

Springfield Armory

National Historic Site
Springfield, Massachusetts



American firearms craftsmanship had an early beginning around the Springfield, Massachusetts area over two hundred years ago. In 1776, three local residents constructed twenty firearms for delivery to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety. One year later in the midst of the American Revolution, General George Washington initiated construction of an arms depot at Springfield which served for the production of paper cartridges and as a storage area.

By Act of Congress, April 2, 1794, Springfield was established as a National Armory and played a significant role in this nation's creation and defense for 174 years.

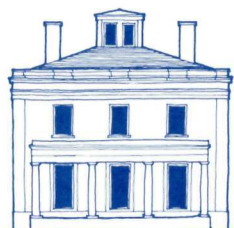
War with Tripoli

War of 1812

1795—The armory, with a work force of about 40, began the manufacture of the first official U.S. weapon, the U.S. Model 1795 Flintlock Musket.

Seminole Wars

1818—One of Springfield Armory's outstanding craftsmen, Thomas Blanchard, invented the Blanchard Lathe which revolutionized the gun-making industry by making it possible to mass produce gunstocks.



Commanding Officer's Residence

1841—The appointment of Major James W. Ripley as Commanding Officer brought a dynamic personality to Springfield. Between 1845 and 1850, he constructed both the Main Arsenal and the Commanding Officer's Residence.

Mexican War

Civil War

1842—The Armory began mass production of the Percussion Lock Musket. During the Civil War, its some 3,000 employees produced as many as 1,000 rifles a day.

Indian Wars

1865—The "Trapdoor Springfield," Model 1865, was one of the first breechloading rifles to be accepted by the Government. It became the first in a long line of "trapdoor" weapons (both carbine and rifle) which were used throughout the Indian Wars and and into the Spanish American War.

Spanish American War

1892—Again Springfield craftsmen demonstrated their ingenuity in their use of the Krag-Jorgenson rifle design to manufacture U.S. Model 1892, 1896, and 1898 magazine rifles. These were the first U.S. service weapons designed specifically for the use of smokeless powder.

World War I

1903—Armory fame reached new heights with the highly acclaimed model '03. Over 1½ million were manufactured.

World War II

Korea

1936—The Government accepted the design for the M 1 rifle which was conceived by John C. Garand, a Springfield employee. This became the first major design improvement in U.S. firearms for over a quarter of a century. Over 5½ million were manufactured for service around the world.

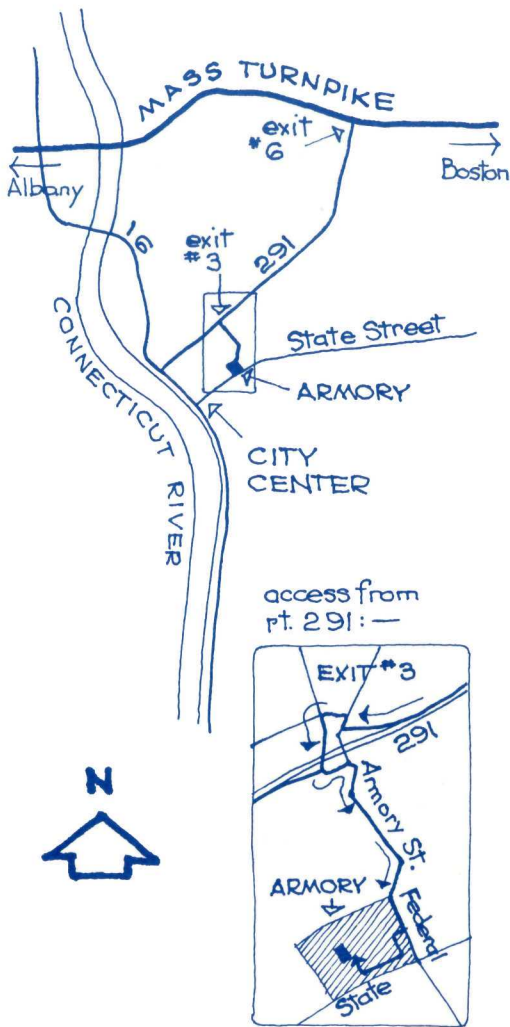
Vietnam

1957—The M 14 Automatic Rifle, the last of the Springfields, so effective that it replaced 4 other weapons, was a fitting conclusion to the 174-year history of fine craftsmanship.

On April 30, 1968, Springfield Armory was retired from military service. Today as a National Historic Site, the armory with its fine museum signals our nation's outstanding history of craftsmanship in firearms.



The site is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and is open every day from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A superintendent, whose address is Springfield Armory N.H.S., P.O. Box 515, Springfield, Ma. 01101, may be contacted for further information.



LOCATION MAP.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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