



## The M1903 Springfield Rifle (Weapon)

*Leroy Thompson*

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Developed to replace the Model 1892 Krag-Jørgensen rifle, the Model 1903 Springfield was a five-shot bolt-action rifle that introduced the .30-06 cartridge - the standard US round until the introduction of the 7.62mm NATO cartridge - and gave the US infantryman a durable, magazine-fed weapon so renowned for its accuracy that it remained in service as a sniping rifle for decades after it was superseded by the M1 Garand in 1937. Extensively used in World War I, the M1903 Springfield saw widespread combat in World War II and Korea; even during the Vietnam War, US Marine snipers still used M1903 Springfield rifles, and it remains in service today with drill teams, color guards, and ceremonial units. When large numbers of M1903 Springfields were sold off to American civilians it became a popular hunting rifle and one of the most collected US military firearms due to the large number of variations.

During World War I, US troops developed a formidable reputation for marksmanship aided by the accuracy of the M1903 Springfield, which was widely used in that conflict alongside the Pattern 1917 Enfield. World War II saw the introduction of the M1903A3, which changed the rear sight so that it was closer to that of the M1 Garand, to allow easier training of troops who might be issued either rifle. The M1903A4 sniper version was used during World War II and later. Many infantry squads that were equipped with the Garand also had at least one "grenadier" who retained an '03 for launching rifle grenades.

Illustrated with specially commissioned color artwork and drawing upon veterans' recollections, this is the engaging story of the M1903 Springfield, an iconic rifle prized for its lethal accuracy that equipped US and other troops for much of the 20th century.

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