

GUNS&AMMO

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF THE MODEL 1911

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Steven R. Herrman Killed In Car-Train Crash

DIES IN ACCIDENT--This was the scene Tuesday afternoon after Steven R. Herrman was killed when his car and a train collided on the Sand Prairie Blacktop north of Manito. For details, see story below. Funeral services were conducted Friday afternoon at the Johnson Funeral home.

MANITO (C)--Steven Robert Herrman, 26, of Rt. 2, Manito, was fatally injured at 12:55 p.m. Tuesday when his car was struck by the engine of a Chicago and Illinois Midland train five miles northeast of Manito on the Sand Prairie Blacktop. The driver of the Herrman was driving south

from his car by the force of the impact. The car was knocked 25 feet down an embankment. Skid marks for a length of 70 feet from the point of impact indicated the car was traveling south at the time of the crash.

Members of the Manito Fire Department were on the scene at the time of the crash. The car was damaged beyond repair.



Dinner Honor

A Brother's Keeper

BY ERIC R. POOLE // PHOTOS BY TRACY HALPIN

Seventy-nine feet of skid marks indicated that Steve tried to stop, then swerved to avoid the train that killed him. Crossing the tracks on the way back from a meeting in Springfield on August 25, 1964, the untimely death of this 27-year-old special deputy sheriff and staff sergeant with the 182nd Tactical Fighter Squadron Air Police Division was one of life's unthinkable tragedies to those who knew him.

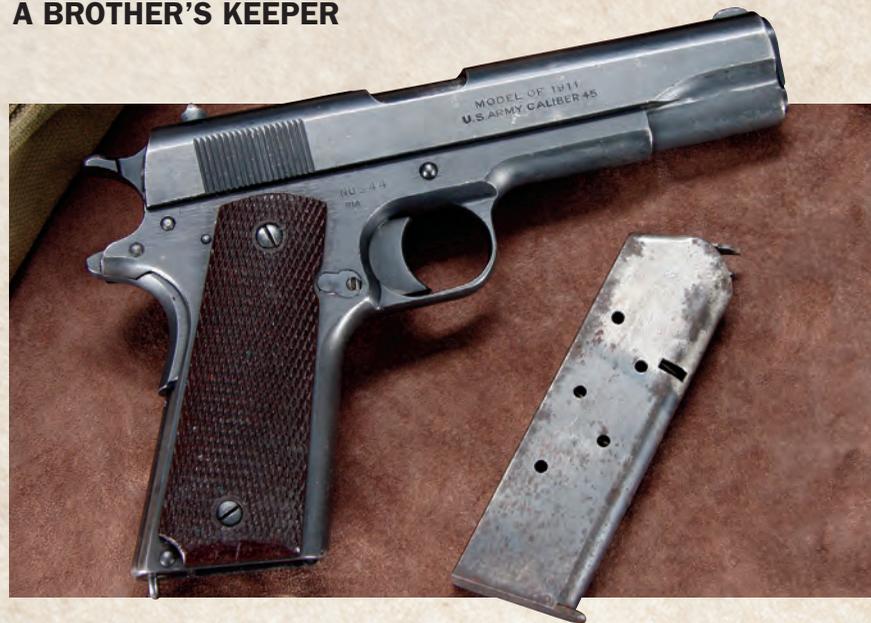
Steve's guns were decidedly passed down to his younger brother, Jim. When the accident occurred, Jim was following his brother's footsteps and completing the second phase of basic training at Kessla Air Force Base in Mississippi. He tearfully recalls, "Steve took me to the airport when I had to report to the first phase of basic at Lackland in San Antonio. I never thought that ride would be the last time I'd ever see him. When I was going through phase two, the Red Cross came to notify me."

Steve was a proud veteran of the Air Force and a better man than most. His family particularly recalls his patriotism, his attention to detail and his love for history. Among his personal effects, Steve left behind a number of guns that represented a different side to his personality and each a different type of memory.

"Naturally, when I see one of his guns I think of my brother. But they're good thoughts. I don't dwell on it, but if I want to feel real close to him I'll pull one out and look at it. I still have the .38 he kept under his pillow and the trap gun that he and I used to go out and hunt with," Jim adds. "We hunted together when I was young, but after his accident I lost complete interest. It was about 20 years before I could shoot again. I don't know if I really ever lost interest in hunting, but whenever I came across his old trap gun or the .45, it brought back those memories. When I see his 1911, I think of him in uniform because he often carried it in his government-issued black leather holster. Before he was killed, I went out and bought a Colt because I wanted a 1911 like his. I was surprised to

TURNBULL RESTORATION CONJURES FOND MEMORIES THROUGH A REMINGTON UMC.





