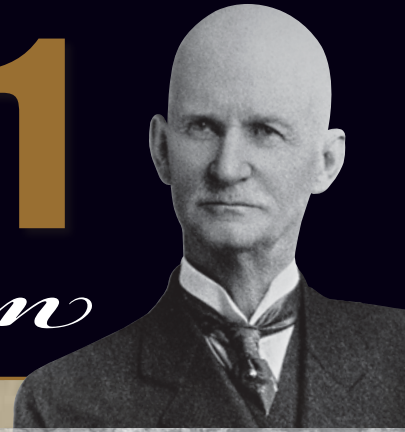


# THE COMPLETE BOOK OF THE MODEL 1911

*The Centennial Edition*



J. M. BROWNING.  
FIREARM,  
APPLICATION FILED FEB. 17, 1910.



KIMBER CENTENNIAL

Patented Feb. 14, 1911.

3 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



COLT CENTENNIAL



PARA LIMITED

*Inventor.*

*John M. Browning.*

*per*

*W. E. Elliott*

# Colt Centennial

## Collectables that are still intended to be shot.

BY ROBERT KOLESAR || PHOTOS BY MIKE ANSCHUETZ

One hundred years ago the United States was a far different country than the America of today. It was primarily rural then, with a population of just over 92 million, and cars were still a novelty. Flying in airplanes was considered a stunt, and the main forms of transportation were the railroad and horse-drawn wagon. The preferred handgun for self-defense was the revolver, with many still clinging to the Colt Single Action Army over the newer double actions. Semiauto pistols were making their appearance, though, mostly in Europe, with the Germans adopting the Luger in 1908. In 1911 the U.S. Army, after several years of testing, adopted its own semiautomatic pistol, the Browning-designed Colt M1911.

Just about everything I can think of from that era is long obsolete...except the 1911 pistol. Still issued to some special forces units, it is probably the most popular civilian pistol in the U.S. Until very recently, it ruled the bullseye ranges at Camp Perry in the Service Pistol event.

The modern pistol technique, pioneered by the late Jeff Cooper, is based on the 1911. And 1911s aren't made by just Colt now. You can buy a 1911 from several makers, with custom features limited only to the amount of cash in your wallet.

As Colt was the original producer of the 1911 and 1911A1 .45, a 100<sup>th</sup>-year commemorative offering (Colt calls it a "limited special edition") from the legendary Hartford handgun maker seems appropriate. I was a little concerned that this pistol would be a shiny thing with gaudy stamped oak leaves and grinning faces on the slide, but I needn't have worried. Colt did a nice job on this one. It's very pretty, but somewhat understated, an excellent tribute to the pistol that Medal of Honor awardees Sergeant Alvin York, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone and other GIs carried into combat.

Based on Colt's now-discontinued 1911 WWI repro (model 01918), this new Colt Anniversary Edition can trace its heritage back to the trenches of France. It has the older 1911-style frame without the finger

cuts behind the trigger; flat mainspring housing (with lanyard loop); wide, checkered hammer; and long steel trigger of the model 01918. It also has the period-correct, tiny WWI-era U-notch sights. It is beautifully polished and blued. Slide-to-frame fit is snug, but not super-tight, like a match pistol. Colts are made to function.

This limited-edition Colt comes in three grades. The higher-grade 01911AN-VII has the Colt Royal Blue treatment, gold-colored inlays on both sides of the slide and smooth cocobolo wood stocks with Colt medallions. A red-lined locking walnut case and key complete the setup. Production will be limited to 750 units. This is a very nice pistol that probably won't be shot too much. A second, plainer grade (01911AN-VIII) is also available. I like this one. No gold engraving or nice glass case. It's got different rollmarkings ("Model of 1911-2011") appropriate for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but it's the same WWI-style pistol that Colt has been producing the last few years. Stocks are diamond-checkered in the style of the



The rampant Colt logo adorns the slide while highly polished bluing on the frame sets off an original trigger and the lanyard ring puts a distinctive touch on the flat mainspring housing.



