

Collecting and Shooting the Military Surplus Rifle



surplusrifle

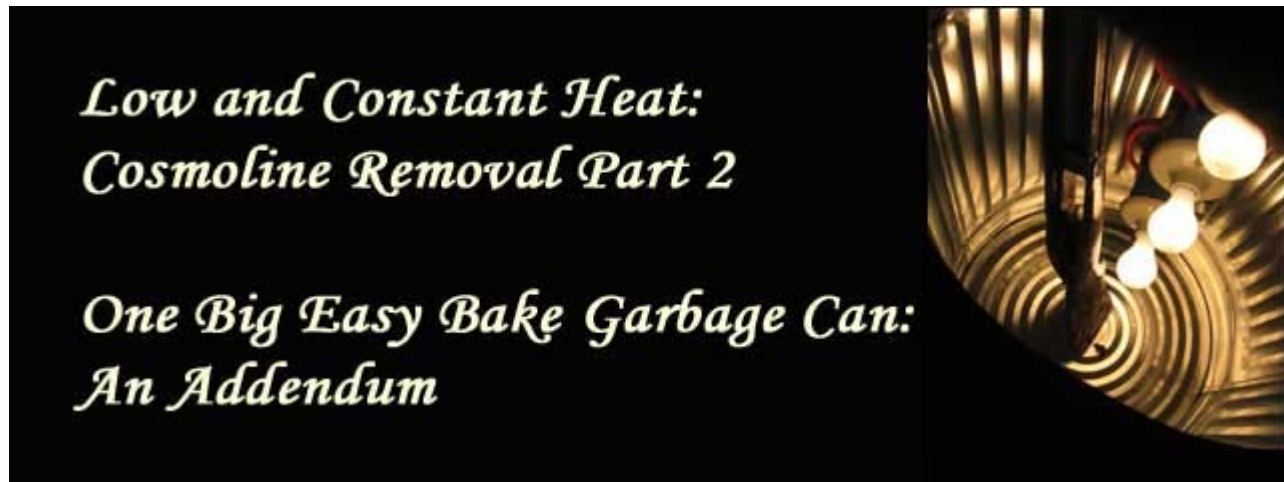


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Article Written by: [R. Ted Jeo](#)

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Jamie recently put together an article on a home made super [Easy Bake Garbage Can](#) that will do the job of cosmoline and grease removal without making a mess out of your oven or dishwasher. There are some people that absolutely swear off any sort of water on wood or metal for cleaning. There are some people that absolutely swear that water on wood and metal works the best. I've used both the oven cleaner method and the Draino methods to great success, but both leave the stock totally bleached and wet, needing to dry. The wood on the stocks that I used those methods on was messed up enough that I basically did not lose anything by refinishing them. But in both cases, I was using some pretty nasty chemicals, plus, I lost time in the days it took to dry the stock. I am also not one to mix anything gun or mil surp related with anywhere I cook or eat food.

So when Jamie put out a call to Mark and I for ideas on a "cosmo coffin" I was game. As Jamie points out in his original article, it had to be easy and cheap. And his Garbage Can Easy Bake Oven idea seemed to fit the bill. Except for one thing (in my mind), the 30 gallon can was not large enough for one complete stock or barrel (or for that matter a COMPLETE rifle). In speaking with Jamie about this problem, he said that he would put in

½ of the stock at a time, and rotated it occasionally to heat all parts of the wood. I tried that, and it worked to some extent, except there were parts of the stock that just did not get the full heat treatment. Back to the drawing board for me.

What I needed was a longer set up. I built one of the Easy Bakes to the same specs as Jamie's. The only difference was that I put my three lamp holders on a metal bar first and then mount the bar into the can. I only had to drill one hole for the power in line and then two holes to mount the bar into the can. I also wired my three lamps in series. I tried the oven out with great success when I baked out the grease from several messy bayonets and scabbards that I had laying around and was wonder how on earth I was going to clean the grease out of the INSIDE of the scabbard for the longest time. Passed with flying colors.



The entire contraption. The 20 gallon is supported by the particle board cut to a smaller diameter.

