

## Shooting the M-44 and 1891/59 Mosin Carbines

*Click on any of the images below to see a larger version of the image.*



I recently discovered that I had a problem. I had acquired several rifles in a very short period of time, but I had never actually taken them out for "the" first try out at the range. I usually run out to the

range as soon as time permits, when ever I buy a rifle. In this case I had actually purchased too many - too quickly. I have always dreamed of being in this predicament and it finally happened. Inside of one month I picked up a **SMLE No.1 Mk III**, a **Romanian M-44**, and a **Russian 1891/59 Carbine**.

All three rifles were very hard to pass up and worth the trouble I would face later at home, for going over my budget.

I did not have any .303 ammo - so the **SMLE** went back in the safe for a later adventure. So I decided to take the two Mosin style and go on a "range" adventure.

The **M-44** was manufactured in 1955 as shown in **Figure 1**. The bore, an hour later cleaning and 100 patches, looks like new. I really don't believe it was fired very much, if any at all. The stock has some dings and the bluing is missing in a couple of spots. All in all - not bad for a whopping \$59 from a local sporting goods store.



The **1891/59** receiver was manufactured in 1943, (as shown in **Figure 2**) but the rifle was assembled in 1959.

I have read that the **1891/59** is a carbine that was assembled, during and after WWII, out of parts and rifles of **1891/30 Mosin-Nagants**. Creating this rifle was faster than manufacturing an **M-44** from scratch and it filled the need for a shorter length battle rifle.

This little rifle is immaculate in every detail - great wood, almost 100% bluing, and a brand new, sparkling bore.

I purchased the **1891/59** from my friends at -

**River City Gun Exchange**, 2358 Fruitridge RD  
Sacramento, CA, 95822 Phone: 916-428-0377



The first of two primary differences between the two rifles as far as I could tell was that the **M-44** came with an "*ever so handy*" bayonet that is semi-permanently attached to the right of the barrel and the **1891/59** did not (*soon the M-44 also would not*). The **M-44** had cheesy (*for lack of a technical term*) rear sights when compared to the **1891/59** rifle, as I will discuss in greater detail later in this article.

I was nervous about shooting a short barreled rifle with a full powered rifle cartridge, such as the **7.62x54R**, and I also did not expect great accuracy. So, to start with, I placed my target at 50 yards. My thought was that if I got any shots "in the black", I was lucky. After all, these rifles were not made for accuracy, but I was hopeful as they were based upon the original **Mosin-Nagant 1891/30**.



I began with loading up the **1891/59** with Winchester manufactured **7.62x54R** ammo from their **Metric Calibers** series of centerfire cartridges. This 180 grain, Full Metal Jacket round has a velocity at 50 yards of 2480 fps. I only paid around \$9 per 20 rounds and wanted to save the brass for reloading. Actually this was not such a bad deal when you consider that new **7.62x54R** Norma brand brass runs just a hair over \$8 per 20 pieces (*when on sale*).



As I expected, the recoil was pretty stout - but the one thing I had not expected was the level of accuracy. Not bad shooting for a little rifle.

My first 2 shots were in the **8** ring and my last 3 shots were in the **9** ring (as shown in **Figure 6**).

I did not have any type of shoulder padding - so I had to improvise and found a thick hand towel in my kit to place over my shoulder. I am not a wimp - but I was planning on firing off 60 rounds total and did not want a sore shoulder the next day.



Next I loaded up the **M-44** with 5 rounds, anxious to see how it fared against the **1891/59**. I have

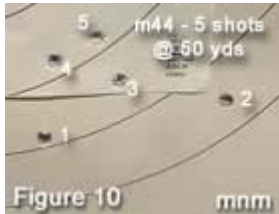
to say I preferred the sights on the **1891/59** over the **M-44**. They were the full version originally on the full version **Mosin-Nagant**.



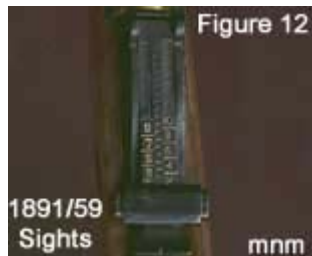
The **M-44** sights are an example of Communist manufacturing at its best as shown in **Figure 11**. They are hand made and very rough, with hand etched gradient marks. While the **1891/59** sights are a little more graceful in looks and

functionality, if you over look the very rough, unfilled routing marks in the steel where the sighting gradient marks were just routed off without any finishing work as shown in **Figure 12**.

I really should not complain, because of what I paid for them both. Also unexpectedly the **M-44** shot just about as well as the **1891/59** and with comparable recoil.



**Figure 10** shows the first 5 shots I made, at 50 yards, with the **M-44**. I was aiming at the logo in the middle of the photo while shooting. Most of the rounds placed to the left of aim, while one stray shot impacted to the right.



Overall I think both rifles would make nice little brush rifles to be used for plinking, pig hunting, deer hunting and/or home protection. Their size and balance makes them a really easy to use and wield rifle. Accept for the recoil, I cannot think of any downside to having a Mosin

Carbine. Actually with the price of M-44s on the market currently (\$40 to \$100 range) – I could see a reason to have one or two in anyone's collection.

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