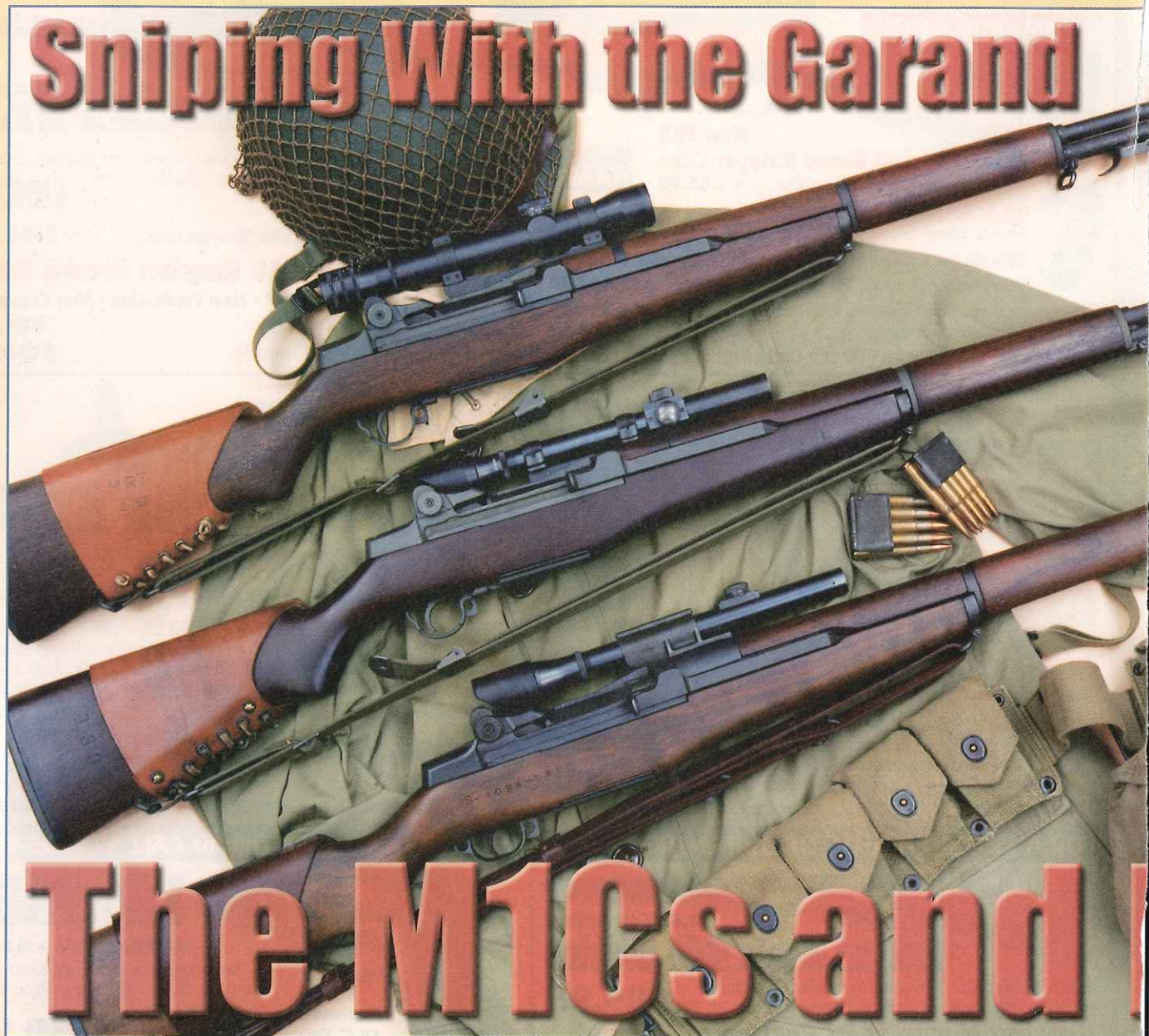


# Sniping With the Garand



# The M1Cs and

World War II's best battle rifle also made a pretty good specialty weapon.

