

AUCTION ACTION | BY FRED BAUMANN

Rock Island Sale Near \$5 Million

ROCK ISLAND AUCTION APPROACHED THE \$5 MILLION MARK IN TOTAL SALES AT ITS THREE-DAY DECEMBER SALE AT MOLINE, ILL., DURING WHICH MORE THAN 3,600 LOTS OF FIREARMS AND RELATED COLLECTIBLES WENT TO THE BLOCK.

Rock Island Auction's Dec. 4-6 auction of more than 3,600 lots was described by the firm as "a huge success, earning about \$5 million in sales." The sale of more than 3,600 lots crowned a record year for the Moline, Ill.-based firearms auction company, with sales of almost \$15 million.

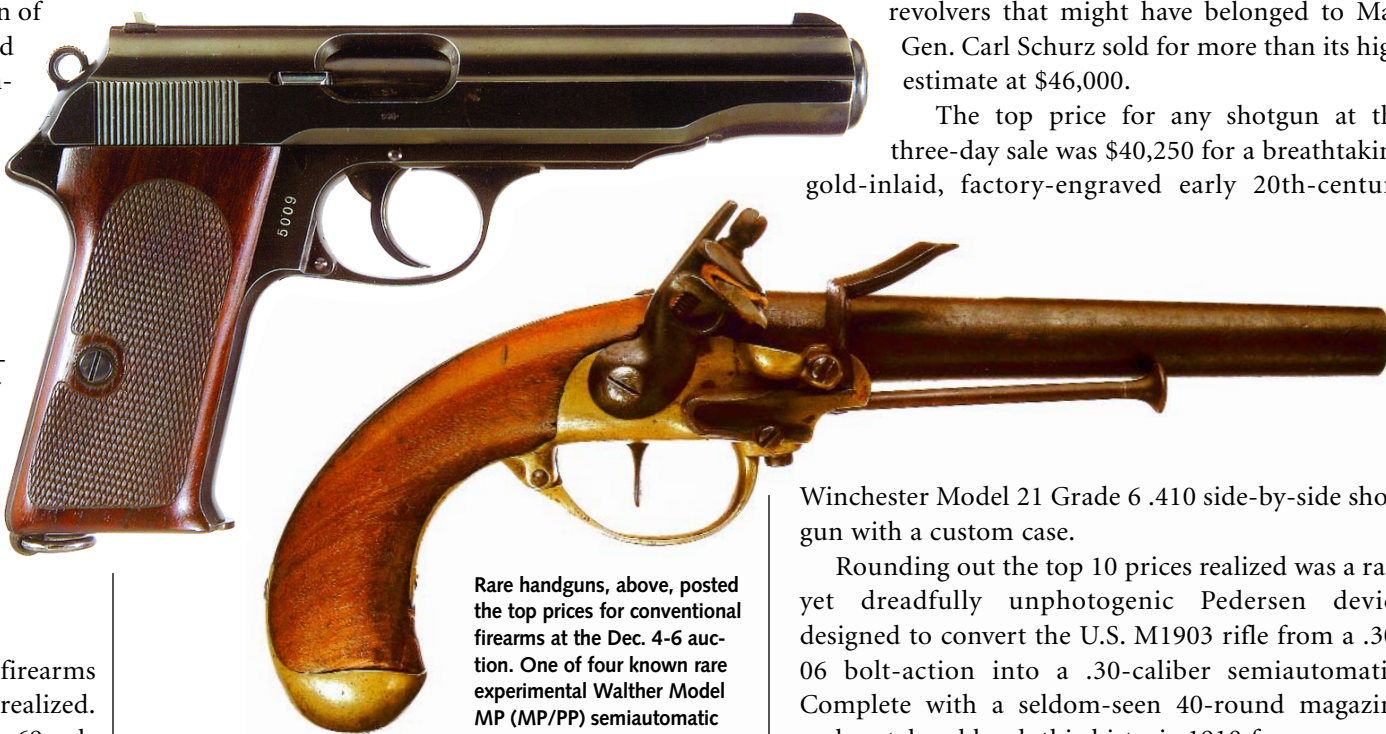
Big Sellers

The big guns at the sale were its top performers. They included a pair of Confederate A.B. Reading & Brother 6-pounder bronze cannons (serial Nos. 10 and 11, one of which is shown below), which sold for \$166,750 and \$195,500, respectively. Those prices include the buyer's premium, as do all others in this report.

Rare handguns were the top conventional firearms at the auction and had the best five prices realized. That included a Model 1799 North & Cheney .69-caliber flintlock pistol, the first handgun officially adopted by the United States. Of the about 2,000 originally made, fewer than 20 are known to still exist in collections. One, rated as fine and estimated at \$40,000 to \$60,000, sold for \$63,250 at the auction.