Next, I had to address the size issue. I looked around the garage and noticed that I had a 20 gallon metal can (the little brother to the 30 gallon can) that I was using for bird food storage. Hmmmm...bird food came out. The diameter of the 20 gallon can is about 3 inches or so smaller, so I could not just do a "monkey barrel" design. I really didn't want to buy another 30 gallon can. It would be heavy to move around and would be hard to keep

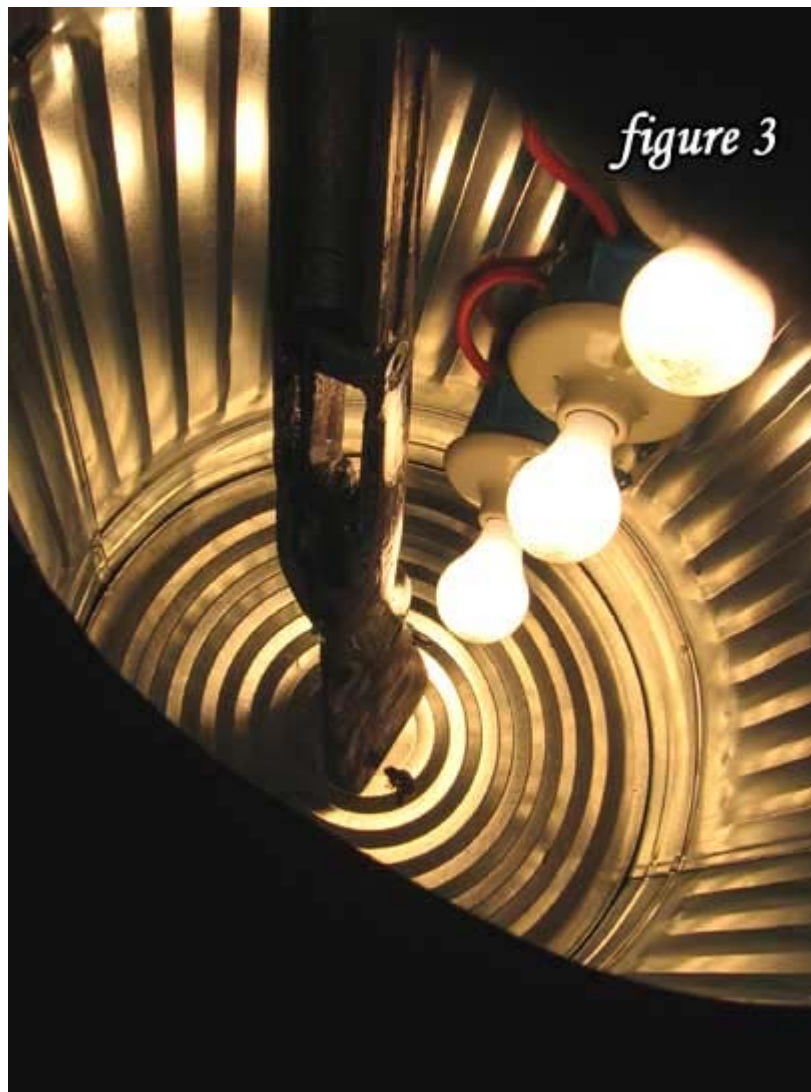
centered. What I did was take some leftover particle board and traced the diameter of the mouth of the 20 gallon can. Then I flipped the can over and used the base of the can (it's tapered) to draw a smaller circle inside the larger one, which is about 1 ½" smaller in diameter. Using a scroll saw, I cut the smaller circle out.



The pipe foam around the edge of the can helps seal the heat in.

This "template" I placed on top of the larger can. The template allowed me to place the smaller can on top, effectively sealing it like a giant barrel of monkeys. To help seal it, I cut some pipe foam and put it on the edges of the smaller can.

To test out the new and improved oven, I placed an old VZ24 stock upright into the can and turned on the three 100w lights. Without the 20 gallon can on top, the system could get to about 150F or so. With the smaller can on top, the temp was just around 100F. I used an old oven thermometer to check temps. The stock was heated the entire length and the grease and oil on the stock came off quite nicely, albeit slowly. I wiped it down several times over about an hour and ½ and came away with it nicely stripped of grease and oil. Very promising results.



The VZ24 stock test. Note the small puddle of grease on the bottom and how shiny the stock is from the grease coming out of it. The one thing I recommend is a VERY dark pair of sunglasses when looking into the can. Even a welder's shield if you have one.

However....

