

MEMO FOR RECORD

20 June 1983

Subject: Adoption of USMC M40 Rifle

Today I received a call from a friend and colleague who participated in the tests leading to adoption of the M40 sniper rifle. He was able to supply the following details.

The trials were conducted in 1964, by Marine Corps personnel at Quantico, a Marine base in Virginia. An urgent requirement existed for a sniper rifle superior to those then available to Marines deployed in Southeast Asia, and the Commandant USMC ordered a "crash" effort to find a suitable rifle within 120 days. Invitations were issued to all manufacturers capable of producing potentially suitable rifles. Remington, Winchester and one other manufacturer submitted samples for evaluation. The Remington Model 700 and the Winchester Model 70 rifles were considered potentially suitable.

The rifles were tested intensively by Marine Corps personnel, and certain changes were recommended. The changes recommended for the Remington Model 700 rifle were (1) to increase the magazine capacity from four to five rounds, (2) to provide a clip slot for more convenient reloading from five-round clips, and (3) to furnish rifles with non-reflective finishes on wood and metal parts instead of the glossy finishes supplied on non-military arms. The recommended changes for military use were made by Remington, and the Model 700 so modified was found most suitable for the intended purpose. Upon adoption as an official weapon, it was designated the M40. Marine gunsmiths at Quantico further modified the rifles to allow mounting telescopic sights approximately 5/8 inch farther forward than the non-military rifles allow, for more convenient use in the prone position. None of the modifications requested, or made, was related to the safety of using the rifle.

The initial order was for 700 M40 rifles, and these were reportedly used with excellent success. The M40 remains today a standard arm of the Marine Corps, after nearly twenty years of satisfactory use.

My friend is currently a civilian employee of the Army Armament Research and Development Command, and is professionally well informed on military small arms and the procedures leading to their adoption. It is his recollection that no non-military agency participated in the evaluation of the M40 rifle prior to its adoption, the tests having been conducted entirely by Marine Corps personnel of the Advanced Marksmanship Unit and other technical organizations at Quantico.

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