

Sterling Submachine Gun

sear and safety group can be detached and removed downward out of the gun easily. A simple flip-over rear sight is calibrated for 100 and 200 yards. There are seven different heights of front sights available for accurate sighting in at the factory. The right hand need not be removed from the pistol grip for any operation of the gun; the operating handle

venting slows the 9mm bullet to subsonic speed to avoid a giveaway supersonic "crack" as the bullet passes. It's an exceptionally quiet design. A Sterling Mark 6 police carbine was made. This was a closed-bolt semiauto version for police forces and civilians. The U.S. export version of this gun had a longer 16-inch barrel to comply with U.S. regulations. The Sterling Mark 7 "Para-pistol" was a variant issued to special forces and intelligence groups. This had a 4" barrel,



manipulation and magazine changes can be done using the left hand. The Sterling can be fired with one hand with the stock either open or closed. Barrier ridges are incorporated on the right side of the ventilated barrel guard to

a vertical foregrip, and had an optional solid stock. It was commonly issued with the short 10- and 15-round magazines for better concealment.

In time, the Sterling was also produced by the Royal Ordnance Arsenal in Fazakerley, near Liverpool. A similar but not identical model was manufactured under license by the Canadian Arsenals Limited as the 9mm C1 Submachine gun. Its slightly differing design primarily avoided royalty payments to Sterling. Other licensed versions are still manufactured at the Indian Ordnance Factories in Kanphur, India. The standard model is known as the SAF Carbine 1A; the silenced version is called the SAF Carbine 2A1. The Sterling has been in use with over 90 countries around the world. In direct comparison to the well-regarded Uzi and H&K MP-5 subguns, the Sterling has proved to be the most reliable available. It's been tested in dirt, sand, mud, ice, snow and water, and it keeps on firing under the worst conditions imaginable. It was very popular with British troops for being compact, having good firepower and accuracy and being extremely reliable.

Approximately 400,000 Sterling subguns have been produced over the years. Following the official discontinuance of the L2A3 by the British government, the Sterling factory fell on hard times and was sold to British Aerospace in 1989. At its peak, the factory had employed approximately 1600 men and women.

Today, a closed-bolt semiautomatic variant of the Sterling with a 16" barrel is produced by Wise Lite Arms in Boyd, Texas, and distributed by Century International Arms. It has a spring-loaded firing pin. A combination of surplus Mark 4 and American-made parts is used to comply with U.S. regulations. This is almost identical to the original Mark 6 U.S. export version. A Sterling may now be owned without full-auto paperwork, and it's a fun gun to shoot.

The Sterling was a solid, well-made, reliable and accurate submachine gun that served many nations as well as the United Kingdom quite admirably. It's a combat-proven submachine gun. **DP**

omewhat resembling
ular receiver and side-
the Sterling provided
led improvements."

prevent movement of the support hand in front of the muzzle or over the ejection port. In addition to the normal 34-round magazines, shorter 10- and 15-round "guard" mags were available primarily to allow tank crews more mobility in cramped quarters. There is only one sling swivel on this arm; it's on the receiver cap at the rear. The sling for the Sterling has a clip on the front which is designed to be attached through any two of the cooling holes in the barrel guard. A bayonet similar to that used on the Enfield jungle carbine may be fitted on the left side. The final model of the subgun was known as the Mark 4 by the Sterling factory, and as the L2A3 by the armed services. A sound-suppressed version, adopted in 1967, is known as the L34A1 (Sterling Mark 5). It replaced the older suppressed Stens. The L34A1 is still in limited service for special operations. This gun's barrel has 72 small holes used to vent powder gases into the suppressor. This