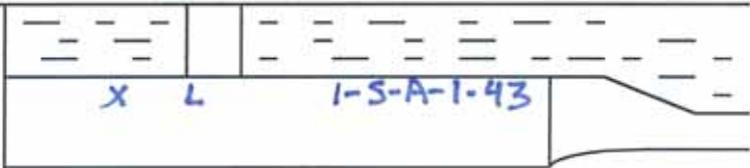


Collectors should carefully examine the photographs and note colors of the finish of individual components. Not all parts are "matching colors" or "WWII greenish Parkerizing" the way many collectors think they should be.

To learn more about the "Guam Garands" see the Guam Garand Monograph. This work contains complete data sheets on all 30 rifles. Copies are available on www.scott-duff.com. For free downloadable images of the rifle and related militaria visit the library section of our website at: www.poperneck.com.

Official Datasheet ©
Garand Collectors Association

Serial Number 1143576
Manufacturer SA

RIFLE TYPE MI GARAND		Original?	Remarks or photo RETURNED FROM GUAM 1996
RECEIVER, Lower right front area  Other marks and location, remarks			
BARREL side markings 		BOLT D 28287-12 SA Extractor BLUE Firing Pin LATE S-A30	
BARREL top markings (under handguard) Remarks HANDGUARD NOT REMOVED		Chamber Bright? YES T.E. = 3.5 M.W. = 2.0	GAS CYLINDER LOCK or PLUG ROUNDED, CHAMFERED LOCK SCREW SOLID
REAR SIGHT Aperture LATE Cover SA TYPE w/ Double INDENT Base LATE Pinion LONG Windage Knob KNURLED - SA TYPE Elev. Knob KNURLED II	FRONT SIGHT Ear width NARROW Cap over screw? YES Screw EARLY	FOLLOWER II Slide LATE BULLET GUIDE FORGED & MILLED OP ROD CATCH LATE FOLLOWER ARM LATE FOLLOWER ROD SHORT FORK RIVETED LOWER BAND ARCHED w/ PIN CLIP LATCH ROUND FRONT	
TRIGGER HOUSING D 28290-14-SA Pad: SMALL TRIGGER GUARD FORGED TRIGGER LATE HAMMER C 46008-5 SA	Hole: COVER LEAF SAFETY C 46015-9 SA SPRING HOUSING PARK. GUIDE PARK. w/ WINGS	OP ROD D 35382 6 SA Relief cut? NO OP ROD SPRING BLUE	
STOCK  Remarks "BULLET TIP DINGS" FERRULE STAMPED w/ HOLE SLING SWIVEL LATE	REAR HAND GUARD Clip STAMPED Clearance cut YES FRONT HAND GUARD Ferrule LATE Spacer LATE	BUTT PLATE LATE Long Screw LATE Short Screw BLUE SLING MILSCO 1944	
SNIPER M1C Base M1C Mount Scope	Rings M1D mount Cheek pad	VALUE VALUE VALUE	DATE DATE DATE