

LEE-ENFIELD

RIFLE MANUAL

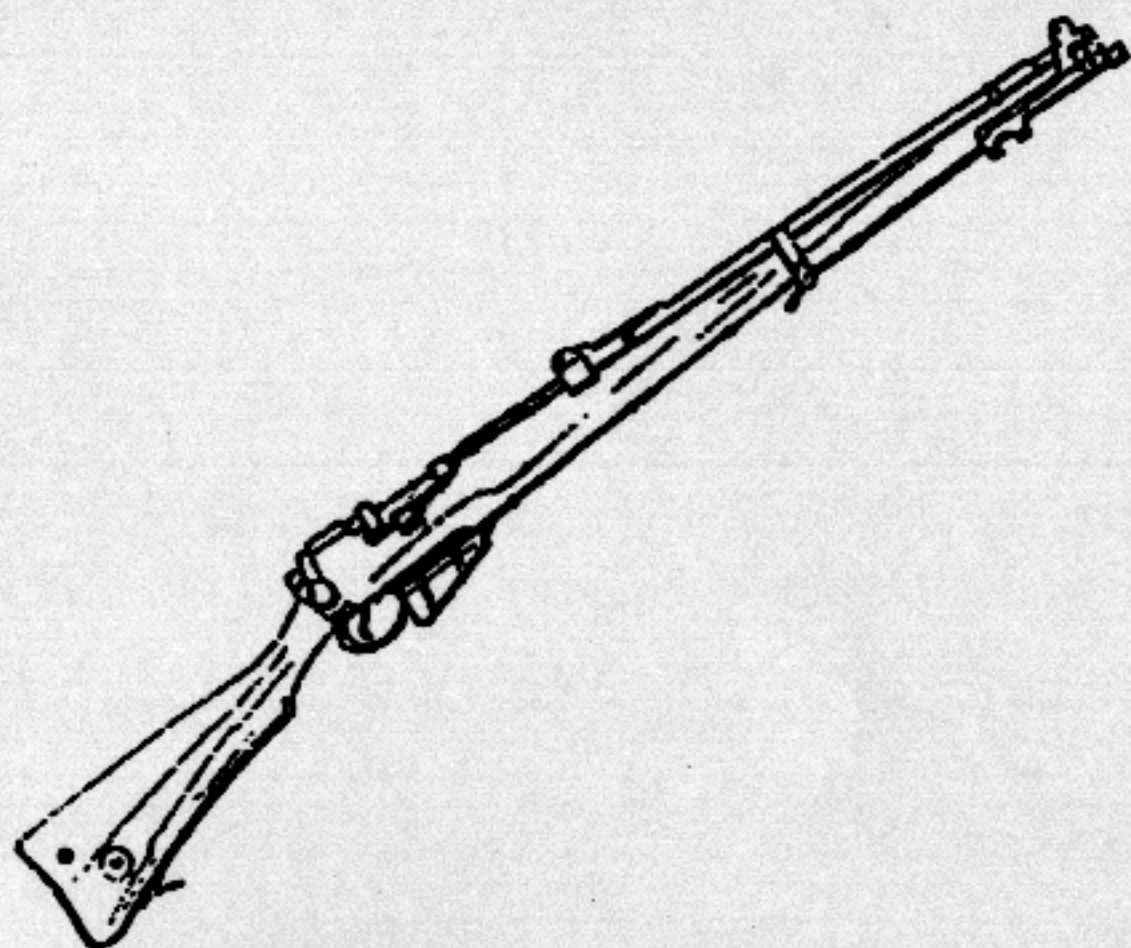
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Preface

Here-in we have a guide for the civilian owner of a British .303 Lee-Enfield Rifle. The subject matter of this text deals with the loading, firing, field stripping and cleaning of these rifles. The .303 British is the most popular chambering for the Enfield, but the information applies to all calibers.

The history of the Lee-Enfield Rifle is not the purpose of this manual. Information can be found elsewhere that covers the subject in detail. However, a chart has been included to help in determining when improvements have been made. Also, excluded from this book are discussions of forestocks and buttplates. There are many varieties of each. Since these parts of the rifle are not critical to loading, firing and cleaning, they have been omitted in order to keep the costs of publication down.

Care should always be used to make certain the rifle is unloaded and always pointed in a safe direction before field stripping and cleaning.

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Introduction

The Lee-Enfield Rifle

Lee-Enfield rifles introduced in 1888 were in use through-out the British Empire from then until 1951, when they were gradually phased out.

By 1957, Great Britain had switched to the .308 or NATO caliber. In the constantly changing world of military arms, 63 years is a very long time for one rifle to remain the number one battle rifle. As a comparison, the ubiquitous Mauser 98 was introduced in 1888, but did not come on the scene as the 98 until 1898. The secret of the Lee-Enfield's staying power was the sound design and the many modifications made during the rifles tenure.

A good many of the Lee-Enfield military rifles have been sold to the United States civilian market by the British and Canadian governments. Witness the current stocks of these fine rifles at gun shows and on the shelves of gun dealers. Some of the appeal of the Lee-Enfield rifles is the fact that many of these rifles were made by American companies such as Remington and Winchester, to tide the British over until they could produce their own weapons during World War II. American shooters and collectors have another excellent rifle to shoot, collect, customize and hunt with at very reasonable prices.

British rifles have undergone a rigorous inspection and proofing system to insure that the weapon is safe to shoot. American commercial ammunition for the .303 British is normally loaded to comparable military velocities and current import rifles should be safe. Handloaders should adhere to the loading manual recommendations. If there is doubt about the safety of a rifle, it should be checked by a reliable gunsmith.