

GUNS & AMMO

JUNE 2019

AUTO ORDNANCE

JUNE 6, 1944, D-DAY:
75 YEARS LATER

REMEMBERS
OPERATION
OVERLORD

WITH 1911A1
M1 CARBINE &
M1A1 THOMPSON
TRIBUTES.

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VICTORY!

G&A TESTS
WINCHESTER'S NEW
WORLD WAR II-SPEC
AMMUNITION

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EMARY

TSgt. Robert Emary:
My father's story, from
England to Austria.



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Every Luger has history,
even a mismatched
Mauser S/42.



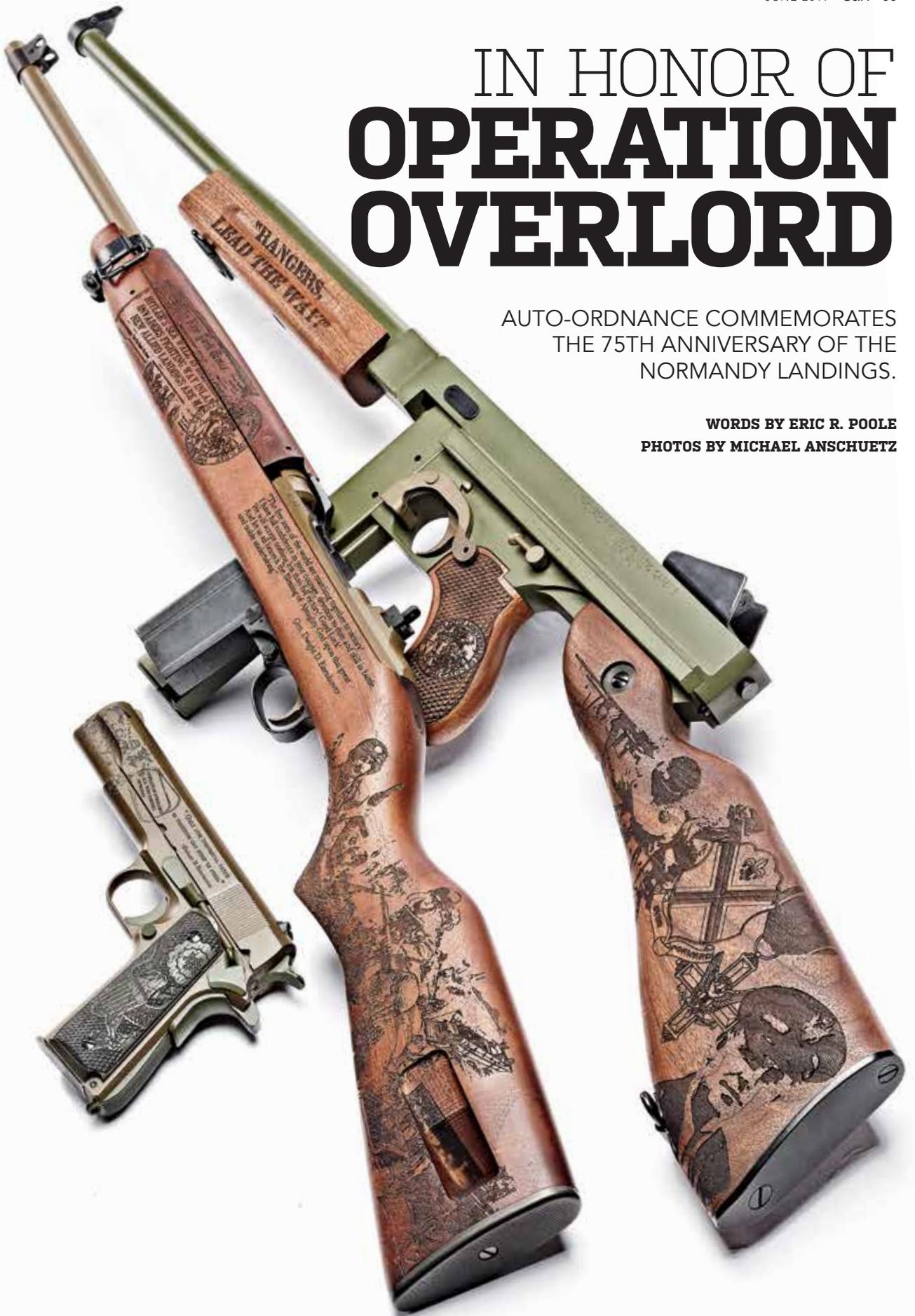
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Ruger, Smith & Wesson and
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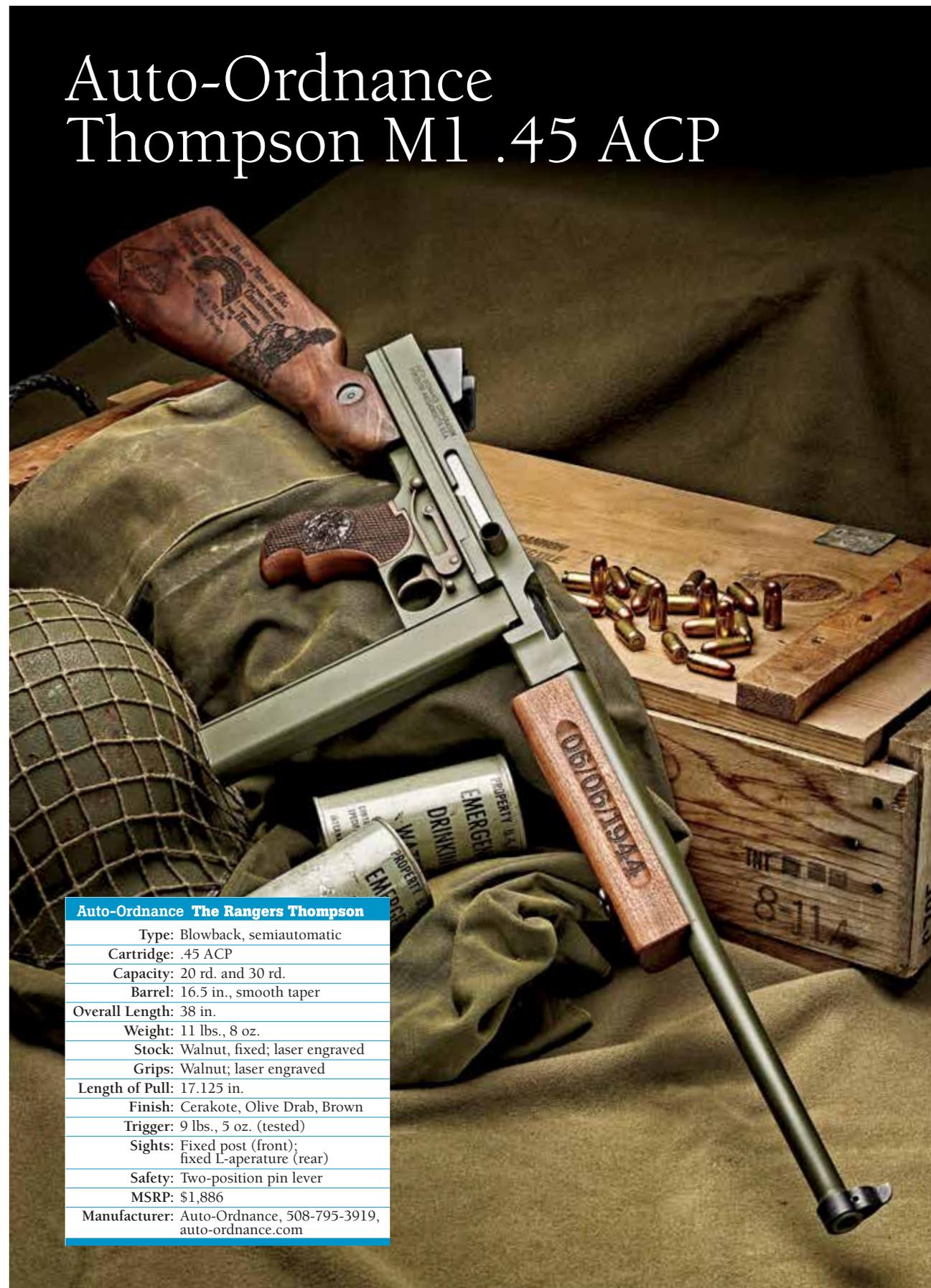
IN HONOR OF OPERATION OVERLORD

AUTO-ORDNANCE COMMEMORATES
THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
NORMANDY LANDINGS.