One of the four known surviving Walther Model MP 9 mm Parabellum pistols, or MP/PP — produced from 1929 through 1932 — in outstanding condition, estimated at \$30,000 to \$40,000, sold for \$86,250.

Other 20th-century German autoloaders saw



Rare handguns, above, posted the top prices for conventional firearms at the Dec. 4-6 auction. One of four known rare experimental Walther Model MP (MP/PP) semiautomatic pistols sold for \$86,250, and an elusive Model 1799 North & Cheney flintlock pistol sold for \$63,250.

strong competition. A professionally restored experimental .45-caliber pistol, serial No. 2, manufactured by Mauser as a prototype before World War I, sold within presale estimates at \$57,500. A cased, engraved Nazi presentation Walther Model PP pistol expected to bring \$25,000

to \$35,000 sold for \$46,000. A cased, gold-plated Nazi presentation Walther PPK, which had been expected to sell for \$20,000 to \$30,000, brought \$40,250.

Described as "magnificent" by the auctioneer and rated as excellent, a pair of cased, presentation-engraved Starr Model 1863 .44 percussion revolvers that might have belonged to Maj. Gen. Carl Schurz sold for more than its high estimate at \$46,000.

The top price for any shotgun at the three-day sale was \$40,250 for a breathtaking gold-inlaid, factory-engraved early 20th-century

Winchester Model 21 Grade 6 .410 side-by-side shotgun with a custom case.

Rounding out the top 10 prices realized was a rare yet dreadfully unphotogenic Pedersen device designed to convert the U.S. M1903 rifle from a .30-06 bolt-action into a .30-caliber semiautomatic. Complete with a seldom-seen 40-round magazine and metal scabbard, this historic 1918 forerunner of the assault rifle, estimated at \$12,000 to \$18,000, sold for \$37,375.

Another rare Walther pistol prototype, a one-of-a-



Other German gems at the auction included a prototype .45-caliber autoloader built by Mauser just before World War I, top left. It sold for \$57,500. Also featured was a gold-plated Nazi presentation Walther Model PPK pistol, at near left, that sold for \$40,250.



Estimated at \$75,000 to \$125,000 each, two rare Confederate A.B. Reading & Brother 6-pounder bronze cannons sold for \$166,750 and \$195,500, respectively, including the buyer's premium.

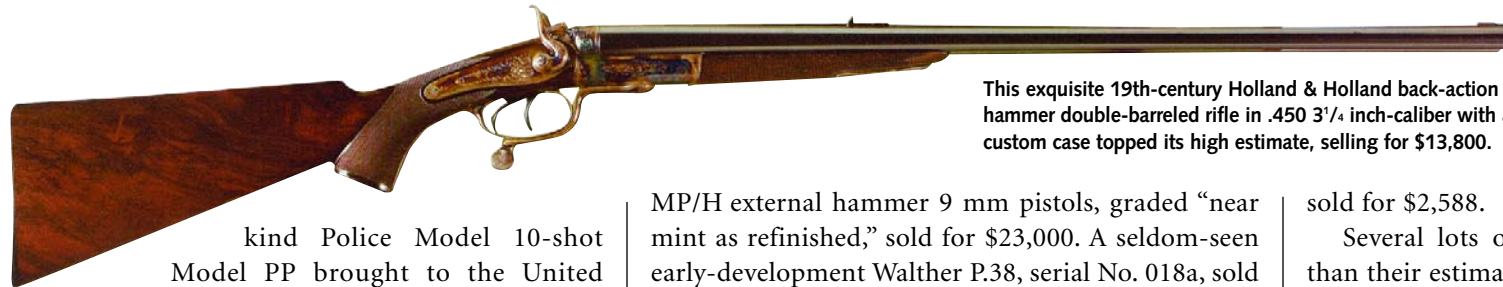
AUCTION ACTION



This gold-inlaid, custom-checked, factory-engraved Winchester Model 21 Grade 6 .410 double-barreled shotgun sold for \$40,250.



This Luftwaffe drilling survival firearm for German bomber crews in North Africa, which featured side-by-side shotgun barrels with a powerful single-shot rifle barrel, sold for \$25,875.



This exquisite 19th-century Holland & Holland back-action hammer double-barreled rifle in .450 3 1/4 inch-caliber with a custom case topped its high estimate, selling for \$13,800.

kind Police Model 10-shot Model PP brought to the United States after World War II, just surpassed its top estimate and sold for \$31,625.

