

THE MARKSMAN - HIS WOOLWORTH RIFLE AND SALAVATION ARMY PISTOL

The Commission has gone to some trouble to portray Oswald as a highly qualified marksman who was well equipped for the murder of both the President and Officer Tippit. The opposite is the truth on all counts.

In Vol. XIX, "Anderson Exhibit No. 1," pp.16-18, is the official response of the Marine Corps dated June 3, 1964, to the Commission's request of June 2, 1964, "relative to marksmanship capabilities of Lee Harvey OSWALD ..." Lt. Col. A/ G. Folsom, Jr., Head, Records Branch, Personnel Department, replied "By direction of the Commandant of the Marine Corps." This should be as official and authoritative as anything relating to the Marine Corps can be.

Col. Folsom, after correlating proficiency with practice, transcribed Oswald's record and concludes in this fashion, "The Marine Corps considers that any reasonable application of the instructions given to Marines should permit them to become qualified at least as a marksman. To become qualified as a sharpshooter, the Marine Corps is of the opinion that most Marines with a reasonable amount of adaptability to weapons firing can become so qualified. Consequently, a low marksman qualification indicates a rather poor 'shot' and a sharpshooter qualification indicates a fairly good 'shot'."

What Col. Folsom is saying is this: While Oswald was under skill training and instruction, the best shooting he ever did was only that which the Marine Corps expected of a man "with a reasonable amount of adaptability to Weapons firing". It considered his shooting merely "fairly good". This was Oswald at his best. While still in the Corps, while still handling weapons and in a military life, and an easier course (see report) but not when under intensive training and skilled instruction, Oswald was such a poor shot that he was a

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only one bullet more than the absolute minimum required of anybody in the Marine Corps (or other services). Col. Folsom's description of this shooting as "a rather poor shot" is actually cushioned for the Commission's benefit because it is qualified by the description of "a low marksman qualification", whereas Oswald's was the absolute lowest qualification.

This firing was done with what was at the time a modern weapon, kept under the best of circumstances, subject to regular inspections and, if necessary, repairs and adjustments. The second course on which Oswald barely qualified for the minimum by the skin of his teeth is here and where I have been able to find references to it elsewhere undescribed. But if it did not include rapid firing or if it deemphasized rapid firing or if it did not include or deemphasize moving targets, then, of course, the representation of Oswald's shooting would be that of an even less skilled man.

Col. Folsom, and a number of other witnesses throughout the hearing, referred to the necessity of practice for a man to keep up his skill. Beginning with what at the very best was only a fair skill, and following closest upon a very poor skill, there is no evidence that Oswald ever had any rifle practice whatsoever. The Commission has produced 2 witnesses to his having fired any kind of a rifle at all. His brother, with whom Oswald went hunting with a .22 rifle, not the same kind of rifle by any means, testified that Oswald's shooting was poor. The only other indication that Oswald ever fired a rifle on any other occasion after he left the Marine Corps came from the highly questionable testimony of Marina, who attributed the firing of a single shot at Gen. Walker to her husband. That shot, if Oswald did fire it, which is extremely dubious, was not a good shot.

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Compared with the fine weapon in excellent condition during his military career, what did Oswald allegedly use in the two murders attributed to him? The Mannlicher-Carcano rifle was a \$10 weapon. A man who may have been fond of weapons, as Oswald appears to have been, but a man who knew weapons, would never have selected such a cheap and questionable weapon, by mail order, for any assassination. That it fired is immaterial. Even cheaper rifles will work. Even if it was an accurate weapon, it is immaterial, for there is no reasonable expectation that a \$10 rifle will be accurate. The total cost with the telescopic sight was \$19.25. The papers dealing with this purchase appear in the report and throughout the various volumes. A convenient point of reference is Vol. XVII, Exhibit 773, p.635, 788, 789, pp.677-8.

- Not only did the Commission fail to show that Oswald ever used a rifle, hence failed to show that he was even able to keep up a poor rifle capability, but it also failed to show that he ever bought or owned any ammunition. It merely attributes to him the ownership of 4 or 5 cartridges, and the manufacture of only one of these is known. In all of his possessions, there was not a single rifle cartridge. So, we are also asked to believe that a man would attempt such an assassination with a maximum of 4 rifle bullets, and alone.

Photographs of the 3 empty shells found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository appear as Exhibits 543-5 on p.241 of Vol. XVII. With complete consistency, the Commission says absolutely nothing about these cartridge shells at the point where they appear in the volume. And the Commission is equally consistent in its table of contents where this description appears, "Three 6.5-millimeter cartridge cases found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building following the assassination". Note here again there is no sign of the

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manufacturer. In this the Commission is only partly consistent. Where it knows the manufacturer, and where it suits its purposes to specify the manufacturer, or where it cannot avoid specifying the manufacture, it does so, as in the case of the pistol.