By Philip Schreier

**A**s an adolescent learning to shoot and hunt along the hills and valleys of the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, I was eager to absorb the knowledge that some of my mentors had to offer. To me their life experience, many of them World War II and Korea vets, was priceless. They knew all the tricks of the trade that I never encountered while reading books and magazine articles on the subject.

I asked about guns, equipment

and caliber specifics, and they obliged by sharing sage advice and personal anecdotes that made my choices seem reasonably well thought out. One of the wisest of the group told me from the start that semiautos were worthless as decent hunting rifles and suggested I trade my new Remington Model 4 for a Model 700.

As I began to later develop an interest in all things military, I often questioned my mentor's

advice when I learned more about M1Cs, Ds and M14s. These semiautos seemed to have made their mark as adopted sniper weapons; the Army and Marine Corps didn't seem to think that semiautos were all that bad...or did they?

World War II began for the United States on December 7, 1941. It was something that most everyone in the country saw approaching throughout the 1930s as war clouds darkened and

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# M1DS

**A number of attempts were made to adapt the M1 rifle to the sniping role. The three most successful were, top to bottom, Marine Corps MC 1952 M1C, M1D and M1C. Of the three, the Marine M1C is by far the scarcest.**

eventually burst over Europe. It's hard to imagine that with all the "early warning signs," the riflemen of this country were ill equipped to do battle when war finally reached our shores. At the start of the conflict there were only slightly more than 500,000 M1 Garands available in military stores. The M1 Carbine was only a few months old, and few had been manufactured. There was



**The M1C featured a 2½X M82 Lyman Alaskan scope, secured to the rifle by a Griffin & Howe mounting system.**

no M1903A4, M3 Grease Gun or any of the numerous arms that would become commonplace by war's end.

The American sniping program was close to non-existent at the start of the war. In the Army's inventory was the antique Model 1913 "Warner & Swasey" rifle-scope for the 1903 Springfield and nothing more. The Marines had made strides to improve their sniping program and had developed better scopes and equipment, but by and large the military was suffering severely in the area of marksmanship equipment.

In December 1942, almost a full year after the start of hostilities, the Army adopted the Springfield bolt-action 1903A4 rifle as a sniper rifle. Later, in 1943, Headquarters Army Ground Forces began to look into the conversion of the M1 Garand to a scoped rifle for use by snipers. The first experimental model was tagged Experimental Rifle U.S. Caliber .30, M1E2. Tests and evaluations were run on this semiauto using an M73B1 scope mounted to the rifle by a Stith-type mount. The M73B was Army nomenclature for the Weaver 330 scope that was also being used on

## The M1Cs and M1Ds



*Marine Corps MC 1952 M1C sniper rifles are not as commonly seen as M1Cs and M1Ds. They used a special MC-1 mount and 4X MC-1 Kollmorgen scope.*



*The 4X USMC Kollmorgen scope featured an aluminum tube. It was a variant of the civilian Stith Bear Cub and was painted black.*

the Springfield 1903A4. Problems with eye relief, scope position and reloading concerns eventually led the board to reexamine the project with the following guide-

lines: The M1E2 was unsuitable and should not be given any further consideration, and the scope placement on an M1 should conform to the following guidelines:

1. Lower the telescope to bring the optical axis as nearly as possible on a level with the standard iron sights when set for medium ranges.



*This Marine in Korea loads his M1C rifle with an eight-round clip. The offset mounting setup allowed for easy charging and ejection of the spent clip.*



*This mint M1D is shown in its original Anniston Arsenal shipping container, complete with a Model 84 scope. Original boxed M1 sniper rifles are very scarce items.*

2. Bring the axis of the telescope as nearly as practicable to the vertical plane through the axis of the bore and still permit clip loading.

