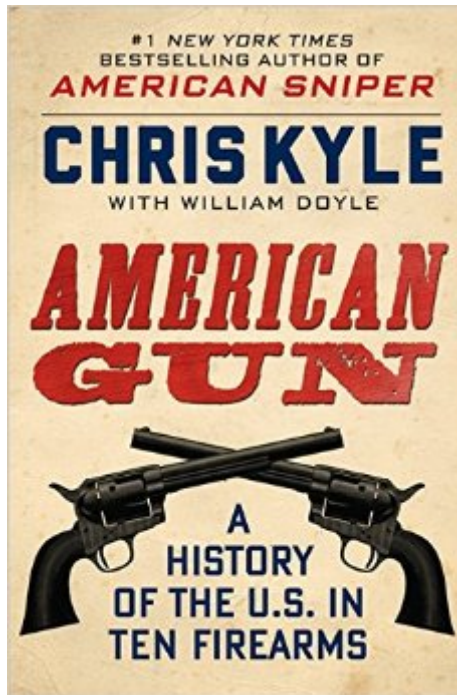


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# American Gun: A History Of The U.S. In Ten Firearms



## Synopsis

Chris Kyle's "fallen hero and #1 bestselling author of American Sniper" reveals how ten legendary guns forever changed U.S. history. At the time of his tragic death in February 2013, former Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, the top sniper in U.S. military history, was finishing one of the most exciting missions of his life: a remarkable book that retold American history through the lens of a hand-selected list of firearms. Kyle masterfully shows how guns have played a fascinating, indispensable, and often underappreciated role in our national story. "Perhaps more than any other nation in the world," Kyle writes, "the history of the United States has been shaped by the gun. Firearms secured the first Europeans' hold on the continent, opened the frontier, helped win our independence, settled the West, kept law and order, and defeated tyranny across the world." Drawing on his unmatched firearms knowledge and combat experience, Kyle carefully chose ten guns to help tell his story: the American long rifle, Spencer repeater, Colt .45 revolver, Winchester rifle, Springfield 1903 rifle, Thompson sub-machine gun, 1911 pistol, M1 Garand, .38 S&W police revolver, and the M-16 rifle platform Kyle himself used as a SEAL. Through them, he revisits thrilling turning points in American history, including the single sniper shot that turned the tide of the Revolutionary War, the firearms designs that proved decisive at Gettysburg, the "gun that won the West," and the weapons that gave U.S. soldiers an edge in the world wars and beyond. This is also the story of how firearms innovation, creativity, and industrial genius has constantly pushed American history "and power" forward. Filled with an unforgettable cast of characters, Chris Kyle's American Gun is a sweeping epic of bravery, adventure, invention, and sacrifice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

American Gun: A History of the U.S. in Ten Firearms by Chris Kyle with William Doyle "American Gun" is an action-packed journey through American history through the barrels of ten noteworthy firearms. As the late-great hero Chris Kyle stated, "I've picked ten guns to serve as the flagship weapons for our America's past." Navy SEAL Team 3 Chief, Chris Kyle, with commendations too long to list, trainer and author of the Naval Special warfare Sniper Doctrine along with award-winning author William Doyle provide the public with a real treat. This riveting 320-page book is composed of the following ten firearms (chapters): 1. The American Long Rifle, 2. The Spencer Repeater, 3. The Colt Single-Action Army Revolver, 4. The Winchester 1873 Rifle, 5. The M1903 Springfield, 6. The M1911 Pistol, 7. The Thompson Submachine Gun, 8. The M1 Garand, 9. The .38 Special Police Revolver, and 10. The M16 Rifle.

Positives:

1. Engaging story-telling and a clever way to go through American history. "Guns have always been present at the leading edge of American history--often crucially."
2. A fascinating topic in the hands of an American hero who tragically passed while writing the final stages of this book. A page turner.
3. Excellent format. Each chapter introduces the firearm in chronological order and proceeds to expertly immerse fascinating historical stories about it.
4. Plenty of diagrams and photos that add to the reading experience.
5. Kyle does a wonderful job of capturing the action-packed scenes of American history. Bravo!
6. A great book for people who normally wouldn't be enticed by firearms but are in fact interested in American history. I can't stress that enough.
7. Gun enthusiasts will be happy to know that despite Kyle's goal to make this book accessible to the masses he delivers in providing technical essentials of each firearm. There is also an excellent Appendix titled, "The Ten Guns, by the Numbers" that provides a useful synopsis.
8. A great selection of firearms. Kyle expertly describes each firearm with gusto. He provides the advantages and disadvantages of each weapon while also mentioning other weapons and influences.
9. A great selection of historical events are included here and then some. Ranging from the revolutionary war to Iraq, and everything in between. Many lesser-known battles as well but no less interesting.
10. In an unintended way the book serves to cover the evolution of weaponry. As the reader gets acquainted with some of the firearms Kyle skillfully uses that as a basis of reference to highlight limitations and the need for improvement.
11. The men behind the weapons. Kyle digs into the history of the inventors and the specific improvements made. As an example, the Winchester 1873 Rifle.
12. Does a wonderful job of describing the strengths and weaknesses of each weapon in terms of functionality and purpose. "The big daddy of all Plains rifles was the post-Civil War Sharps Big 50, the quintessential powerhouse buffalo gun. This piece contributed directly to the shaping of America by powering the final expansion of European settlers across the