The analysis of the report has gone into detail about the conflict in the evidence about the Tippit shooting, especially with regard to the number of bullets taken from Tippit and their manufacture, and the number and manufacture of the cartridge cases found at that time.

Exhibit 790, p.678, Vol. XVII, is a copy of the order for the pistol signed by A. J. Hidell. It undoubtedly appears on a number of other occasions throughout the 26 volumes. It is discussed in the report. The price was \$29.95, and the description of the pistol by the experts clearly shows that the purchaser got stuck.

Other Exhibits relating to the pistol begin with 587 on p.264 of Vol. XVII. They include an article on the pistol, and various photographs of fired and unfired bullets and cartridges and entire bullets.

Consulting the table of contents here gives another clear evidence of the bias and lack of honesty on the part of the Commission. For example, Exhibit 58<sup>7</sup> is described as "Assembled Western .38 S. & W. cartridge", and 588 is "Disassembled Western .38 S. & W. cartridge". 589 is described as "Assembled and disassembled Remington-Peters .38 S. & W. cartridges". 590 is "Assembled and disassembled Western .38 Special cartridges". 591 is "Assembled and disassembled Remington-Peters .38 Special cartridges".

Now we come to Exhibit 592, which is described as "Five .38 Special cartridges found in the pocket of Lee Harvey Oswald following his apprehension". Note there is no indication of any manufacturer. Then

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with Exhibit 594, "Four .38 Special cartridge cases found at the Tippit crime scene". Here again, no reference to manufacture.

On the point of the Commission's honesty, and especially with respect to the ~~weapon,~~ <sup>weapon,</sup> note that they have this description of an additional weapon, "Replica of the C2766 rifle." It is Exhibit 542, a photograph of which appears on p.241 of Vol. XVII. Now it cannot be a replica of a "C2766 rifle". It can be a similar one, it can be a companion one, it can be one of identical manufacture, it can be described in any number of ways; but the one way it cannot be described is as a "replica". The expert testimony of the firearms specialist makes this abundantly clear. Each weapon has a character completely its own in the markings it imparts to; the missiles it fires. This is the essence of firearm identification.

An additional question that this immediately raises is: Was the testing done and was much of the other work done with the genuine rifle found at the scene, or was it done with this "replica"?

In the report and elsewhere in the hearings are references to the manner in which the sight was adjusted. It was described as being fitted to a left-handed man, which Oswald was not. One of the experts said that it could be fixed accurately after a period of adjustment, which Oswald did not have. But in the table of contents of Vol. XVII is another interesting description of the rifle that I do not recall from the report. In identifying Exhibits 576-8, on p.259, the Commission says of these photographs that they are "Three shims inserted under the mount of the C2766 rifle during tests performed on the rifle." I presume that eventually I <sup>tu</sup> will find why and where and for whom these shims were installed. But they destroy the validity of ~~the~~ <sup>any</sup> comparison of ~~o~~ the rifle without the shims, and the mere fact that the sight was

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touched at all altered the entire situation, especially with regard to test firing, for we know that the rifle was not properly adjusted for a right-handed man at the very best.

Still on the question of bias, but having nothing to do with the weapons and the bullets, is another example of the Commission's dishonesty. A number of phony versions of a picture that purportedly was taken from Oswald's possessions were published. The negative of this picture is one of the few things that Oswald ever had that the Commission didn't get its hands on. He denied ever having it. He claimed it was a phony and declared that in court he would prove it. Regardless of whether or not he was telling the truth and regardless of whether or not the picture was in his possession, we find this description in the table of contents of Vol. XVII, "Exhibit 746 A-E, Rephotographs of Commission Exhibit No. 133-A". They appear on pp.517-21. Whether <sup>or not</sup> these were photographs of photographs, they were photographs of fakes. The Commission knew they were fakes, having traced each one to its source, and it knew what alterations were made in each case. Some of them were quite extensive.

Returning again to the rifle, in the table of contents to Vol. XVII we find Exhibits 574-5 on p.258 described as "Two photographs of the clip from the C2766 rifle, showing it holding six cartridges and empty." These photographs have the following legends on them: "CLIP FROM C14 RIFLE LOADED WITH SIX CARTRIDGES" and "CLIP FROM C14 RIFLE". C14 may be somebody else's designation, perhaps the FBI's, for the actual C2766 rifle. Presumably the testimony will reveal this. But the fact is that in the table of contents the Commission does not refer to a "C14 rifle," it refers to the "C2766 rifle". As in the case of the "replica", this is not completely honest or forthright.