WORDS BY ERIC R. POOLE
PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



Auto-Ordnance Thompson M1 .45 ACP



“RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!”

THEIR MISSION was to seize German fortifications at Pointe du Hoc, a promontory with a 100-foot cliff overlooking the English Channel on the northwest coast of Normandy, France. It was the highest point between the American landings at Utah and Omaha beaches. The German army had installed concrete casemates and gun pits for fortification the year prior, but had yet to place their large guns. Under the cover of fire support from three Allied ships, Rangers scaled the cliffs using rope ladders that weren't nearly long enough. Almost an hour later, members of the U.S. Army Ranger Assault Group reached the top, secured the battery area and defended against counter-attacks until they were relieved two days after on June 8, 1944.

A number of the 225 Rangers included scouts, staff- and non-commissioned officers, made the assault with a .45-caliber M1A1 Thompson. (Some historians believe that there were also 1928A1 and M1 Thompsons at the scene.) The M1A1 Thompson was the result of the 1942 simplification of the 1928A1, which was expensive and labor intensive. Developed with fewer features by the Savage Corporation, the design was submitted to the Ordnance Department, then tested and quickly put into production through Savage and Auto-Ordnance (AO). Though many parts were interchangeable with the 1928A1, the M1 featured a new side-charging bolt, a redesigned pilot rod and recoil spring assembly, a trigger frame that required a redesign of the pistol grip, and a nar-

rower magazine slot with a new magazine catch. Neither the M1 or M1A1 would accept drum magazines, which were largely phased out by D-Day. The rear notch-aperture sight was also simplified and given protection by triangular wings. The M1 featured a smooth, unfinned, 10.52-inch barrel that was not fitted for a compensating muzzle device. Early M1s used a milled paddle-style fire selector and safety levers, while the M1A1 received a pin-style selector and safety lever. (You'll note that Auto-Ordnance's semiautomatic M1A1 Thompson lacks the fire selector lever, but does have the appropriate pin-style safety.) The M1A1, adopted in October 1942, further simplified the bolt by eliminating the hammer assembly and fixing the firing pin in place.

Savage produced 722,794 M1 and M1A1 Thompsons, while Auto-Ordnance manufactured 110,602 M1s and M1A1s.



poration in 1999 by the parent company of Kahr Arms. They have built a strong reputation for semiautomatic Thompson carbines that resemble and handle like an original, though they don't fire from an open bolt. Many variations are available, but their most recent introduction honors the U.S. Army Rangers who fought during Operation Overlord.

The Rangers' Thompson fittingly features engravings that commemorate their role. On the right buttstock is part of President Ronald Reagan's 40th Anniversary speech of the landing, along with an image of a Ranger, the Ranger patch and a grappling hook used to scale the cliffs. The date of the battle appears on the forearm, while the left side has Maj. Gen. Cota's quote, "Rangers lead the way!" Images of Rangers, the Medal of Honor, and their leader Lt. Col. Rudder are on the stock. Each side of the grip wears a 75th Anniversary emblem. Applied by Outlaw Ordnance, the finish is Cerakote's Olive Drab with controls finished in Patriot Brown. Armor Black fills the engravings.

Having a 16½-inch barrel, 20- and 30-round magazines, a Kerr sling and three-mag pouch, it's a fine salute to those men.

Auto-Ordnance primarily built M1A1 models. Auto-Ordnance Corporation was bought from Numrich Arms Cor-



Auto-Ordnance The Rangers Thompson	
Type:	Blowback, semiautomatic
Cartridge:	.45 ACP
Capacity:	20 rd. and 30 rd.
Barrel:	16.5 in., smooth taper
Overall Length:	38 in.
Weight:	11 lbs., 8 oz.
Stock:	Walnut, fixed; laser engraved
Grips:	Walnut; laser engraved
Length of Pull:	17.125 in.
Finish:	Cerakote, Olive Drab, Brown
Trigger:	9 lbs., 5 oz. (tested)
Sights:	Fixed post (front); fixed L-aperture (rear)
Safety:	Two-position pin lever
MSRP:	\$1,886
Manufacturer:	Auto-Ordnance, 508-795-3919, auto-ordnance.com

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Black Hills Amm. 230-gr. FMJ	991	34	14.4	2.13	2.9

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 100 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots recorded by Labrador chronograph.