This "before" picture shows the condition of Remington UMC serial number 644 after spending 40 years in a holster, tucked away in a dusty basement. Turnbull's research determined that only three parts were not original to the gun and likely installed by a military armorer during its service life: barrel, grips and thumb safety.

learn afterward that the Remington was nicer than mine."

THE REMINGTON UMC STORY

To support anticipated needs of the Great War, Remington UMC was awarded a contract on December 29, 1917, for the manufacture of 150,000 Model 1911 pistols. On March 21, 1918, a new contract was issued to Remington for 500,000 pistols, replacing the previous contract. Remington's 1911s never achieved an acceptable degree of interchangeability with other 1911s, but nevertheless they were well-made, first-class pistols.

Colt was to provide drawings, sample pistols and gauges, but the first set of drawings from Colt were incorrect. Gauges never arrived, and the first Colt drawings only illustrated flat, nominal dimensions—without tolerances. Joe Poyer, author of "The Model 1911 and Model 1911A1 Military and Commercial Pistols," writes, "Accurate production drawings were not necessary at Colt because their pistols were 'manufactured by veteran machinists who were proficient in all of Colt's production methods.'" Colt sent a second set of drawings, but these, too, proved unusable.

By direction, three Colt Government Model pistols were issued to Remington,

but the ones sent were commercial models not applicable to the military contract. Unfortunately, they couldn't be used as samples to replicate. Remington did manage to procure 10 service pistols on their own and measured for the dimensions required to reverse-engineer the 1911 for manufacture. These dimensions were then used for the preparations of Remington's own set of drawings, referred to as "Salvage" drawings.

A large new factory complex was adapted for pistol production in Bridgeport, Connecticut, to produce these service autos immediately following the contract award. This plant became known as Bridgeport Works. It was originally built in 1915 to manufacture Mosin-Nagants for the Russians, and because pistol production machinery was difficult to obtain, the U.S. government purchased the equipment already in the factory for this purpose.

Production of the Remington UMC finally began in April 1918, but the first pistols were not completed until August. On December 17, 1918, just four months after those pistols were completed and a month after the armistice, the U.S. government suspended the contract. Though the needs of World War I had come to an end, manufacture of Remington's .45 continued until May 1919. The contract called for 21,513 of these Model 1911s to be produced, but 163 pistols were delivered after the contract settlement was met in February 1919. In April, 160 additional pistols were delivered and three more in May. Final production of the Remington UMC Model 1911 totaled 21,676.

AN HONORABLE PLEDGE

Forgotten by all but Jim, Remington UMC serial number 644 remained hidden in a black U.S.-marked holster among tonnage and dust beneath his home for more than 40 years. My friendship and sincere interest in his family history brought a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity my way. As he sat in his chair one evening and looked me over with an intimidating stare, I knew the words about to roll off Jim's lips were going to be serious.

Whenever possible, Turnbull's gunsmiths will use original, period-correct parts. They do, however, have the capacity to manufacture new parts like this front sight to original specifications.



"I wouldn't turn this over to just anybody. I trust that you'll take care of it," Jim said.

Receiving that pistol was an awkward surprise and an honor that I didn't take lightly. I couldn't disrespect his gesture, but I didn't know how to respond, so I simply replied, "It's a privilege, sir."

I had come in contact with only a few of these Remington UMCs in my life, and this example had the lowest serial number I'd seen. Based on records, number 644 was produced in October 1918 (along with 4,145 others). To me what makes number 644 particularly special is that it was a part of the last known batches to be delivered to the U.S. government ahead of World War I's end on November 18th.

He didn't ask, but during my next visit I prompted a discussion about the idea of me sending his brother's 1911 to Doug Turnbull for restoration. Would he mind if I altered the appearance of his brother's pistol? An approving grin appeared to grow through his thick, long white beard. And with his blessing I shipped it to Turnbull's shop in Bloomfield, New York.

WHERE OLD BECOMES NEW

The pistol arrived at Turnbull's and was carefully scrutinized before I received the call to discuss my intentions. The project was assigned to Karl Schill, a gunsmith who has been working with Doug for the last 17 years. His personal interest lies

with first-generation single actions, but he loves working on handguns in general.

