

For many soldiers who have spent idle moments trying to hit a rock or beer can with the M1911A1 .45 automatic pistol, this standard sidearm of the United States Army is strictly "number 10". The "Government Model" as it is commonly known is lacking in accuracy when compared to other American made sidearms and for this reason the weapon is often ridiculed by those not acquainted with its good points.

The inherent inaccuracy of the ~~x~~ .45 stems from the fact that the ~~xxx~~ weapon employs a very loose fitting slide and also a loose fitting barrel to barrel bushing contact. Lock the slide of your .45 open - now shake the barrel with your finger. That play in the barrel may cause you to miss your target by as much as 15 to 20 inches at 50 yards. Precision made commercial .45 autos use extremely close tolerances that guarantee accuracy to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches at 50 yards. From this description it would seem that the Government Model has no place in the hands of combat troops in Vietnam. A closer examination, however, reveals the true virtue of the time tested invention of John Browning.

The loose construction of the weapon is not a product of poor quality control but is a deliberate design feature. The wide tolerances allow the .45 to keep firing even when rain, mud, and sand work their way into the mechanism. In contrast, the German Luger, a finely made precision firearm, is more accurate ~~that~~ than the U. S. pistol but less reliable under actual combat conditions. The tight fitting Luger ~~xxxx~~ often jammed during World War II along the Russian Front because of the bitter cold while cheaply made Russian pistols continued to fire. Such was also the case with the U. S. automatic which over its 56 years of military service has never been ~~x~~ charged with unreliability.

But what about the inaccuracy? The .45 like all sidearms in war is a defensive weapon designed for personal survival rather than offensive operations. Although its point of impact may vary by more than a foot at 50 yards

it is important to note that it will fire to within approximately 2 inches of the point of aim at 10 yards and most (if not all) combat uses of the .45 occur at nearly point blank range. When considered with the fact that a normal semi-sidearm trained soldier (usually not an expert pistolman) could not fire ANY ~~weapon~~ at a 2 inch target under actual combat conditions and expect a hit, the slight lack of accuracy assumes secondary importance in relation to reliability. The 230 grain slug of the Colt automatic is more than able to make up for a slightly misplaced shot~~s~~ and the weapon's extreme reliability render it an excellent combat sidearm in war - the exact role for which it was designed.