



Official State Historical Center of the Texas
Rangers law enforcement agency.

**The Following Article was Originally Published in the
*Texas Ranger Dispatch Magazine***

The *Texas Ranger Dispatch* was published by the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum from 2000 to 2011. It has been superseded by this online archive of Texas Ranger history.

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Funded in part by grants from
the Texas Ranger Association Foundation

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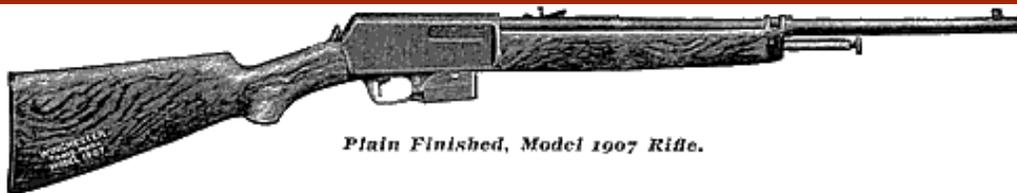

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Plain Finished, Model 1907 Rifle.

Ranger Chapman's 1907 Winchester by David V. Stroud



So far, all of my articles have featured only weapons used officially by the Texas Rangers because they were the best of the best. The Model 1907 featured this time, though not formally utilized by the organization, is nevertheless documented to an individual who was an early 20th-century Ranger and, therefore, truly represents a Ranger's weapon. (1)

George W. Chapman was twenty-three years of age when he enlisted as a private in Captain J. J. Sander's Company A in Alice on 1 September 1917. According to The State of Texas, Adjutant General's Department, Warrant of Authority and Descriptive List, he was born in Atascosa County, stood 5' 11" tall, had brown eyes and hair, a light complexion, and listed "Peace Officer" as his occupation.

Chapman signed the Enlistment, Oath of Service, and Description Ranger Force Form listing his marital status as single and solemnly swearing:

... since the adoption of the Constitution of the United States and of this State, and I do further solemnly swear that since the adoption of the Constitution of this State, I being a citizen of this State, have not fought a duel with deadly weapons, nor have I acted as second in carrying a challenge, or aided, advised or assisted any person thus offering. And I furthermore swear that I have not, directly nor indirectly, paid, offered or promised to pay, contributed nor promised to contribute, any money, or valuable thing, or promised any public office or employment, to secure my appointment, So help me God.

Chapman served barely a month, being honorably discharged on 11 October of the same year. He then reenlisted in Company C, Laredo, under Captain W. M. Ryan on 20 March 1920.

The second Descriptive List gave his height as 5' 10 ½", and noted that he had a fair complexion. His occupation is listed as stockman.

Once more, Chapman served only briefly, resigning on 22 February 1921 before reenlisting a third time on 11 August 1922 in Company A. He again resigned on 1 November 1922.

Chapman's last enlistment paper recorded his occupation as contractor and his place of birth as Pleasanton in Atascos County. He is listed as married, residing in Cotulla, and recommended by "Fuller Williamson, Chief Special Agent, International -Great Railroad in Palestine, Texas." (2)

Many may believe Chapman's service as a Texas Ranger was unusual. However, that type of sporadic service was common during much of the organization's history. As the need for additional Rangers arose, Special Texas Rangers were enlisted until the situation was handled, and then discharged.

As a Special Ranger, Chapman was expected to arm himself with the best weapons available. He chose the Model 1907, self-loading Winchester presented here. (3)

Winchester's first semi-automatic rifle was the Model 1903 blowback in .22 caliber. Since standard .22 bullets were not uniform as to powder charge, this often resulted in the '03 failing to reload. Winchester then developed a uniformly charged—as much as possible—automatic cartridge that should have sent sales through the roof. However, due to the need of the special cartridge, trade was slow, and only 123,000 or so were manufactured by the time the rifle was discontinued in 1936. (4)