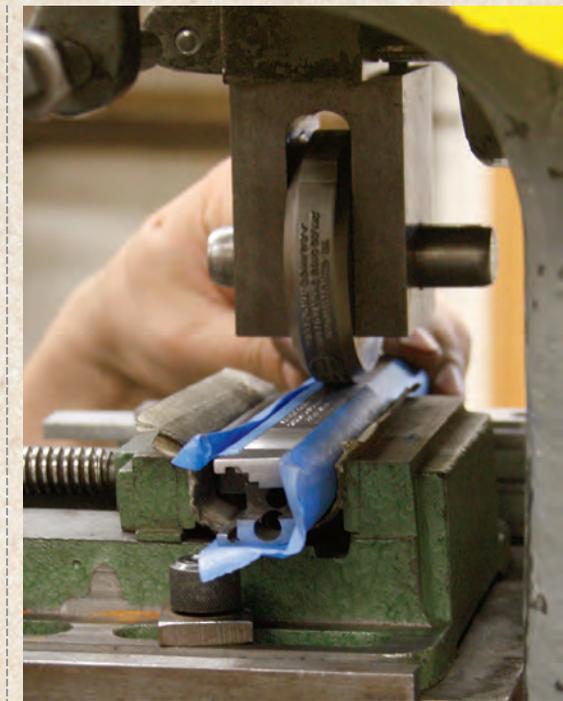
Turnbull's staff won't recommend a restoration if it will devalue the firearm or if the firearm carries special provenance. Turnbull keeps an incredible amount of coveted resources secured in a vault, and before work can begin they have to know what they're working with.

"We have literature that gives all the descriptions, years and details as to what the parts should look like," says Schill. "Then we have a timeline on the serial numbers, which serves as a language for metal polishers."

Each restoration gunsmith spends a great deal of time studying the unique characteristics associated with a specific serial number and what part styles or marks were used in the original construction. Turnbull's research of Remington UMC number 644 revealed that an incorrect 1911A1 barrel and an incorrect Colt thumb safety were installed. Unfortunately, there was no association with a significant historical figure.

Even through World War II and the years leading up to Steve's death, this pistol was never fielded in combat and appears to have served stateside personnel in administrative and law enforcement functions. Considering its condition, this Remington UMC was the ideal candidate for a Turnbull restoration. So I authorized work to begin.

"We have guys that work on rifles and shotguns," Schill says, "but I'm typically



building our Open Range revolvers. Your 1911 is a nice change of pace because it's a completely different animal. Unlike a single action that stretches the gun in every direction each time it's fired, the 1911 lends itself incredibly well to restoration. If the barrel is shot out or the link



doesn't function properly, it can easily be replaced. It's a really neat gun. We work on a lot of arsenal-refinished pistols, a number of them Frankenstein monsters with the wrong parts throughout. The arsenal rebuilds that we look at now were just an old gun back then. The armorers didn't give too much thought to using incorrect parts. Their job was just to make it shoot. This Remington was in better condition than a lot of the 1911s that come through, though, and I don't really see that many Remingtons being restored."

It wasn't until the movie "Saving Private Ryan" that Americans began viewing firearms like the Model 1911 as war relics and made efforts to preserve originality and condition.

"I've really seen attitudes change since I first started," says Schill. "People were rabidly against restoring anything. From my own experiences, when someone has buffed the finish off and hot blued one of these, how can you not justify a restoration? If you're going to be true to the form, these pieces of history definitely deserve a second chance."

Gunsmiths assigned to a project will do their best to keep a 1911 like this one as completely original as possible, but in many cases they find that something has been fitted with incorrect parts or has to be repaired mechanically. Turnbull maintains an awe-inspiring collection of original parts gathered in various methods since Doug opened shop in the early '80s. When the gun store that Turnbull serviced went out of business, he received a lot of the parts they had on hand, but he didn't stop there. Opportunities to obtain any quantity of original parts are becoming harder to come by, but for Turnbull's team it's a never-ending search.

"I know that for a while we could go to gun shows and pick up original magazines by the box," says Schill. "We have a drawer full of them with price tags and stickers that indicate those times were really, really long ago. Working on a recent project with Cylinder & Slide has been helpful because those parts they make are painstakingly accurate. The

good news is that so many 1911s were made that you can still find small parts if you're willing to dig."

CORRECTNESS

"You have to really work on many 1911s for years and years to recognize all of the nuances between a Colt and a Remington," says Schill. "The components between the two are almost the same, and for the most part it's just the markings and where they are located that make a difference. The diamond checkering on the grips are different, for example. We have a guy who makes those grips, and they are perfect."