Auto-Ordnance M1 .30 Carbine



Auto-Ordnance The Soldiers Carbine	
Type:	Short-stroke gas piston, rotating bolt, semiautomatic
Caliber:	.30 Carbine
Capacity:	15 rds. or 20 rds.
Barrel:	18 in.
Overall Length:	35.75 in.
Weight:	5 lbs., 7 oz.
Stock:	Walnut, fixed; laser engraved
Length of Pull:	13.375 in.
Finish:	Cerakote and Parkerized
Trigger:	7 lbs., 2 oz. (tested)
Sights:	Post, fixed (front); dual aperture (rear)
Safety:	Crossbolt, button
MSRP:	\$1,391
Manufacturer:	Auto-Ordnance, 508-795-3919, auto-ordnance.com

“THIS WE’LL DEFEND.”

THE SOLDIERS M1 Carbine remembers the troops who landed on the beaches of Normandy by sea and air 75 years ago. On its left side, Auto-Ordnance engraved the newspaper headlines announcing to the world that the invasion had begun, followed by a selection from Gen. Dwight Eisenhower’s famous address to his gathered forces. The buttstock features images depicting the beach landings, while the patches of U.S. Army divisions and paratroopers in their drop gear are engraved on the right side. A map of the landings is shown in part, as are commemorative dog tags for Operation Overlord. Each D-Day M1 Carbine is finished in Cerakote Patriot Brown applied by Outlaw Ordnance.

Based on photographs taken near Normandy on D-Day and shortly thereafter,

it’s generally accepted that M1 Carbines had Type 1 barrel bands with either I-cut or oval-cut highwood stocks, and a flip-aperture rear sight. An interesting observation: putting buttstock pouches to carry spare magazines didn’t become vogue until weeks after the landings.

There were many requests for a light-weight alternative to the M1 Garand, including those from support troops tasked with carrying equipment. Commanders noted that the Garand impeded the mobility of these troops, while the U.S. Army requested a compact infantry rifle for its new airborne troops. Specifications called for a small arm that weighed no more than 5 pounds and had an effective range of 300 yards. A formal requirement for the light rifle was approved in 1940.

Readers may already know a version of the story featuring David Marshall “Carbine” Williams, hired by Winchester to help design a short-stroke gas piston after serving a prison sentence. With Williams’ help, prototypes were developed to include a Garand-style rotating bolt and operating rod. By October 22, 1941, the M1 Carbine had been standardized, as was the .30 Carbine cartridge.

With more than 6 million various makes and models, the M1 Carbine became the most produced American military small arm during World War II. The

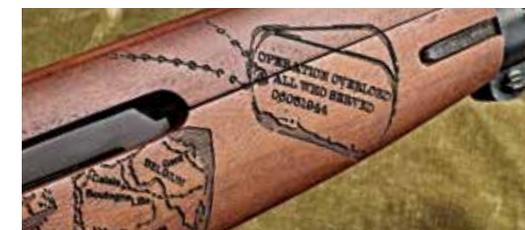
M1, along with its cartridge, was also one of the more cost-effective designs to make.

The Auto-Ordnance brand was not among the long, original list of M1 Carbine manufacturers at the time. Under the leadership of Kahr Arms, Auto-Ordnance began production of M1 Carbine replicas in 2005, first basing it off of the 1944 M1, sans the barrel band and bayonet lug, and adjustable rear sight. (Auto-Ordnance did produce parts for the M1 Carbine during the war, which were supplied to IBM.)

Though produced in record numbers at one time, original M1 Carbines have become a scarce and expensive rifle. Collectors hoard them for the many variations, creating a rise in demand and interest for M1 Carbine replicas.

Made to modern quality control standards, Auto-Ordnance M1 Carbines enjoy a reputation of being as reliable and accurate as wartime originals. With the affordability and availability of magazines (\$40), the M1 Carbine proves to be a fun and still-practical firearm that’s meant to be shot and modified without fear of hurting the history of a veteran specimen. Since the launch of Auto-Ordnance’s M1 Carbine, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) recreated the M1 Carbine Match in 2006. (Visit thecmp.org.)

