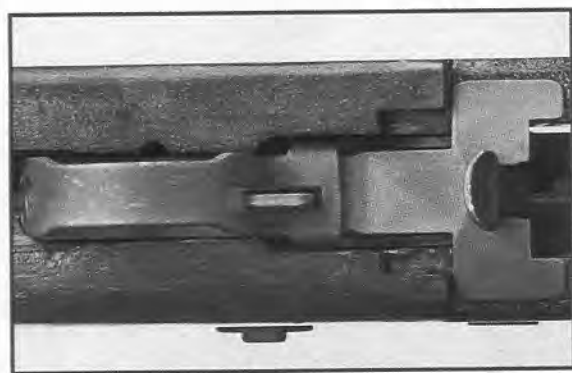
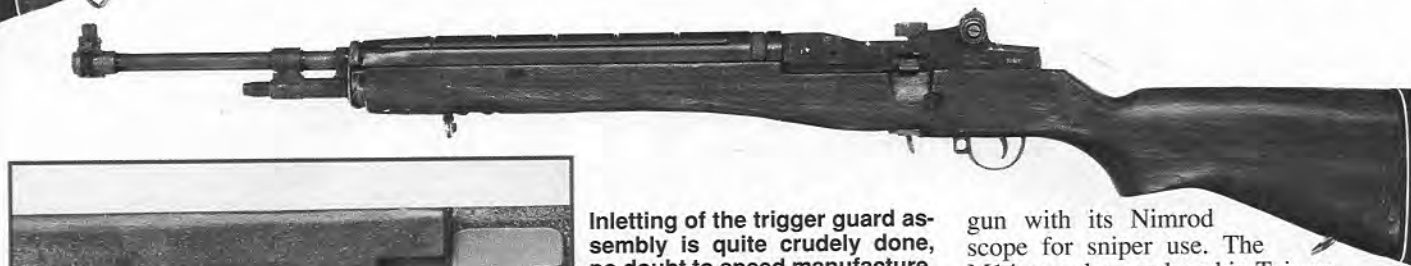


Norinco M14 Sporter Rifle



The Norinco M14 Sporter is a Chinese version of the former service rifle, with modifications to suit federal regulators.



Inletting of the trigger guard assembly is quite crudely done, no doubt to speed manufacture.

the gunmaking part of Winchester were given a vigorous push down the path to eventual bankruptcy by the M14 cancellation.

In the end, less than 1.4 million of a projected 5 million were made, and after brief service in Vietnam, the

M14 was withdrawn from infantry issue, with some examples converted into the M21 sniper rifle. The latter is now being replaced by the Remington-made M24, leaving the M14 visible mainly on the shoulders of the Corps of

THE success of the M14 rifle and its civilian equivalents in highpower rifle competition has tended to obscure the fact that as a primary service rifle it was pretty much a failure.

It was produced for only about five years, and manufacture was terminated just as the prime contractors—Harrington & Richardson, Thompson Ramo-Wooldridge, Winchester and the government-owned Springfield Armory, got production fully up to speed.

TRW never returned to the small arms field, Springfield Armory was closed in 1968, H&R and



While the Norinco stock (I.) is milled flat on its top, the M1A is contoured at the grip (above).

Cadets at West Point. It is also racked aboard U.S. Navy ships, where it is used to shoot at floating mines.

Many M14s have been dispersed to users like the Nicaraguan *contras*, Eritrean rebels in Ethiopia and the Philippine army. Israel has combined the

gun with its Nimrod scope for sniper use. The M14 was also produced in Taiwan on the former H&R tooling as the Type 57 rifle.

Given this checkered past, the M14 would seem an unlikely candidate for

NORINCO M14 SPORTER

Manufacturer: China North Industries Corp., 7A Yue Tan Nan Jie, Beijing 2137, 10045, P.R. China

Importer: Century International Arms, P.O. Box 714, St. Albans, Vt. 05478

Mechanism Type: gas-operated semi-automatic

Caliber: 7.62x51 mm (.308 Win.)

Overall Length: 40³/₄"

Barrel Length: 22¹/₄"

Weight: 8 lbs., 12 ozs.

Magazine Capacity: none supplied

Trigger: two-stage, 6 lbs. pull

Sights: blade front, rear adjustable for windage and elevation

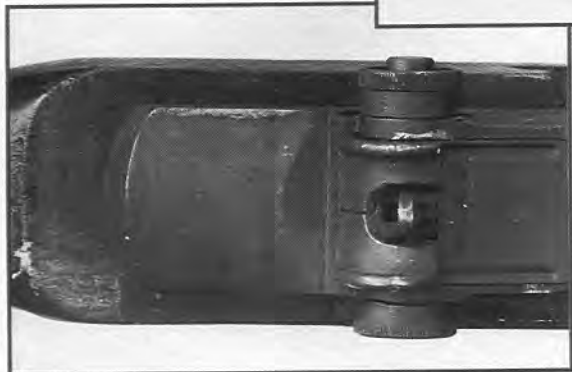
Stock: Chinese hardwood: length of pull, 12⁷/₈"; drop at heel, 2¹/₂"; drop at comb, 1⁷/₈"

Price: \$478.80

copying, even by the masters of mimicry on the mainland of China. Why would they choose to make their own version of a complex rifle that was outdated even at the time of its introduction?