The walnut stocks on a Remington UMC feature a truncated diamond pattern where the top diamond averaged .59 inch wide and 1.26 inches long from the top to bottom. The bottom truncated diamond averaged .57 inch wide, and 1.08 inches long. For comparison, a Colt's walnut stocks would feature diamonds that had top and bottom diamonds averaging .62 inch wide and 1.28 inches high. Colt-manufactured stocks had 20 full raised diamonds across their width, while the Remington UMC-manufactured stocks had 21 diamonds for its horizontal count. Differences are subtle, but Turnbull looks out for these details when creating new parts.

If an original part is correct but has textured surfaces that are worn (i.e., slide serrations, hammer-spur checkering, etc.), Turnbull restorers won't change the number of checkered diamonds or serrations. Though historical references serve as a guide to what should be on a particular gun, an original part may display slight variations.

"When it comes to serrations and checkering on an original part that we know to be correct, we don't change the number. We'll just take what's there and recut them."

With the Remington UMC I sent in, I included a two-tone magazine that was heavily spotted with rust. I wasn't sure that it was even correct and wouldn't have been surprised if 644 had been given a random magazine at some point during its service life. The absence of a lanyard

A BROTHER'S KEEPER

loop that I typically see with World War I-era 1911s was a bit peculiar, but Schill confirmed that the magazine was correct. Pre-World War II Model 1911s featured a magazine of four types. Type 1, 2 and 3 each featured a lanyard loop, but Type 4 did not. Like the Type 3 magazine, the Type 4 had a folded and welded body with rounded corners on top. The two-tone appearance comes from a magazine that was dipped in cyanide to harden the lips and improve functional reliability. As production of 1911s increased in 1918, the location of the two-tone line became inconsistent and appeared both above and below the magazine catch slot.

GOOSE LOOSE

For what they were designed to do, combat tolerances were more than satisfactory for a 1911 to perform well. Turnbull tries to duplicate the factory's best known effort in terms of fit. If something like the rear of the slide wasn't at least somewhat blended to the back of the frame, many customers wouldn't be happy. The trick for Turnbull is not going over the line and creating the appearance of a custom gun. The gunsmiths at Turnbull don't spend their time making slides tight to the frames for Bullseye shooting, but in many cases they must reverse a 1911 that's been altered for match shooting.

"It's not uncommon to see one that was set up for Bullseye shooting," says Schill. "Often, we have to fabricate an original front sight to replace an OEM part we might not have in stock. Whenever possible, however, we'll work with original parts we have on hand."

Much attention is given to components dealing with reliable ignition, extraction and ejection. The location where the firing pin strikes the primer is critical, and many untrained attempts to repair a tired extractor by bending it places too much tension on the part. If a 1911 isn't feeding correctly, that's usually the culprit.

MAKING EDGES

Once the pistol is mechanically sound and correct, Turnbull gunsmiths focus

MARKED PARTS

E.E.C.

The Ordnance Engineering Division approved the use of Army Inspector of Ordnance initials on Remington UMC Model 1911s, a departure from the established procedures in 1918 to 1919. Consequently, these pistols are stamped **1** E.E.C. (Edmund E. Chapman, Major) in addition to **2** eagle's head inspection marks. These eagle's head marks represented the final inspection by the Ordnance Department's Inspection Division.

SN

Remington UMC did not print a serial number prefix. **3** Serial numbers were stamped after bluing. As a result, the inside of the numbers are usually bright or burnished. Fading of the bluing around the numbers is usually noticeable.

SLIDE MARKINGS

The **4** slide markings on the Remington UMC follow the Ordnance Department guidelines with the Colt patent dates on the left side of the slide separated by the Remington UMC logo and the company address.

A letter **5** "E" was marked in the hammer recess above the firing-pin stop plate from the beginning of production to about serial number 15,000. "E" stood for Walter H. Evans. This inspection mark is also found on the upper left side of the triggerguard and at the bottom of the magazine housing in the same serial number range.

ARMY INSPECTOR OF ORDNANCE MARKING

Two U.S. Army inspectors were assigned to Remington UMC during 1911 production: "L.E.B." represented Capt. Leroy E. Briggs (March to August 1918) and "E.E.C." represented Maj. Edmund E. Chapman (August 1918 to May 1919).

The **2** eagle head marking was the final inspection stamp found on Remington UMC pistols. The eagle head is raised vertically and placed behind the trigger above the magazine catch.

UNITED STATES PROPERTY

6 Stamped in the same sans serif letters as other markings on the Remington UMC is the property marking on the left side of the receiver ahead of the slide stop pinhole.

