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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force,
Marine Corps Base, San Diego, California.

January 16, 1941.

From: Lieutenant Colonel William W. Ashurst, U. S. Marine Corps.
To: The Major General Commandant, Marine Corps, Washington, D. C.

Via: The Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force.

Subject: Extracts from report of Board to Conduct Competative Tests, Caliber .30 Rifles.

References: (a) MGC ltr 1240-10 over AP-268-je, dated 24 October 1940, appointing subject board.
(b) Marcorps despatch 081731, January 1941.
(c) Comgenfmf despatch 082359, January 1941.

Enclosure: (A) Brief of the tests conducted.

1. Quoted herewith are the findings and recommendations of the subject board. The documentary evidence to support these findings and the recommendations will be forwarded under separate cover about February 1, 1941.

FINDINGS

(1) That all three of the semi-automatic rifles are comparable to the M-1903 rifle in accuracy.

(2) That the zero of these rifles (semi-automatic and M-1903) is not noticeably changed by field stripping.

(3) That recruits can be taught the rudiments of stripping and assembling, care and cleaning, of the semi-automatic rifles in about five hours, and that slightly less time is required for the M-1903 rifle.

(4) That all of the rifles are adapted to infantry drill, including the manual of arms except that the fore arm of the Johnson rifle does not extend far enough towards the muzzle to be included in the grasp of the hand while at the position of "order arms". If the ten or twenty round magazine is carried

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in the Winchester, the rifle must be carried on its left side at right (left) shoulder arms.

(5) That the M-1 rifle is superior in the number of well aimed shots that can be fired per minute.

(6) That all rifles submitted to the board function satisfactorily at temperatures as low as seventeen degrees F.

(7) That the semi-automatic rifles produce a larger volume of fire and attain a larger number of hits than the M-1903, against indistinct field targets (silhouettes) in a given time limit.

(8) That the rear sight of the M-1903 rifle is superior in the dual capacity of a target and combat sight, particularly, the battle sight against moving targets and stationary indistinct field targets.

(9) That the M-1903 rifle is superior to the semi-automatic rifles in functioning after being subjected to thick dust and dirt. However the semi-automatic rifles will function reasonably well under these conditions when liberally lubricated.

(10) That the M-1903 rifle is superior to the semi-automatic rifles in functioning in steady rain or intermittent showers.

(11) That the semi-automatic rifles will function with all types of caliber .30 service cartridges except blanks.

(12) That none of the rifles will function satisfactory after being immersed in mud.

(13) That none of the rifles will function satisfactorily after being sprayed with or immersed in salt water and then dropped in wet or dry sand, however, the functioning of the M-1903 rifle is superior to the functioning of the semi-automatic rifles under those conditions.

(14) That all weapons will function with minor malfunctions after being immersed in salt water for 10 minutes and exposed for forty-five (45) hours to the elements.

(15) That in sustained firing for a period of several minutes the fatigue to personnel firing the M-1903 rifle is considerably more than to personnel firing the semi-automatic rifles. This reduces the comparative rate of fire and

number of effective hits of the M-1903 rifle.

(16) That all of these rifles can be handled satisfactorily under combat conditions involving fire and movement after they have been excessively heated by sustained firing.

(17) That loose ammunition can be loaded and fired in the Johnson rifle faster than in any of the other rifles in this test.

(18) That all these rifles will function satisfactorily after being fired 100 rounds and exposed over night without cleaning.

(19) That these rifles are all satisfactory for bayonet fighting, with the following defeciencies noted: the stocks on two of the Winchester rifles were not sufficiently strong and were broken; the barrel of the Johnson rifle being exposed (not inclosed by wood) the rifle cannot be properly held (hot or cold) for close in fighting; after considerable firing the hand guard of the M-1 rifle becomes so hot it interferes with the grasp of the piece with the left hand, and after similar firing the heat from the hand guard clips on the M-1903 interferes with the grasp of the piece with the left hand.

(20) That the Johnson rifle did not always function satisfactorily at minus angles with bayonet attached.

(21) That all rifles functioned satisfactorily with dirty ammunition.

(22) That all rifles were reasonably accurate after firing approximately 2500 rounds which included the abuse tests.

(23) That the point of impact changed with all rifles when the bayonet was attached, but that the M-1903 rifle was the least affected and was the most uniform in distance and direction.

(24) That the M-1903, M-1 and Winchester rifles will function reasonably well without lubrication if free from dirt, burrs or malformed parts.

(25) That the Winchester rifle equipped with a fluted chamber will operate satisfactorily with the extractor removed.

(26) That the parts of the M-1903, M-1 and Johnson rifles are interchangeable.

(27) That the M-1903 rifle is the most efficient and dependable weapon under all conditions and that it completed this test with the fewest number of malfunctions and the smallest number of broken parts.

(28) That the M-1 rifle proved superior to the other semi-automatic rifles in reliability, number of malfunctions and broken or repaired parts.

(29) That when the Johnson rifle fails to function as a self-loading weapon it can be operated manually with ease, but that the large number of malfunctions and broken parts sustained throughout the progress of the test make it less desirable as a military weapon, in its present state of development, than either the M-1903 or M-1 rifle.

(30) That the Winchester rifle in its present state of development is not satisfactory as a military weapon.

(31) That spare parts in the ratio as specified in "standard nomenclature lists" published by the War Department are sufficient for the normal upkeep of the M-1903 and M-1 rifles.

(32) That since the Johnson rifle, Caliber .30, and Winchester rifle, Caliber .30 tested, were not production weapons and are not recommended for adoption, the question of spare parts has not been considered.

(33) That the comparative standing of the four types of rifles competing in these tests is as follows:

U. S. Rifle, Caliber .30, M-1903.
U. S. Rifle, Caliber .30, M-1.
Johnson Rifle, Caliber .30, semi-automatic.
Winchester Rifle, Caliber .30, semi-automatic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The Board recommends that the United States Rifle, Caliber .30, Model 1903, be retained as the standard rifle of the U. S. Marine Corps until such time as a semi-automatic rifle has been developed to the degree it will be comparable in efficiency and dependability to the M-1903 rifle under the field conditions which the Marine Corps may normally expect to encounter.

(2) It is further recommended that in the event the M-1903 rifle can not be procured, the U. S. Rifle, Caliber

.30, M-1, be adopted as the standard rifle of the U. S. Marine Corps.

W. W. ASHURST.

2000-40-50/9-cvs 5224/1st Endorsement January 1[illegible], [illegible].
Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, U.S.[illegible], San Diego, California.

From: The Commanding General.
To: The Major General Commandant.

1. Forwarded.

W. P. UPSHUR.