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## SPECIFICATIONS

Colt 1911 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Model (limited special edition)

**TYPE:** Recoil-operated semiautomatic

**CALIBER:** .45 ACP

**CAPACITY:** 7+1

**WEIGHT:** 40 oz.

**BARREL:** 5 in.

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.5 in

**HEIGHT:** 5.5 in.

**THICKNESS:** 1.3 in.

**FINISH:** Blued

**FRAME/SLIDE:** Steel frame and slide

**SIGHTS:** Fixed, front blade, rear notch

**TRIGGER:** Single action

**STOCKS:** Smooth cocobolo (01911ANVII),  
checkered walnut (01911ANVIII)

**PRICE:** 01911ANVI, not for sale

01911ANVII- { Unavailable at  
01911ANVIII- { press time

**MANUFACTURER:** Colt Mfg. Co, LLC, Hartford, CT  
coltsmfg.com

Colt will be accepting orders for both models starting in October 2010. A total of 750 of the high-grade 01911ANVIs will be produced. All regular-production Colt 1911s will be marked "100 years of service" on the slide during 2011.

## COLT CENTENNIAL

original WWI pistols. Incidentally, all regular Colt 1911s produced in 2011 will have an additional “100 years of service” rollmark to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is a nice touch. It makes all Colt 1911s produced in 2011 “special editions.” There will also be a highly embellished Custom Shop 01911ANVI grade, which will consist of just one pistol. Colt will be donating this one to an organization that is in the forefront of defending U.S. Second Amendment freedoms. Colt will begin accepting orders from its distributors in October 2010 for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary models.

A call to Colt’s had the higher-grade version (01911ANVII) en route to our offices for examination. Since this was a limited-edition high-grade gun, it wouldn’t have been a good idea to put any rounds through it. I have a 1911 repro that the special-edition anniversary 1911 is based on that I used for the actual shooting. After 100 years, Colt knows how to build a 1911. A test on this well-known classic should be more along the lines of a re-familiarization with an old and trusted friend. And there was nothing new here. I shot a very nicely polished, fitted and blued Colt 1911 that didn’t malfunction, shot to point of aim and grouped extremely well. This particular Colt of mine has now had well over a thousand rounds of GI ball, match semi-wadcutters and commercial hollowpoints through it without a hiccup. The trigger breaks at a creep-free 4.2

### COLT 2010

There have been quality-control issues with Colt firearms over the last two decades. Colt went through a bankruptcy, union battles and a hemorrhage of capital and skilled labor that almost destroyed the company. But all of this happened quite a while ago, and Colt is still here. Despite what you may have heard from the gunshop commandos, Colt is on sound financial footing and intends to be a major player again in the American handgun market. I took a tour of the West Hartford factory last year and watched several million dollars worth of new CNC machinery being installed. Colt is ramping up production as well as quality on its 1911s. New models are being introduced, and some old ones will be reintroduced as production capacity increases.

I talked with the Colt folks extensively about their 1911 line, the Custom Shop, quality control and customer service. The new machinery will increase production (Colt sells every 1911 it can build) and will assure a perfect slide-to-frame fit. And while new Colts are now produced on CNC machinery, hand-fitting is still required on each Colt pistol. Most small parts on a Colt 1911 are machined steel, not MIM, unlike other 1911s. There are some non-critical cast parts used (such as the grip safety and thumb safety), but a Colt 1911 is a rare bird in 21<sup>st</sup> century gunmaking: a pistol of steel and walnut that gets touched and shot by human hands before it is packaged and shipped. I may sound biased (I am), but Colt is now making some of the finest 1911s ever.

pounds. If you want to shoot your new Colt special edition, go for it. It’s made to be shot. Some of these WWI repros and anniversary 1911s will be tucked away as “safe queens,” never to be fired, and that’s fine. But many of them will be shot by their new owners. Those owners will find that they have a pistol that functions and shoots as good as it looks. My Colt repro groups almost as well as my accurized 1911s, centering groups of about two inches with GI match ball at 20 yards. The tiny sights are difficult to pick up quickly, but this pistol was designed by

John Browning for close-quarters. High-visibility night sights weren’t needed by Sergeant York in 1918, and proper concentration on sight alignment and trigger control will still result in centered hits. This pistol works as intended, 100 years later.

Whether or not you shoot it, a Colt 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1911 would be a lifetime investment that will honor America’s greatest service pistol and the American warriors who carried it. I’ll be finding room in my safe for one. And I will shoot it.



The barrel, bushing and guide rod are as on the original.



Each pistol comes with a glass-front display box.