Edward C. Ezell, in *The Black Rifle*, offers a theory:

"Approximately 100,000 Red Chinese M14s were made up, so the story goes, marked 'M14'...to arm a communist uprising in the Philippines that never took place. All were apparently fitted for selective fire and chambered for the regular 7.62x51 mm NATO cartridge, also made by Norinco using the same distinctive, copper-washed steel



that China uses in its East Bloc cartridge cases, but bearing, confusingly, British NATO headstamps!"

When China received most-favored-nation trading status and discovered the American gun market, semi-automatic versions of the Chinese M14 appeared, and examples were seen on trade show stands during the late 1980s. Importation, it was said, was being slowed by engineering work to ensure parts interchangeability between Chinese and U.S.-made guns.

Finally, Century Arms began to list Chinese M14s during 1990. These were assembled in Canada from Chinese parts and U.S.-made receivers. Unfortunately, just as these began to appear on the market, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms issued a ruling that forbade U.S. assembly of



The flash hider is simply sawed off, welded and recrowned, while the bayonet lug is removed to satisfy the BATF.

"assault rifles" from imported parts. Though the M14 wasn't on the import ban list, it was clear that BATF was instituting a new and much tighter regulatory regime (see October 1991, p. 49).

Century responded in time-honored fashion—it came up with a rule beater. The M14 Sporter is simply the Norinco M14 with all the "military" features removed. The folding buttplate is replaced by a rubber recoil pad. The flash suppressor is sawed off and the stub crowned. The bayonet lug is likewise ground off and the flash suppressor nut spot-welded in place.

These alterations, performed at Century's facilities in Canada, turn the previously naughty M14 "assault rifle" into the perfectly-OK-for-civilians M14 Sporter. The rifle also is supplied without a magazine, neatly sidestepping the whole capacity question. M14 magazines are available at just about any gun show or surplus dealer. Century plans to offer a five-round box in the future.

Paradoxically, while the military-style gun had to be assembled on a U.S.-made receiver, the Sporter is all Chinese. The metal parts closely follow the original, with the exception of a

Accuracy Results				
Five Consecutive 5-Shot Groups at 100 Yds. Fired From Sandbags				
7.62x51 mm Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
PMC No. 308B 147-gr. FMJ-BT	2805 Avg. 11 Sd	2.30	3.30	2.45
Samson No. 308-30A-M 150-gr. FMJ-BT	2759 Avg. 20 SD	2.19	2.71	2.36
Winchester No. S308W180 180-gr. STBT	2581 Avg. 11 Sd	1.75	3.81	2.91
Sd (standard deviation)		Average Extreme Spread 2.57		
Abbreviations: FMJ-BT (full metal jacketed-boattail), STBT (Silvertip boattail)				

rather thin Parkerizing job. Its bore is heavily chrome plated. We were able to switch several parts between the Norinco and a Springfield Armory M1A without difficulty, though we made no attempt to fire the guns in a mongrelized condition. The Sporter also readily accepted a commercial scope mount.

One exception to the generally clean and sharp metal work was the rear sight, which was quite rough and appeared to have been scraped against concrete. The windage adjustment was quite stiff in operation.

The stock, on the other hand, was truly atrocious, even by Chinese standards. The shaping through the wrist area was blocky and the inletting of the trigger assembly haphazard. The finish was splotchy and inconsistent in color. The trigger assembly was inletted so deep that the trigger blade barely peeked out from the bottom line of the stock. Even with the thick recoil pad, length of pull was just 12⁷/₈".

One suspects that the first reaction of many buyers will be simply to toss the Chinese stock aside in favor of one of the many aftermarket wood or synthetic stocks available for the M14. The handguard is plastic and looks no worse or better than

many U.S.-made versions, so it won't attract so much attention.

The M14 Sporter was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with PMC, Samson and Winchester ammunition. There were no failures of any kind.

Despite its ratty looks, the M14 Sporter turned in a pretty decent accuracy performance, almost exactly equaling the results of the first Springfield M1A tested here (March 1974, p. 36). This is in line with several Chinese rifles we have tested that shot a lot better than they looked.

With the cushiony recoil pad, the rifle was quite pleasant to shoot, though the short pull length was noticeable. Recoil was very mild, but muzzle flash



The odd bottom line of the Norinco (l.) makes it easy to distinguish from U.S.-made guns.



was intense with some loads.

It is doubtful that the Norinco M14 will be dominating the awards platform at Camp Perry anytime soon, but, at a retail price less than half that of the Springfield M1A, it should have considerable appeal to the casual shooter or collector of modern military-style arms.