

These 14 Survival Guns Are Immortal

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Many working handguns, rifles, and shotguns are also classics.

Although they are old, even those that aren't in working condition can be repaired and used for shooting.

Being able to recognize which classic guns can be restored is an important skill for preppers. Even though you may have confidence in the guns you own now, it never hurts to know how to use and [repair older guns](#) that rely on simpler technologies.

How Old is Too Old?

For serviceable and dependable weapons, I would go no earlier than WW I. Most of these weapons are still in use by collectors and shooters alike. Some of these weapons are classics and set design standards.

Since these weapons have been popular for a long time, spare parts and other accessories are easier to obtain.

Advantages of Military Surplus Weapons

Military surplus is one of the best places to get good quality firearms. All of these weapons were designed for heavy military service and should be dependable under all shooting conditions. Most of these firearms are well over 75 years old or more.

In addition, many of these weapons can be reworked into good to excellent hunting rifles for less cost than a newer model.

Since millions of military grade weapons were produced along with large quantities of ammunition, you can find them in many surplus stores. In the past you could buy these weapons at a cheaper price, but with today's higher supply and demand, they are more expensive.

Law Enforcement Surplus "Turn-in" Revolvers

Over the last 20 years or so, law enforcement agencies have changed from revolvers to semi-automatic pistols. These revolvers are usually in good to excellent conditions with good grips and little or no holster wear. Mechanically, many of these revolvers also tend to have very little use.

As with any other second hand gun, you will still need to check it over for signs of internal wear. Surplus law enforcement revolvers are usually low cost and an excellent deal for the collector or shooter.

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A Few Classic Guns to Consider

Revolvers and Pistols

Revolvers

S&W Model 10 [revolver](#) DA/SA in .38 Special is made of blued steel, with either a 4 inch heavy or standard barrel, and black finger groove rubber or wood grips.

S&W Model 64 revolver DA/SA is a .38 Special made in stainless steel, with a 4 inch heavy barrel, and black finger groove rubber grips.

Pistols

CZ-52

In the 1950s this pistol was produced in Czechoslovakia for their military. The CZ-52 fires the very fast and devastating 7.62x25mm Tokarev round. This pistol was finally replaced by the CZ-82 in the 1980s which fires the 9x18mm Russian service round. As a result of this change in pistols there was a large surplus of CZ-52s and a large quantity of 7.62x25mm ammunition at very cheap prices.

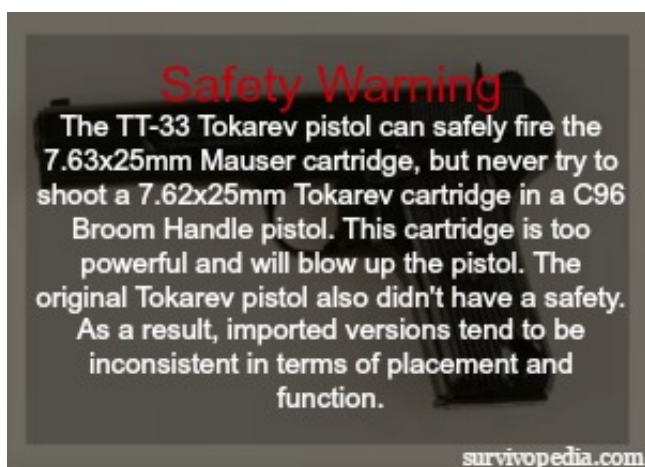
The CZ-52 is of interest, in part because of its unusual recoil system. Instead of having a fully gas operated system that's prone to failure, this gun is the only one that has a pure roller-locked system.

The roller lock on this Czech pistol is composed simply of the barrel, two rollers, and a locking cam. When not firing, the recoil spring compresses the cam which pushes the rollers outwards into the slide.

When the round is fired, the recoil opens the cam and the pressure further extends the rollers out of the detent and allows the slide to travel. At the end of the arc, the recoil spring snaps the slide forward again and the rollers are cammed back out to hold it locked.

Even in a 33-ounce gun, the fast little bottle necked round still produces a good bit of felt recoil and a muzzle blast that is sure to scare away bystanders on both ends of the gun. If you don't mind the trade-off of heavy recoil for reduced risk of failure, this gun will work for you.

TT-33 Tokarev



This pistol was a replacement for the old Russian Nagant M1895 revolvers.

It is a semi-automatic pistol that fires the 7.62x25mm Tokarev cartridge.

This cartridge was based on the 7.63x25mm Mauser cartridge that was used in the Mauser C96 Broom Handle Pistol.

The 7.62x25mm cartridge is very powerful with a very flat trajectory. This round will penetrate thick clothing or soft body armor.

Externally, the TT-33 Tokarev is similar to John Browning's 1903 semi-automatic pistol. Internally it uses the Browning's short recoil tilting barrel system of the 1911 pistol.