3. Bring the rear end of the tel-

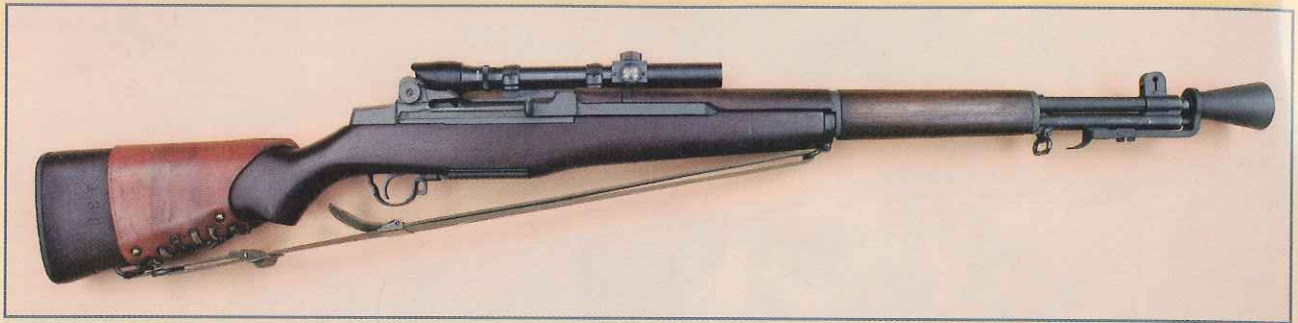
lescope forward to a position one-quarter inch in front of the forward edge of the elevation knob on the iron sight.

4. Permit fore and aft adjustment of the telescope tube of at

least a half-inch to fit the conformation of the individual.

Basically, what the board asked for and desired, in layman terms, was a scope that could be moved back and forth to provide

## The M1Cs and M1Ds



*The M1C was a premier version of the Garand sniper, and though developed during World War II, it saw very little use during that conflict. It was used with some regularity in the Korean conflict, though.*



*In order to put the rifleman's head in the proper position to deal with the offset scope-mounting systems, a leather, lace-on, deeply padded T4 cheekpiece was developed.*

adjustable eye relief for the shooter. Eye relief is the position of the scope that best gives you a clear view through the tube. As you move closer or farther away from a scope, black rings can shrink the view considerably. These are eliminated, and the optimal sighting position is obtained, when the scope has perfect eye relief for the shooter. The board also wanted a decent scope mount on the left side of the receiver that would not only provide a position that would be conducive to loading the

Garand's en-bloc clip but would also allow use of the iron sights.

The M1E6 was the initial result of the board's recommendations but required too many adjustments to the sights (such as a ramp sight similar to the 1903A3) and receiver modifications to warrant any further serious consideration.

The M1E7 and M1E8 rifles were presented for review and possessed the qualities desired by the board to justify further attention and review.

The M1E7 was a standard M1

Garand with a Griffin & Howe scope mount that was a dove-tailed, cam-operated, pressure-plate design that only required three holes to be drilled and tapped, as well as an additional two holes drilled into the receiver.

The M1E8 was a Springfield Armory-designed rifle with a scope mount that incorporated a machined block that was mounted to the breech as well as a shortened hand guard, a process that required a significant amount of refitting of a standard M1 to the M1E8 configuration.

Two types of scopes were selected for use on the rifles: the M73 and the M73B1. The M73 was a commercial Lyman Alaskan scope that was a 2.5 power with a .001 crosshair reticle. The M73B1 was a more popular commercial Weaver 330 2.5-power scope with a tapered post reticle. Upon adoption, the Lyman Alaskan was designated the M81, and the Weaver 330-style reticle was designated the M82.

To protect against the elements and provide a cushion for the shooter's eye, the M73 and M73B1 scopes were mounted with a T5E1 rubber eyepiece, and the objective end of the scope was fitted with the rubber T6 "Rain & Sun Shield."

