

Winchester M1897 Shotgun, 1917



Trench warfare required the development or adaptation of a weapon capable of a rapid rate of fire with wide dispersion at close ranges. The Winchester Model 1897 shotgun ideally fit this criteria. Sometimes referred to as a trench gun or trench broom, the shotgun was effective for capturing and clearing trenches. After capturing two American soldiers in possession of a shotgun, the Germans issued a legal protest against its use. The protest stated that any future soldiers captured with a shotgun would forfeit their life. No evidence exists to suggest that any American was executed for this reason.

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War is not just a compilation of dates that represent a series of battles. "[Kentucky Military Treasures](#)," an online exhibition that illustrates the personal stories of bravery, innovation, heartache and perseverance, provides evidence of the people and artifacts history books often neglect. To learn more about this item and others in the military collections of the Kentucky Historical Society, visit "[Kentucky Military Treasures](#)."