

# The Garand Story

by Z. Lee Schmidt

The U.S. Rifle .30 M1 was the first semi-automatic rifle to be adopted by the U.S. Military. Over the years the rifle was called various unofficial names including: "Garand", "M1", "U.S. Rifle", and "M1 Garand". The Garands, as I prefer to call them, were designed by the Canadian born engineer John C. Garand. Garand first introduced his rifle in 1919 and was hired by the Army Ordinance Department as a civilian engineer. He was charged with perfecting the rifle. This was no easy task and in fact it took the better part of twenty years. The U.S. Rifle .30 M1 was officially adopted by the U.S. Military as their first ever semi-automatic rifle, August 3, 1933. It would reign as king for more than twenty years.

## Place in History

The Garands weighed in at 9.5 lbs., were 43.5 inches long, had a 20 inch barrel, and fired the legendary 30-06 cartridge from an eight shot En-Block clip. Their accuracy, dependability and superior fire

power on the battlefield was highly acclaimed and famous. General George S. Patton said of the Garand rifle . . . "The M1 Rifle is the greatest battle instrument ever devised." They were routinely credited with winning many battles and some say even World War II.

The Garand saw more action after the War and was used extensively in Korea. They were produced until the late fifties, when they were

finally replaced as the official United States rifle by the M14. The M14 is a modernized and refined version of the Garand design. The historic Garands, many still in use today in armories and as sporting weapons, are much sought after by collectors and sportsmen.

## Manufacture

Three manufacturers were involved in the production of the M1 Rifle during the fifties: Springfield

Armory of Springfield, MA; Harrington & Richardson Arms Co. of Worcester, MA; and the International Harvester Corp. of Evansville, IN. Under the heading of Industrial Mobilization, contractors in private industry were sought to produce the entire rifle and various parts. International Harvester Corp., a well known maker of farm equipment and trucks, was awarded the first outside contract for production of complete rifles. The contract number was DA-33-008-ORD-149 and was awarded on June 15, 1951, for the production of 100,000 rifles. International made its initial deliveries in December of 1952.

These rifles were produced in a small area of IHC's Evansville, IN plant. The reason IHC was chosen was the result of the government's *geographical dispersion plan*. The bulk of the military arms producing

industry was centered in the New England area. The advent of atomic bombs and rockets capable of delivering them made this a most uncomfortable situation.

The plant in which IHC M1's were produced was the former Republic Avia- tion Plant. P-47 Thun- derbolts were

produced there during World War II. IHC had converted this facility for the manufacture of refrigerators, freezers, and window air conditioning units. Adjacent to this plant, near a railroad siding, was another building called the firing house; all proof functions, and targeting operations were performed in this building.

## Springfield Assistance

Obviously, International Harvester Corp. had a great deal of manufacturing experience, but none with small arms production. Springfield Armory assisted IHC in furnishing a full set of reproducible drawings for tools, fixtures, gauges and components. Also, the Armory provided manufacture routing slips, completely finished sample components, and literally hundreds of partially completed components used for checking machine tools on the pilot line.

Even with all of this help from Springfield Armory, International experienced difficulty getting set up for actual production. During the last six months of 1953, Springfield Armory produced approximately 10,000 M1 receivers for International Harvester. These receivers were most likely the first "gap lettered" IHC's, and quite possibly the SA/IHC "postage stamp" logo and

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SA/IHC "arrowhead" logo rifles. These variants are explained in the following: The exact sequence of these variants remains unknown.

### Variations

Several variations of the IHC receivers are known to exist. There are four basic types which have been observed to date. The following descriptions are not intended to be chronologically sequential. The first is referred to as the "postage stamp" logo IHC/IHC, and this is by far the most predominant. This is the type with all lines of the tang logo being of the same length, with no large gaps between words or letters. In addition, they also have a drawing number on the right receiver leg, but no drawing revision number or heat lot number. This type is found in all IHC serial number ranges and these receivers were made entirely by IHC.