The Soldiers Carbine is a fun-to-shoot tribute to the M1 that helps to ensure that we never forget the fallen.



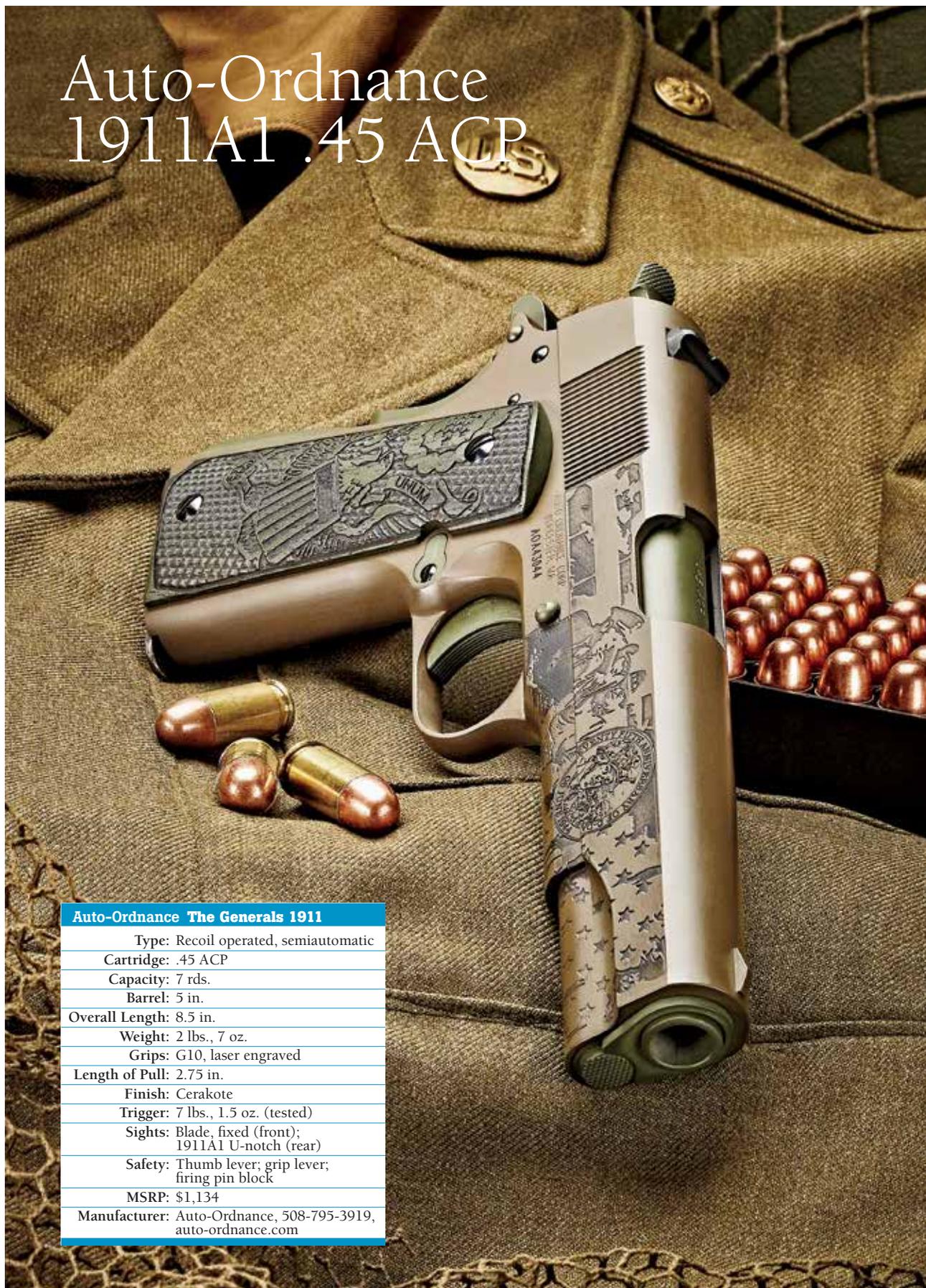
PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Hornady 110-gr. FMJ	2,063	53	22	3.01	5.5

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 100 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots recorded by a Labrador chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle.