The '03 was followed by the .32-caliber Model '05, which utilized the same basic design. Although Winchester had spent two years developing a blowback that fired a heavier cartridge, the '05 was still underpowered. Therefore, regular production halted after serial number 29,113 in 1914. (5)

The Model 1907 was Winchester's answer to its customers' requesting a self-loader capable of firing a more powerful round. Its .351 caliber, capable of penetrating a quarter-inch steel plate, (6) became the company's bestseller of the blowback repeaters, with a production run in excess of 58,000. (7)



The '07 maintained Winchester's attractiveness in its symmetry, beauty, and compactness, while still being simple and strong. The working parts of the rifle are few and tough. There are no moving projections on the outside to catch clothing or tear hands, no screws or pins to shake loose, and the attached sights offer the shooter championship accuracy.

After serial number 18,300 (1909), heavier stocks became standard, and the '07 was regarded as a lawman's rifle due to

poor civilian sales. (8) The detachable magazine holds five rounds.



10-Round Magazine

Ten-round models were available for \$3.50 but had to be fitted at the factory. Because of its weight (7 ½ pounds) and cost (\$28), the self-loader was available with a twenty-inch, round, nickel-steel barrel only and in plain, pistol-grip, walnut stock. A "fancy walnut, checked" stock and forearm could be purchased for \$48. (9) Police rifles were produced with sling swivels, heavier stocks, checked-steel butt plates, and bayonet attachments upon order. (10)

The barrel markings appearing on the 1907s during production varied. Early markings are found on top through the first 17,300:

MANUFACTURED BY THE WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS CO.
 NEW HAVEN, CONN. U.S.A. SELF LOADING MODEL 1907. PAT.
 AUG. 27.-.351 CAL.
 DEC. 10, 1901, FEB. 17. DEC. 22, 1903. AUG 21, 1906. OCT. 30,
 1906.



Barrel Markings

After number 7,100, this additional marking is on the left side of the barrel:

-NICKLE STEEL BARELL-
 ESPECIALLY FOR SMOKELESS POWDER

Model '07s approaching number 17,300 may have the last line of patent dates replaced to read:

AUG. 21. OCT. 30. 1906. JULY 5. 10

By number 3,500, the added line and changes became standard barrel markings on the left side. After number 24,300, nickel steel was replaced with:

-WINCHESTER PROFF STEEL-

Somewhere between number 47,900 and number 48,300, this marking became standard until the end of production:

**MADE IN NEW HAVEN. CONN. U.S. OF AMERICA—WINCHESTER-
MODEL 07-.351 CAL.**

-WINCHESTER PROFF STEEL-TRADE MARK-

Tang markings through number 15,900:

**WINCHESTER
TRADE MARK
MOD. 1907 S.L.**

After number 15,900:

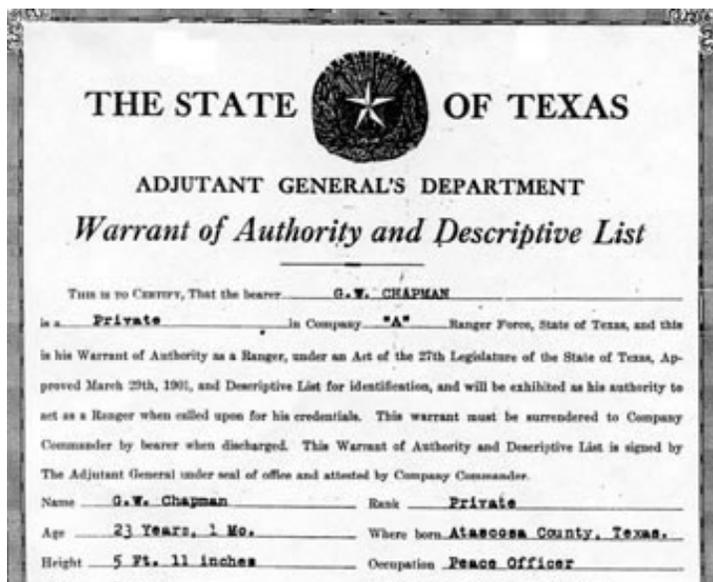
**WINCHESTER
TRADE MARK
REG. IN U.S. PAT OFF.
MOD. 07 S.L.**