A whole slew of leather padded cheekpiece designs were considered for use on the rifle as well. Because the scope was offset on the left side of the rifle, it was necessary for the shooter to have his head/cheek offset in the same manner to obtain a clear sight picture. The T2 cheekpiece had three fiber inserts that you could place inside the pad to adjust for comfort, thickness and position. This style was held in place by snap fasteners.

The T3 replaced the snaps with two lacings, and the T4 replaced the T3 with one lacing, making the design fairly easy to remove and replace. Changes in the insert from fiber to polyvinyl were designated T5, which was eventually replaced by the T6, a model that incorporated cork-covered thickness pads.

The T18 flashhider, which became known as the M2 flashhider upon adoption, eliminated 90 percent of the muzzle flash at 100 yards. It mounted to the gun in an identical fashion to that of the M7 grenade launcher, which snapped into the bayonet lug.

In June 1944, just as the Allied armies were getting a foothold in



**Because of the Garand's unique charging system, it was necessary to offset scopes in order to load the en-bloc clip.**



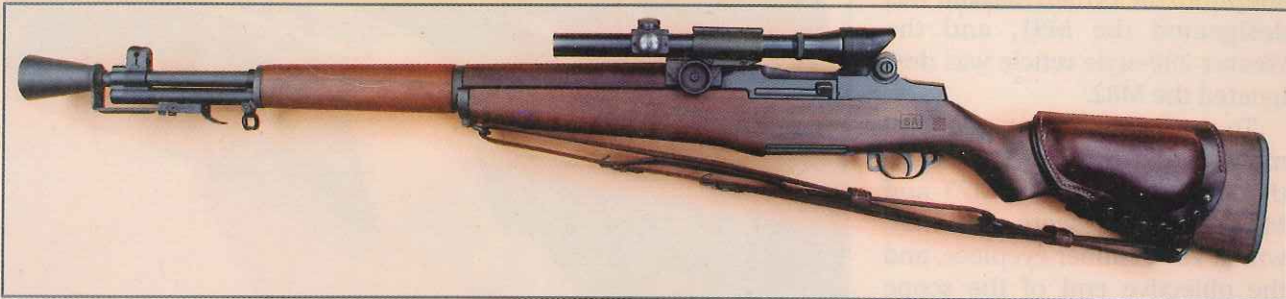
**The detachable M2 flash-hider slipped over the rifle's muzzle and was secured by a clip on the bayonet lug.**

France, the M1E7 was adopted as the M1C sniper rifle and went into production. By the end of the war in Europe (May 8, 1945), Griffin & Howe had completed 14,000 mounts and achieved a total of 37,000 mounts by the war's end.

To meet the demand for sniper

rifles, the board adopted the M1D in September 1944. The primary difference between the two rifles was the scope-mount setup and modifications made to the rifle. The M1D was slightly easier to make, as it only required the installation of a special M1D barrel to the rifle. The M1C needed

## The M1Cs and M1Ds



*The M1D was a follow-on to the M1C and featured a different mounting system and special D barrel that could be added to existing rifles rather than having a rifle built up specially for the sniping role, as was the M1C. Like other rifles shown in this article, it is kitted out with a detachable M2 flash-hider, developed in 1945. These rifles saw use as late as Vietnam.*



*Though mounts and bases were serial numbered, it is very unusual to find matching numbers on vintage rifles. Of course, the same numbers would be ideal, but a mismatch does not affect value as much as might be expected.*

holes drilled and tapped into the receiver. The Griffin & Howe had a pressure plate that two thumb levers could easily release, while the M1D had a single large retaining screw that held the scope to the frame.

