

A 3 Digit Survivor

By Bo Ramsour

1911 S/N 350 This rare survivor is one of the first 500 pistols shipped to the Army on Feb. 15, 1912, in a crate of 200 pistols, S/N 301-500. These first contract pistols are extremely rare. This gun is battle worn and has survived multiple wars and in original condition. S/N 350 still has evidence of the desired Colt oven blue finish and polish and fire blue finish on the small parts, i.e. slide stop, hammer, trigger and thumb safety. This finish was deemed too brilliant and prone to wear and scratches. The military made Colt change this to a less reflective blue finish. The change was implemented at around S/N 2400. Early and Original Features of S/N 350 A. Thin grip screws. Colt stopped using the thin grip screws at around S/N 3000 because the armorers were deforming the screw heads. B. Type I exposed base magazine, very rare because the upper rear corners of the type 1 mag would crack and require a type 11 keyhole magazine replacement making the exposed base mag extremely rare. C. Type 1 non-punched recoil plug and pointy eared recoil spring guide and thin thumb safety. The military ordered that all of these small parts be modified to make an improved military sidearm. D. Type 1 rare original non-H plain barrel with early striations. H stamped barrels started at around S/N 400. Note: the wear patterns of the barrel match the slide. E. Type 1 convex magazine catch lock, "no screwdriver slot." On 3-18-1912 the military armorers wanted it changed to an easy o remove flat head screw driver slot. Conclusion: For the past 112 years this first contract 3 digit has amazingly survived with all original parts intact, nothing was ever replaced. Only a few of these rare pistols exist today. This pistol is the centerpiece of my collection.