This pistol uses a much simpler hammer sear assembly than the 1911. The assembly can be removed as a modular unit. This unit also included machined magazine feed lips to prevent ammunition misfeeds due to broken magazines loaded into the gun.

The Russians were always looking for ways to make production easier. Their most notable was the simplifications on the barrel locking lugs which allowed for fewer machining steps.

Some TT-33 Tokarevs used a captive recoil spring secured to the guide rod which depended on the barrel bushing to hold it under tension.

These pistols are very heavy duty and will give you years of good service. The ammunition is cheap and plentiful. Like most Russian firearms they were designed for simplicity and to be used by poorly educated individuals.

1911 or 1911-A1 Semi-automatic Pistols

The 1911 or 1911-A1 semi-automatic pistol is the gold standard that all others semi-automatic pistols are judged by. It was designed by John Browning, who is best known for his designs featuring the short recoil principle; which he added to the 1911 basic design.

The pistol was widely copied and the short recoil system was used in nearly all centerfire pistols designs thereafter. The 1911 was a modern handgun replacement for the older revolver handguns carried by the US Armed Forces.

Since this pistol design has been in use for over 100 years, it has withstood the test of time. This pistol has always been, large, heavy framed, rugged, and built to last.

The 1911 is a single action semi-automatic that is magazine fed. This pistol was originally chambered in the .45 ACP cartridge. The US produced over 2.7 million M1911 and 1911-A1 pistols in military contracts during its service life.

In October 1986 the M1911 and M1911-A1 were replaced with the 9mm Beretta M9 pistol as the US Armed Forces sidearm.

During the 1980s and 1990s a lot of surplus 1911-A1 .45 caliber semi-automatic pistols were imported back into the US. Most of these pistols were given to our allies under the Lend-Lease Treaties that started in World War II.

The pistols are in good shape and bought by collectors and shooters. The pistols are a good bargain

with their low prices, plenty of spare parts, and cheap surplus [ammunition](#). As a cheap platform to build your own custom .45 pistol, it can't be beat.

Rifles

There are two types of [rifles](#) in surplus rifle marketplace. The first is the bolt action and the other is the semi-automatic.

Bolt action

Mauser 1898

When the Mauser 1898 was introduced it was the most advanced bolt action rifle ever produced. This is the bolt action rifle that set the standards that all other bolt action rifles must be measured against.

There have been many variants of this rifle with the best known as the Mauser 98k used in World War I and World War II.

The early 1898 Mauser rifles shot the 7x57mm cartridge. This cartridge is a good hunting round for medium sized game like deer, hogs, and small bear. With the 98k, the ammunition was upgraded to 8x57mm. This is a more powerful cartridge for hunting medium sized game than the 7x57mm.

Many of the old 98k rifles have been reworked to different calibers such as the .30-06. They have also been reworked to accommodate big game cartridges like the .416 Rigby; which is used to hunt elephants and Rhinos.

Surplus FMJ bullet loads in 7x57mm and 8x57mm are usually corrosive primed and cheaper than commercial ammunition. This surplus ammunition can usually shoot 3 inch to 4 inch groups at 100 yards. This is not match accuracy, but it is good enough for plinking or training.

1903 Springfield

The 1903 Springfield used so many of the 1898 Mauser new design features that the American government had to pay Mauser for royalties for patent infringement.

The 1903 Springfield, like the Mausers, were very successful rifles used in time of war. The Springfield rifle was very accurate with the .30-06 Springfield cartridge and could hit targets at long ranges. This is the reason they were still used as sniper weapons in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

The 1903 Springfield's long history of great accuracy makes it popular with hunters and target shooters alike. It is ideal for hunting all of the medium to large game animals in America. The biggest problem you will face is obtaining a surplus 1903 rifle because the cost is high due to demand.

Mosin-Nagant

This rifle is the most reasonably priced bolt action rifles you can buy in military surplus. The rifle was used by the Russian soldiers during WWI and WWII, and other communist forces in Third World Countries during the Cold War.

The Mosin-Nagant is chambered in the 7.62x54mmR cartridge. This round is known for it's hard

kicking recoil and cheap price.

Buyer beware! Most of this surplus ammunition is corrosive and the rifle must be thoroughly cleaned after each use. Good hunting ammunition is available in the US, making this rifle a good budget hunting weapon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmVJYB3uDkc>

Video first seen on [hickok45](#).

.303 Lee-Enfield

The .303 Lee-Enfield rifle saw military service from 1895 to 1957. It was one of the most successful bolt action rifles of all times. This rifle was commonly used by the British Empire around the world in British conflicts.

The .303 Lee-Enfield is a great military surplus rifle and a budget friendly for those in need of a hunting gun. It has good accuracy when chambered in the .303 British cartridge. You can hunt deer, moose, bear, and other big game animals in the US and Canada with this gun.