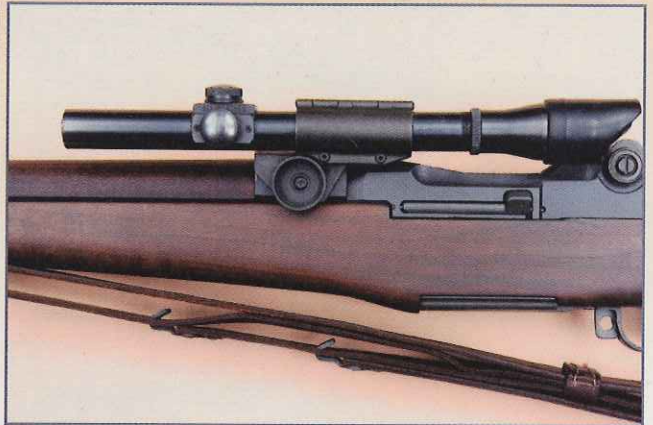
M1Cs made it into both theaters of combat by war's end but

never in significant numbers. The M1D never got further than initial production models before VJ day and saw use by the Army and Marine Corps in the Korean War.

A new scope, the M84, was adopted in April 1945. It utilized a post reticle with a horizontal crosshair and had gasket and seal

improvements that significantly reduced the internal moisture problems that plagued the M81 & M82 scopes. It was used in Korea.

Of the three main sniper weapons—the 1903A4, M1C and M1D—none stands out as being as reliable, overly effective at great distances or as

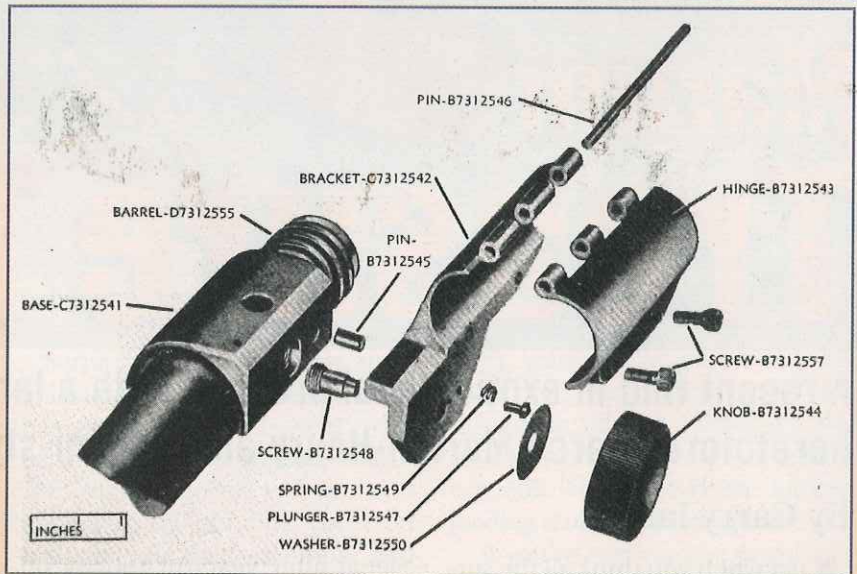


**M1Ds employed an entirely different mounting system than the M1C. This screw-off arrangement was easier to use and sturdier than the Griffin & Howe setup used on the M1C.**

practical as those developed by other armies during the same time frame. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that, in the sniper's world of stealth and quiet, a gun that ejected loud, clanging en-block clips announcing to all that the gun was empty did not find favor with most who used them. It would be early in the Vietnam period before serious attention would be given to developing a use-specific bolt-action sniper rifle for our armed forces.

Among the complaints riflemen had for the rifles, most centered in on the quality of the optics.

The M81 scope proved to be highly susceptible to moisture, and the .001 crosshairs were quite fragile when subjected to the rig-



ors of combat and life in the field.

Another drawback to both rifles was the offset scope and cumbersome loading system. It was never considered a great long-range gun, as most of its best work was done at around 500 yards. Today CENTCOM units in Iraq and Afghanistan clamor to

acquire M14 rifles in .308 from government storage facilities to continue the sniper tradition. So 60 years later, our best sniper teams are still using semiauto rifles to accomplish their missions. The debate over semiauto vs. bolt-action sniper rifles will continue for some time. ©