continent."13. Movie stars and presidents (and future presidents) and their weapons of choice.14. The story of how America became an international power.15. Kyle's favorite sniper weapons.16. Favorite gangster weapons. "America's most infamous public enemy of the era was undoubtedly John Dillinger, a Hollywood handsome bank robber who used the Thompson as his withdrawal slip."17. The gun that saved the world...find out.18. The history of .38 Specials. Famous firearms from other countries...like the Glock, AK47.19. Famous attempted assassinations.20. The evolution of the machine gun.21. Heartfelt afterword and source notes.Negatives:1. This book was written for the masses and so historical gun enthusiasts (who already have a great grasp of its history) may want to pass on this.2. No links to source notes.3. No formal bibliography.In summary, I really enjoyed this book! What a fun way to learn about American History and the firearms involved. Chris Kyle will be missed but I am grateful for his service and the historical knowledge he left behind. I highly recommend this book!Further suggestions: "American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History" by Chris Kyle, "The Life and Legend of Chris Kyle: American Sniper, Navy SEAL" by Chris J. Mooney, "Glock: The Rise of America's Gun" by Paul M. Barrett, "No Easy Day: The Firsthand Account of the Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden" by Mark Owen, "The Red Circle: My Life in the Navy SEAL Sniper Corps and How I Trained America's Deadliest Marksmen" by Brandon Webb, "SEAL Team Six: Memoirs of an Elite Navy SEAL Sniper" by Howard E. Wasdin, and "Massad Ayoob's Greatest Handguns of the World" by Massad Ayoob.

While I certainly appreciate Chris Kyle's service as a Navy SEAL, I have to downgrade this book for the numerous historical errors he makes, at least in the pre-1900 chapters. I didn't read the book but rather listened to it as a recorded book. (The fact that a gun book was recorded on a CD is unusual and refreshing.) My area of interest is in the pre-1899 period of American history so I can only base my views on that portion of the book. His casual style of writing may appeal to some readers but it sometimes tends toward sensationalism. Anyone with a knowledge of early firearms will cringe at some of the errors one will find. Just to name several as examples, and I found more, the American long rifle (or Pennsylvania-Kentucky rifle) is generally thought to have originated about the 1720s, not 1620. The typical barrel length of French and British military smoothbore muskets in the Revolutionary War period was not 30 inches but rather a rather unwieldy 42 to 46 inches. The Sharps Rifle Company did not manufacture the Spencer repeater. The Colt M1851 Navy revolver was six-shots, not five. Finally in speaking of the slaughter of the bison herds after the Civil War, hides sold for around \$2.50 to \$4 or so, not \$100 unless it might have been that of a white bison. His chapters on post-1900 weapons, particularly the M-1 Garand of WW II and of Vietnam-era and

later military arms may be right on the money. The book will appeal to many who are not gun enthusiasts, but if you fall into the category of a collector of antique arms or historian, be warned. Despite the book's flaws, perhaps it will generate enough interest to draw some readers into expanding their knowledge of firearms which isn't a bad thing.

Chris Kyle, author of his bestselling memoir *American Sniper*, was no stranger to guns. As a Navy SEAL, he had a record confirmed 160 kills. Beyond his expert marksmanship, Kyle possessed the unique ability to be a great storyteller. At the time of his tragic death in February 2013, he was working on a new project, *American Gun*. In the book, Kyle chronicles American history, beginning during the revolutionary war. Each section details this history using a different firearm as the main focus. Having shot each of the weapons featured in the book, Kyle not only speaks of the physical aspects of the guns, but also provides a wealth of historical context that surrounds them. Rather than write about each gun in a textbook fashion, which Kyle himself admits would be incredibly boring, he zeroes in on the human side of the story, placing the reader in the place of the men who used the weapons. There are a few moments of historical speculation, particularly in the section about Lincoln's push to get the multi-shot Spencer Repeater rifle into the hands of his Union soldiers. Lincoln was met with resistance from military leaders who saw the new technology as gimmicky. Kyle argues that, had the Union used the new weapons sooner, the Civil War would have ended sooner, and more American lives could have been spared. Despite this speculation, Kyle acknowledges the facts and seems to respect the history as it occurred. In the past year, firearms have become a hotly politicized topic. I was a bit worried that, as a man who spent a great deal of time with weapons, Kyle would turn this book into a kind of propaganda tool. Fortunately, Kyle never seems to be preachy or pushing an ideology upon the reader. Instead, he writes with a passionate respect for both guns and the history surrounding them. Perhaps his words sum it up the best. "You can get a little fancy talking about guns. . . That's not fair. Real life has been messy, bloody, complicated. . . But the past can show us the way to the future. It can give us hope. . ." (pg. 261-262)

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