PROOFMARKS

Barrels manufactured for the Remington UMC Model 1911 were marked with a "P" for proof on the right side of the lug from the beginning of production to about serial number 1,000. Afterward, the "P" proofmark was moved to the top of the barrel along the centerline.



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their attention on forming the shapes and edges that have been worn in the last century.

"The first thing I do if there are any bad spots," says Schill, "is prepare to weld metal. Your Remington didn't need it, but it's important to get the edges back to where they were before. The inside of the triggerguard and the triggerguard bow are usually the place for a lot of wear, and a little more attention is required to these areas to safely bring back the surface edge."

With metal repaired, stones, files and polishing paper are brought out to recreate a factory edge and recut serrations or checkering. Schill uses only one particular file for each job and discards small strips of polishing paper once the file starts to collect debris.

"The file I used to recut the serrations is only used for cutting serrations," says Schill. "I'm very careful on how I use it. Only cut on the front stroke. Don't draw it back. If you use a file to cut the direction it was intended, clean it with a file card and care for it, it should last indefinitely."

FINISHING TOUCHES

Of Turnbull's staff, only three gunsmiths actually work on restoring handguns, and it's not a job a new gunsmith out of school falls into. When you're in school to become a gunsmith, there isn't much opportunity to build experience to draw from. Each member of Turnbull's restoration team has been restoring pistols for quite a while. New gunsmiths typically start working on Turnbull's line of production guns, which gives them a lot of repetitive practice and the experience they need to eventually grow into the restoration side of Turnbull's operation.

"I've probably polished out 10,000 guns," says Schill. You get to a point that you're comfortable with what you're doing and can make it profitable for the business. A 1911 is not as conducive to a belt [sander] as other guns can be. With the 1911, there is a lot of focus and time required because there are several different ways to polish a part depending on the manufacturer. Our emphasis is

always on making the product look like what it's supposed to."

Before a lot of the final polishing can be applied, Mike Knowles does the stamping on a refreshed surface. From a towering wall of roll stamp dies, he picks the appropriate Remington UMC die off the wall and inserts it into the stamping press. He then places the slide in a fixture to properly locate the impression and pulls the lever that presses the die onto the slide with 20 pounds of pressure as the slide rolls from one side to the other. The location and depth of the stamped mark does not change, and Turnbull's gunsmiths make ink pulls of each original mark to ensure that it's placed back in the exact location it originally appeared.

With the polishing complete and the marking reapplied, Turnbull applies the bluing by the same methods as Colt of that era. The exact formula for the bone charcoal blue process is a closely held secret that's attracted the business of other 1911 manufacturers such as Cylinder & Slide, Kimber, Wilson Combat—and yes, even Colt.

COCKED AND LOCKED

Once a restoration is complete, the gunsmith will put a magazine of 230-grain ball through it to ensure that it properly functions and is safe to operate. This Remington UMC functioned well and knocked over a few bowling pins behind Turnbull's shop in the process.

"I really enjoy the historical aspect of restoring a 1911 like this Remington," says Schill. "It's really gratifying to work on something that had a role in serving our nation. We'll occasionally get a call or a letter that really expresses a client's emotional appreciation for something they thought was in a hopeless state. I take it upon myself that I don't want this to be my *job*. These pistols mean something to someone, though every project is



The two-tone appearance seen on early 1911 magazines was the result of dipping a fully blued magazine body into cyanide. The cyanide removed the bluing but hardened the feed lips.

a challenge. The most interesting gun I get to work on is the next one."

Having Doug Turnbull's shop restore a pistol in this condition typically costs about \$2,500 and takes six to eight months before its return. It's the only restoration service that can actually add value to an otherwise average 1911

lacking provenance. A Turnbull-restored Remington UMC recently sold for \$8,500. My father once told me that something is only worth what someone was willing to give for it. When you consider that Turnbull has a hard time keeping any inventory of these restored 1911s in stock, contrary to what some might believe, supply and demand continues to be indicative of these pistols' actual value.

Jim trusted me with the care of his brother's beloved .45. The act of presenting it to me was one I could never forget, and perhaps it was a way for him to release the memory of a young man he still looks up to. Upon receipt of this 1911 from Turnbull, I decided that the only right thing to do was dutifully return it to his family in hopes that it would be kept in the family. The highly anticipated event gave me witness to tears of prideful joy. "I wish you could have known him Eric," Jim said.

Sir, it would have been an honor. 🇺🇸

Often seen wearing his signature black bowler hat, Doug Turnbull is a recognizable figure who is dedicated to the faithful and accurate restoration of vintage firearms.