After number 27,100 until production end:

**WINCHESTER
TRADE MARK
MADE IN U.S.A
MODEL 07 S.L.**

The '07 was not only popular with lawmen such as the Texas Rangers and F.B.I, but also with the outlaws such as Bonnie and Clyde, Machine Gun Kelly, and John Dillinger. World War I Allied flyers whose copilots fired at German aircraft from the rear seat also used this weapon. (11)

Lawman George W. Chapman's Model '07 was produced in 1916 and must have been a recent purchase when he enlisted in Company A. What adventures the private had with it during his sporadic service are unknown. However, the pride of owning a Texas Ranger '07 can only be imagined by fellow gun historians. (12)



Height	5 Ft. 11 inches	Occupation	Peace Officer
Hair	Brown	Enlisted Where	Austin, Texas.
Eyes	Brown	Enlisted When	1 September, A.D., 1917
Complexion	Light	Enlisted by Whom	Capt. J.J. Sanders.

Given under my hand and seal of office, this 4th
day of September, A.D., 1957

Francis Fitchling
The Adjutant General

Attest: *J.J. Sanders*
Captain Ranger Force
Commanding Co.

Chapman's Warrant of Authority

Notes

- 1) Chapman's enlistment papers and proof of ownership.
- 2) Enlistment paper.
- 3) "Semi-automatic" means that the weapon is self-loading, but for many they are referred to as an "automatic." "Automatic" actually describes a weapon that is self-loading but loads, fires, extracts, and ejects the spent cartridges. In blowback models, the bolts are non-locking and simply blow back to eject and reload.

4) Some serial numbers were skipped while assembling leftover parts in 1937. This resulted in a higher number (126,211) than the actual number manufactured.

5) The '05s were assembled until 1923, and the same skipping of serial numbers occurred as in the '03. The skipped numbers are found between 29,113 and 31,467. Serial number 1 was assembled on November 6, 1907, and production from 1943 to 1958 is unclear. However, serial numbers over 58,000 were reached before production ceased in 1958.

6) A full patch bullet must be used to accomplish this publicized feat.

7) Wilson, p. 152.

8) Madis, pp. 188-889.

9) Winchester Catalog, 1916, pp. 87 & 96.

10) Madis, pp 188-189.

11) Wilson, p. 152.

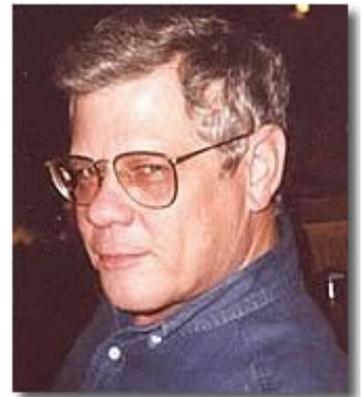
12) As with any obscure Ranger of yesteryear, historical information is not readily available. It must be painstakingly sought by searching county newspapers during the Ranger's service to validate any family stories one might receive. To date, the author/owner of Chapman's '07 has reserved that treasure hunt until the book, Ector's Brigade, has been published.

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Wilson, R.M., *Winchester, An American Legend: An American Legend: The Official History of Winchester Firearms and Ammunition from 1849 to the Present*, Random House. 1991.

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David Stroud was born in Tyler, Texas, and graduated from Henderson (Texas) High School in 1963. He enlisted in the Marines the following year and served a tour in Vietnam and two years as a drill instructor at Parris Island, South Carolina. He earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees in history at Stephen F. Austin State University and is a history instructor at Kilgore (Texas)