

The First Shot

CMP On-line Magazine



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Rifle Cleaning and Maintenance

By SSG William T. Pace, USAMU Service Rifle Team Member



This article will cover one of the many reliable techniques to clean your rifle. The two main reasons we clean our rifles are to maintain consistency in accuracy and to help prevent any possible malfunctions. The cleaning of your rifle can be broken down into four steps: cleaning the barrel, cleaning the chamber, cleaning the bolt, and cleaning the lower receiver.

We want your feedback!
Please let us know what you think about TFS. Do you have an interesting story or article that you would like to share? If so, please let us know!

Cleaning the Barrel

The first thing to consider before cleaning your barrel is your cleaning rod. It is best to use a one piece, coated rod. If you have a sectional rod, I would advise you to get rid of it, as it may scratch the bore. Always use a bore guide when you clean your barrel. This is crucial because it provides proper alignment for the rod and allows you to clean the barrel from the chamber end out, rather than from the muzzle end. It also provides protection for the chamber, throat, rifling and crown.

Start by soaking a patch with a good carbon cutter. (In this article I'm going to use Hoppes #9 as my

Reader Comments:

Thank you for this excellent e-newsletter. The links and information are

great.
Sincerely,
John B.

I greatly enjoy the
USAMU shooting
tips in the newsletter
and also being able
to find them on-line.
Regards, Ray in FLA

EXCELLENT BRIEF
UNDERSTANDABLE
ARTICLE ON
SITTING RAPID
POSITION, BEING
CLOSE TO 60 THIS
IS MY WORST
POSITION AND ANY
HELP I CAN GET IS
GREATLY
APPRECIATED!
GOOD ARTICLE;
MARTY

SFC Singley:

It has been a while,
but I sent CMP a
request for a TFS
article on possible
means by which us
"centrally
endowed" (read that
as 'fat') shooters
might work ourselves
into a useable sitting
position. Spring is
coming and I will be
trying to get ready for
matches. Your article
has been copied and
I will read it and work
on trying the options
you have provided.
Thanks very much
for your individual
military service to our
Nation and for your
personal efforts to
help other shooters
improve our skills.

Melvin C.

Really enjoyed the
M1 for Vets article.
Its really good to

example. While product
names are used, other
products are available and
the Army is not a
compensated endorser of
any of the stated
products.) Once you have
soaked the patch, run it
through the barrel and
repeat that process three
times. All of us on the
Army Service Rifle Team



Members of the USAMU
Service Rifle Team clean
their rifles to maintain
consistency in accuracy
and to help prevent any
possible malfunctions.

use a pointed jag with Pro Shot patches; it's a
very good combination. Brushing the barrel is the
next step. Use a copper or nylon brush; do not
use a steel brush because it will scratch the
barrel. Brush the barrel 10-12 times. Then run
two wet patches followed by one dry patch down
the barrel.

Now move to a copper removal solvent (In this
article I'm going to use Sweets as my example.)
Soak a patch with Sweets and run it through the
barrel, let it soak for 3-5 minutes. If you are using
Sweets, do not let it soak for more than ten
minutes! After you have let it soak you can either
continue to run wet patches down the barrel until
the patches come out fairly clean or brush the
barrel with the Sweets. If you do decide to brush
the barrel with Sweets, be sure to use a nylon
brush. Sweets will eat the copper bristles off of a
copper brush rendering it worthless after one
cleaning. Which ever method you choose, you
need to neutralize the Sweets. You can do this
by rodding your barrel with a patch wet with
Hoppes, followed by a dry patch. Continue that
process until the patches come out clean.
Cleaning the crown is the final part of cleaning
the barrel. To clean the crown, use a Q-tip
soaked in Hoppes followed by a dry one. Repeat
that sequence until the crown appears clean.

read something that was done for wounded vets. The match must have been a real wingding. Too cold for me. There is alot of history 1903 Springfield and the M1 . I had to sleep with my o3 for baning the butt on the deck in boot camp. Anyway thanks again for the story.

Jim N., Ok

I enjoy the TFS. In fact, occasionally I like to print some of the articles to be able to review them in the future.

James L. M.

Whenever we come back in from the field it's always a good day when "The First Shot" is in. I drill the guys in the fundamentals – many of which I learned and fine tuned at CMP matches – and it comes back in spades out here when it really counts!

Dean H.

LTC - US Army
Security Advisor
Kabul/Afghanistan

Finally caught up with the October '06 story: A Rifle For Shifty. It was simply one of the best things I've read. As someone who had two uncles in combat in WWII, one air

Cleaning the Chamber

Begin cleaning the chamber using a chamber rod and chamber brush. Take a 30 cal or 7.62 patch and tightly wrap it around the chamber brush. Soak the patch with Hoppes and run it into the chamber, repeating that process three times. Next, dry it out using two dry patches. If you have a lug recess cleaning head, use it after the two dry patches on the chamber brush. Apply the same technique of one Hoppes soaked cotton swab, followed by one dry cotton swab, and repeat that twice. If you do not have a lug recess cleaning head, the 30 cal. patch wrapped around the chamber brush works fine. Once the chamber is clean and dried out, use a rag and a little Hoppes to wipe out the inside of the upper receiver. With the inside of the upper receiver and chamber clean, insert the bore guide and run one more dry patch through the barrel. The reason for this is that some of the solvent may leak into the rifling while cleaning the chamber.

Cleaning the Bolt

Cleaning the bolt is the easiest process. A rag and a little Hoppes works fine for cleaning the outside of the bolt carrier. Clean the inside of the bolt carrier applying the same technique used to clean the chamber. With the bolt disassembled, clean the inside of the bolt body, using Hoppes and Q-tips. Be sure to dry it out once it is clean. The outside of the bolt can be cleaned with a rag and some Hoppes. If there is significant amounts of carbon build up on the outside of the bolt near the rings, you can use a razor blade or small knife as a scrapping tool to break it loose. Another option is to take an old chamber brush or an old bore brush soaked in Hoppes and brush it over the carbon build up to break it loose. Once the carbon is broken free, simply use a rag to wipe it clean. If you seem to have a

corps and one infantry, I will forever believe those men were heroes of the first echelon. Anything any of us can do for any of them is simply the least we can do.

Steve R.
Birmingham,
Alabama

The article about Bill Krilling was very good, a great shooter, coach and a gentlemen to boot!
Ruth S.

Thanksfor the great stories and tips. Even old dogs can learn new tricks. This is great for keeping the CMP active.
Tim H., AZ

lot of carbon build up after firing a match, you might consider either using a different lubricant or lubricating your bolt more frequently. If you use a good lubricant and re-lubricate your bolt every 20-30 shots during the match, it will help the rifle function correctly and make cleaning a lot easier.

Cleaning the Lower Receiver

The lower receiver is also a very simple process. Use a rag to wipe off everything that you can and use Q-tips for the hard to reach spots. You can also use Gun Scrubber, Does It All, or any one of these types of aerosol cleaning agents for the lower receiver and trigger mechanism. It is not necessary, however, to use these products for every cleaning. Some prefer to use it only after every 500 rounds or so. If you do use these products to clean the trigger, be sure to re-grease and lubricate the trigger mechanism after each application.

I hope that you are now familiar with the tools and techniques used to clean your barrel, chamber, bolt and lower receiver. Whether you follow the exact process outlined in this article, or you create your own routine, it is very important that you clean your rifle the same way, every time. Cleaning the rifle with a consistent technique will help you to be aware of any changes in your rifle and to insure that none of these steps is neglected.

When you clean and properly maintain your rifle your chances of "cleaning the target" greatly increase.

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