Auto-Ordnance 1911A1 .45 ACP



Auto-Ordnance The Generals 1911	
Type:	Recoil operated, semiautomatic
Cartridge:	.45 ACP
Capacity:	7 rds.
Barrel:	5 in.
Overall Length:	8.5 in.
Weight:	2 lbs., 7 oz.
Grips:	G10, laser engraved
Length of Pull:	2.75 in.
Finish:	Cerakote
Trigger:	7 lbs., 1.5 oz. (tested)
Sights:	Blade, fixed (front); 1911A1 U-notch (rear)
Safety:	Thumb lever; grip lever; firing pin block
MSRP:	\$1,134
Manufacturer:	Auto-Ordnance, 508-795-3919, auto-ordnance.com

“ONLY OUR INDIVIDUAL FAITH IN FREEDOM CAN KEEP US FREE.”

GENERAL Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces, was just one of the great men who led American forces during World War II, and Auto-Ordnance’s “The Generals 1911” proudly commemorates the service of a few of the war’s iconic leaders. As a monument to courage, wisdom and determination, the General’s 1911 D-Day pistol features an engraving on the left side with the image of Gen. Eisenhower speaking with troops at Newbury, England, prior to their embarkation.

“The General wandered through formless groups of soldiers,” wrote his grandson David Eisenhower, “stepping over packs and guns. The faces of the men had been blackened with charcoal and cocoa to protect against glare and to serve as camouflage. He stopped at intervals to talk to the thick clusters of soldiers gathered around him. He asked their names and homes ... affirming an awareness that the general and the men were associated in a great enterprise.”

Gen. Eisenhower’s words, “Only our individual faith in freedom can keep us free,” is engraved on the slide.

The right side features an image of Gen. Omar Bradley; Admiral Alan Kirk; a battle-worn American flag; and the D-Day 75th anniversary commemorative emblem. Both panels of green G-10 grips are engraved with detailed enhancement of the U.S. Army’s eagle and shield crest.

The Model 1911A1 is finished in Cerakote with the slide and frame receiving the Patriot Brown color and all other parts in Olive Drab. The engraving is given contrast with Armor Black Cerakote.

The Generals 1911 is based on Auto-Ordnance’s 1911A1 with a 5-inch barrel and GI sights. Auto-Ordnance notably markets various models with “GI Specs.”

I’m a stickler when it comes to the Model 1911 and Model 1911A1, and am pleased with the number of correct style

parts on AO’s 1911A1 tribute models. Given that The Generals 1911 features engravings to honor D-Day, we can look past the absence of period-correct markings and finishes.

The sights are in the correct 1911A1 style with a fixed serrated ramp at the front and the drift-adjustable U-notch rear. These were an improvement over the sights original to the Model 1911.

The rear slide serrations are a fair representation, as is the ejection port cut. More importantly, most of the touch points are correct in terms of style and texturing with the exception of the serrated or ribbed trigger shoe and slide-lock lever. The wide-spur hammer, tab-lever thumb safety, magazine release button and recoil

spring plunger all feature checkering.

Functionally, The Generals 1911 features the Series 80 safety system, which would have been incorrect for World War II. That said, it’s quite common on modern 1911s. The Series 80 includes a firing-pin block that prevents the firing pin from moving forward should it be dropped or severely impacted. The firing pin block is a plunger that’s pushed up as the trigger is pressed and when the slide is in battery. This system has an additional lever that has to overcome the plunger’s spring, which adds weight to the trigger pull. No surprise, the trigger pull on The Generals 1911 measured more than 7 pounds. However, since it’s a single-action pistol, the pull doesn’t feel that heavy.

Auto-Ordnance has released other made-in-the-U.S.A. editions of their 1911A1, M1 Thompson and M1 Carbine, each aimed at honoring World War II veterans. Several models pay tribute to the U.S. Army Air Corps with aircraft nose art editions, while there is an M1 Thompson “Tanker,” a “Vengeance” M1 Carbine that remembers Pearl Harbor, and an Airborne carbine with appropriate folding stock. 



PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ	800	36	15	2.55	4.47

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 25 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots recorded by a Labrador chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle.

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