Semi-automatic

M1 Carbine

The M1 Carbine was manufactured by the millions in World War II. Later on, it found it's way into the surplus marketplace where they were bought by shooters and gun collectors.

Although it shoots the under powered .30 Caliber Carbine cartridges, it is still a good personal defense weapon.

This carbine is very popular because it's lightweight, easy to shoot, and has a mild recoil. Overall, it is a good weapon for small framed individuals to shoot and carry.

For deer hunting I feel that the M1 Carbine is too under-powered to kill deer humanely, even at close range with HP or SP ammunition. It would be better to use it to hunt hogs, small game, or varmints.

SKS

The SKS was originally a Russian semi-automatic rifle that fired the 7.62x39mm cartridge. It was there first line battle rifle until it was replaced by the select fire AK-47. The SKS was manufactured by several Russian allied countries or sold to Russian allies throughout the world.

The SKS is very dependable, reliable, and shoots more accurately than the AK-47, but is not as rugged. The price on an SKS depends on country of origin, condition of the SKS, type of receiver (milled or stamped), and the number of rifles produced there.

Although I would not choose the SKS as a deer rifle, it does have it's uses as a varmint, plinking, or self-defense rifle.

As a surplus self-defense rifle, it would also be a good choice. It is light, rugged, quick shooting, and

fires a cartridge that will stop a man quickly and easily. Surplus ammunition is cheap and plentiful.

The M1 Garand

The M1 Garand was the best semi-automatic battle rifle in World War II. Its 8 round en bloc clip was way ahead of the standard bolt action rifles used by enemy forces in World War II and Korean War. This rifle gave the US soldiers a strong advantage on the battlefield.

Aside from being able to lay down a large amount of fire power it is a very accurate rifle. This rifle has good sights, and an outstanding trigger. This enables a good shooter to accurately shoot at ranges of 100 to 1000 yards.

Though some say the M1 Garand has a heavy recoil, it is still one of the most popular military surplus rifles used by shooters and hunters alike in the US. The Civilian Marksmanship Program still sells shootable M1 Garands at a fair price to US citizens that meet the CMP requirements.

Shotguns

12 Ga. shotguns were used by the US Military from World War I to present day. These weapons can lay down a lot of buckshot quickly and effectively. They are excellent weapons for close quarter fighting, fighting in trenches, and jungle warfare.

The following are excellent shotguns to buy in the surplus marketplace. They are wanted by shooters and collectors alike. They are a good value, and if you take care of these guns, they will last a life time.

Winchester Model 1897 Trench Gun

Is a 12 Ga. pump action exposed hammer shotgun with a 18 inch heat shielded barrel. It was in military service starting in World War I through the Korean War.

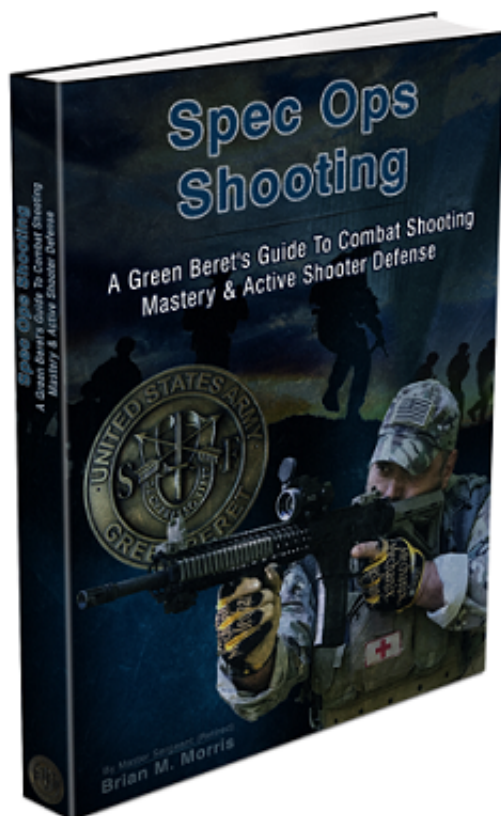
Winchester Model 1912 Trench Gun

Was a 12 Ga. pump action hammerless shotgun with a 18 inch heat shielded barrel. It was in military service from World war I through Vietnam.

When it comes to old, classic, and immortal guns, there are some that have already withstood the test of time and are worthy of consideration. As a prepper, you can save some money by focusing on these weapons without sacrificing utility and durability.

Remember that a personal defense weapon should be something you feel comfortable carrying at all times.

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This article has been written by Fred Tyrell for Survivopedia.

Further reading:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combat_shotgun

<http://thegca.org/history-of-the-m1-garand-rifle/>

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/articles/2016/7/1/lee-enfield-rifle-workhorse-of-the-british-empire/#>

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