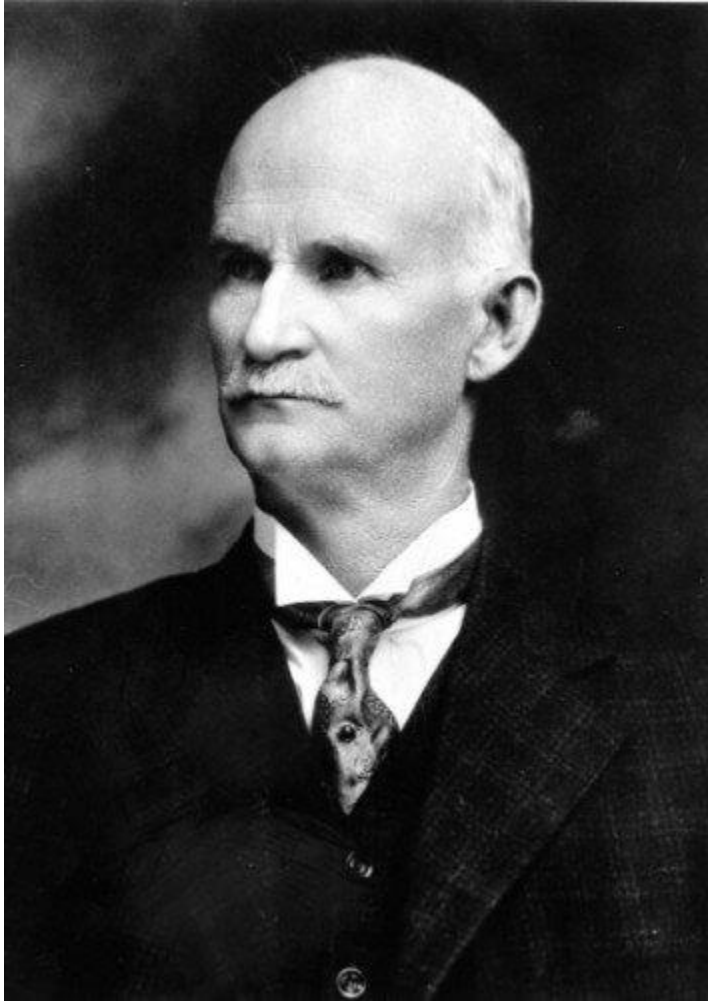


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The M1911

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, T. Gum, Site Admin.)



John M. Browning. Photo Credit: John M. Browning Collection.

In 1911 the Philadelphia Athletics beat the New York Giants in the World Series, but for many this is not what stands out about this particular year. No, it would be one of the most loved, and for others loathed, handguns to ever be produced.



Soldiers During WWI Maneuver. Photo Credit: National Archives Administration.

The M1911 was designed by John Browning and originally manufactured by the Colt Manufacturing Company. Chambered in .45ACP, with a magazine capacity of seven rounds (though many would chamber one round, eject the magazine, and replace the round bringing the total in-hand count to eight).



WWII Soldier. Photo Credit: Stripes Magazine.

The Army, Marines, and Navy would all end up adopting the M1911 though the Army would be the first to do so in 1911 with the Marines and Navy doing so in 1913. Interestingly, the 28th

Division and the 1911 would cross paths while both serving in Mexico as part of the Punitive Expedition in 1916; arguably a front-line test for both.



US Army, Korean War (note sidearm, bottom left).

By the end of World War One the M1911 would be produced by approximately nine companies though many of the awarded contracts would be withdrawn due to the War ending. The major manufacturers of the pistol during this period included the Colt Manufacturing Company, the Springfield Armory, Remington-UMC, and North American Arms Company. Years later during World War II other manufacturers would be contracted to produce the M1911 including the Union Switch & Signal company (located in Pittsburgh, PA), and Singer (famous for manufacturing sewing machines).



Vietnam War, "Tunnel Rat."



USMC DOD Image.

The variants of the original M1911 include types of metal treatment and coating, length of barrel, types of handle material, and distinctive markings just to name a few... though what is shared between the variants is the continued service of the pistol from 1911 through 2012, the last official service being with the US Marines. However, units permitted to self-select kit & gear continue to rely on the M1911 as their sidearm.

Various production models and custom M1911's have been carried on countless continents on all kinds of missions including storming beaches, trench works, volcanic caves and jungle tunnels, worn on chests of pilots and tankers alike, and clung to at night while catching shut eye. It has been a constant companion, trusted during close quarters battle or when all other ammunition had been expended.

The M1911, or simply the 1911, continues to be a highly respected sidearm for its capability, along with value in the collectors world. A service length of over one hundred years lends itself to at least a measure of respect even from the most dedicated fans and users of other service pistols.