I had ordered a Turk M38 after Christmas. All I can say is that it was the most greasy messy mil surp that I had ever laid eyes on. There was so much grease that the paper that they wrapped it in stuck and dissolved to the wood stock. I couldn't touch any part of the rifle without gloves. It was going to be a nightmare stripping it down to parts and cleaning it. So it became the next guinea pig.



UGH! A mil surp lovers nightmare/dream, a greasy M38 Turk! The paper was dissolving right into the stock. This thing STUNK and stuck to EVERYTHING.



Close up of the receiver. Note the grease everywhere. Hard to tell, but I think the date is 1939?

I figured that I would take the rifle apart into receiver/barrel and then wood stock (the two largest pieces). The bolt and sling swivels could easily be stripped and cleaned with either mineral spirits or brake cleaner. The two items (stock and barrel) were placed into the expanded Easy Bake. To help speed things along and heat the upper can more, I exchanged the three 100w bulbs with three 200w bulbs.



Close up of the action. There was so much grease the bolt STUCK and the barrel and receiver made a sucking sound when it came out of the stock.

Within 10 minutes, the temp was at 175F and holding. The grease was coming off the stock and barrel in a flowing river and the bottom of the can was a mess. I wiped the stock and barrel down several times with paper towels to remove excess grease. I did this several times over about an hour and a half and then I quit. I was thoroughly surprised and delighted with the results. I managed to strip all the grease off the stock and the barrel inside of 90 minutes...PLUS, I was able to take down the Christmas ornaments and trees at the same time, being that I did not have to stand there the whole time. I would check it every 10 minutes to make sure everything was okay.



After running in the Easy Oven, damn near squeaky clean. The red is not rust. It is the reflection of the red eye flash on the camera.



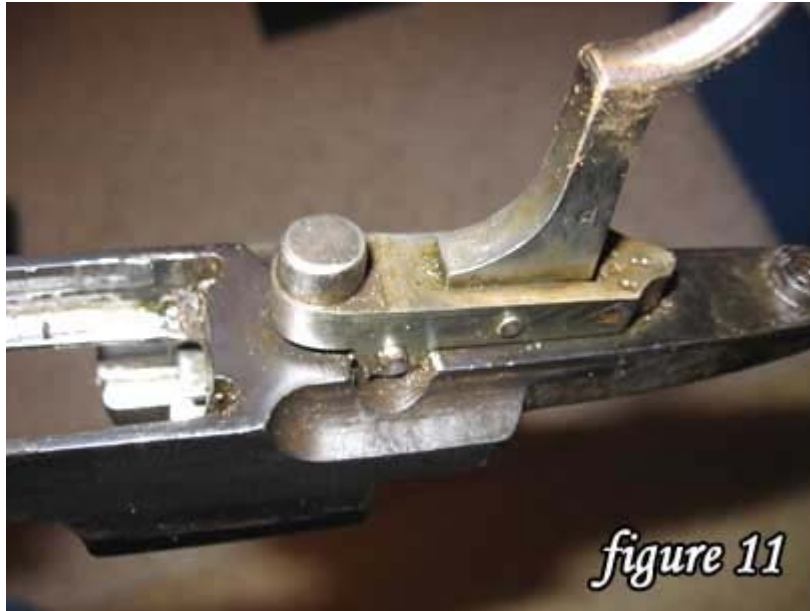
Close up of the action. Grease is all gone, but I will still need to take apart the bolt release. At least now I can see what I am doing.



Close up of the wood around the trigger. Note how nice and dry it looks.



Close up of barrel channel and recoil lug area. Again, it's nice and clean, these are some of the hardest areas to degrease on a rifle.



Close up of the trigger area. Again, I will still need to take this completely apart, but the oven has completed the majority of the work.

So, now I have a way to clean/degrease rifles that keeps the boss of the house happy with no smells (I run it in the garage), it works in the dead of winter, it does not damage the wood or the metal, it can remove all the grease at one time even most of the stuff packed into the tight spots. I will still need to go through the nooks and crannies with a brush, but at least I can handle the rifle without covering myself in grease. When I want to do smaller parts, I just use the bottom can (with the lights) and the lid to make a smaller chamber.

This is the way to go folks. Easy, fast, and cheap. Meets the criteria of a true mil surp cheapskate.

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