The second variation is another "postage stamp" logo, but is SA/IHC; in other words, made by Springfield Armory for IHC. This type has the same shape tang logo as the other "postage stamp" logo type, but does have the drawing revision number and heat lot number typical of Springfield manufactured receivers. A few receivers with this type of logo have been observed in the 4445XXX serial number range and seems to be a very rare variant.

The third variation is referred to as the "arrowhead" logo SA/IHC. This receiver was made by Springfield Armory for IHC and has the typical SA drawing number and heat lot number on the right receiver leg. This type is easily identifiable by the logo bearing close resemblance to that used by Springfield. This first line of the logo is the shortest, the second line slightly longer, the third line is the longest and the fourth line is shorter. This variation seems to be quiet rare and has been observed in the 4440XXX to 4441XXX serial number area.

The fourth variation is the "gap lettered" logo SA/IHC. This receiver was made by Springfield Armory for IHC and has the typical SA drawing revision and heat lot number on the

right receiver leg. This variation can be found in the 4638XXX through 4659XXX serial number range and also later at the end of IHC production in the 5204XXX serial number area. While this type is the least rare of the SA/IHC's it is nevertheless a fairly rare variation of the M1 Rifle and is sought after by many collectors.

### Some Destroyed

In December, 1955 and January, 1956, Springfield Armory was again called on to produce receivers for IHC. This time 13,243 were shipped to the Evansville plant. These were the gap letter rifles in the 5 million serial number range. There is good reason to believe that not all of these receivers were assembled into finished rifles; and in fact it is believed that an unknown number were destroyed under government instructions.

Records of IHC deliveries of the M1 Garand indicate that 6,804 were delivered in 1953, 82,897 were delivered in 1954, 175,736 were delivered in 1955, 72,186 were delivered in 1956. Total deliveries; 337,623.

Records also indicate that serial number blocks 4,400,000 through 4,660,000 and 5,000,501 through 5,278,245 were assigned to IHC. The earliest and latest known serial number in each block are as follows; 4440161/4665712 and 5007341/5211254.

### Fun Collecting

The collecting of International Harvester Garands is most interesting and challenging; however much of the IHC story remains uncovered. The beauty of collecting is in the eye of the collector. Different people desire to collect different things. For example, I would prefer to have an all IHC made Garand of the IHC/IHC postage stamp logo, rather than one of the other three, rarer variations, that were partially made by other manufacturers.

One must be careful in collecting IHC Garands to insure that all the parts in the rifle are in fact the correct IHC parts. Throughout production of the Garands, by all the various manufacturers, all the parts had to be interchangeable. When a

## Attention Members Making Winter Convention Reservations!

There is another IH function at a later date at the same Holiday Inn, so to avoid problems, call the hotel at (309)-762-8811 and ask for Amber or Scott. Also say that you are with the IH Collectors Club, and give the Feb. 29-March 2 dates. This will help ensure that you get reserved rooms in the Holiday Inn, and Chap. #10 apologizes for any inconvenience anyone may have had.

part became worn or the rifle was rebuilt by an armory, no effort was made to maintain manufacturer originality. One of the best references to determine originality of parts is the book entitled "The M-1 Garand: Post World War II" by Scott A. Duff. This book explains the various post war manufacturers, parts, variations, part numbers, etc.

Garand collecting can be fun. As with any collecting it is best to be knowledgeable about what you are collecting. The hunt for the "correct" rifle or the parts to make a certain rifle "correct" can be frustrating, but is a lot of the fun.

IHC Garand prices range from \$450 to \$950, depending on condition and originality, most I have found average around \$700. They are becoming rarer, harder to find, and more expensive as the demand for them increases.

The IH Collectors Missouri Chapter Membership is very fortunate to own an all original IHC/IHC postage stamp logo Garand, serial number 4574129, built in January of 1954. All of the parts, including the wooden stock on this rifle are IHC. It is a part of the International Harvester Mobile Museum display. This Garand gets a lot of attention and lookers; some admiring it for what it actually is, but many others awed because they didn't realize IHC ever made a rifle.

*Submitted by Z. Lee Schmidt*  
References: *The M1 Garand: Post World War II, Dept. of the Army Technical Manual TM9-1005-222-12, and Military Gun Collectors Magazine.*