Another superb Winchester shotgun at the sale was a cased, engraved, gold-inlaid Model 21 Grand American 12-gauge two-barrel set, rated as "excellent plus." Bidders agreed, pushing the final price to \$28,750.

Also featured was a rare J.P. Sauer Luftwaffe drilling, issued in 1941 in limited quantities as a survival firearm to German bomber crews in North Africa. The gun combined side-by-side 16-gauge bar-

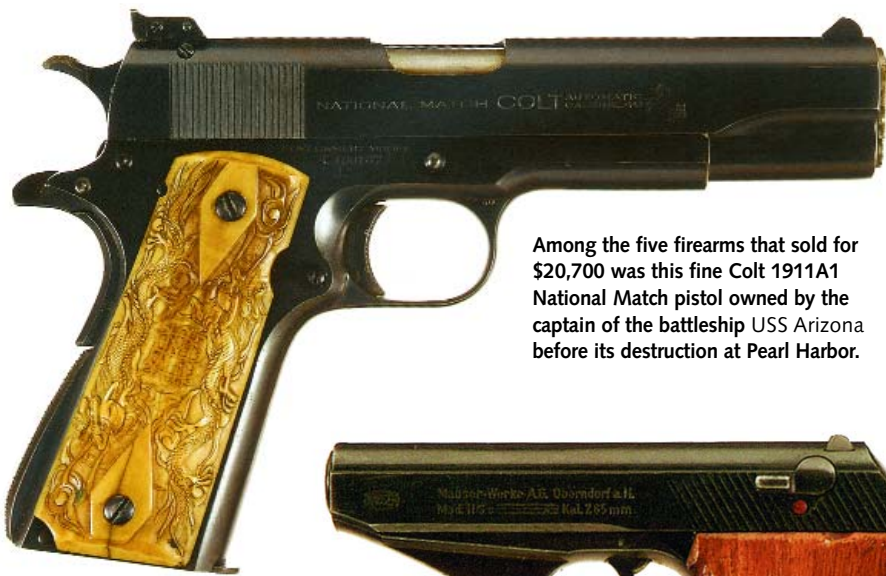
rel with a single-shot rifle in 9.3x74 mm. In near-mint condition — with accessories, an aluminum case and papers documenting its capture and importation — the gun sold for \$25,875.

MP/H external hammer 9 mm pistols, graded "near mint as refinished," sold for \$23,000. A seldom-seen early-development Walther P.38, serial No. 018a, sold for \$21,850.

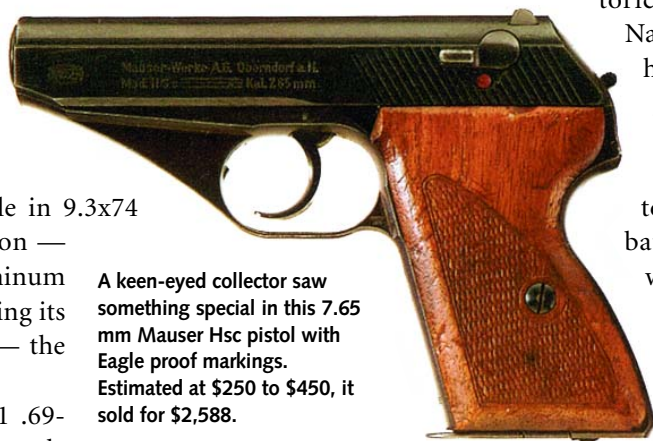
Shown below at right, a Confederate Navy LeMat percussion revolver owned by Lt. Simeon W. Cummings, an assistant engineer on the Confederate raider *CSS Alabama*, also sold for \$21,850, which was higher than its estimates.

An 1877 Baby LeMat revolver, winner of a National Rifle Association silver medal in 1991, was one of five choice firearms at the sale that went for \$20,700. Sharing that distinction were splendidly engraved Winchester Model 1866 and Model 1873 lever-action rifles; a rare 1807

Among the five firearms that sold for \$20,700 was this fine Colt 1911A1 National Match pistol owned by the captain of the battleship *USS Arizona* before its destruction at Pearl Harbor.



A keen-eyed collector saw something special in this 7.65 mm Mauser Hsc pistol with Eagle proof markings. Estimated at \$250 to \$450, it sold for \$2,588.



first-model Forsyth detonating-lock pistol, which was a historic forerunner of percussion-lock firearms; and a historic Colt Model 1911A1 National Match pistol with highly engraved ivory grips. The gun had been owned by Capt. George M. Baum, who from 1936 to 1938 commanded the battleship *USS Arizona*, which was destroyed Dec. 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor.

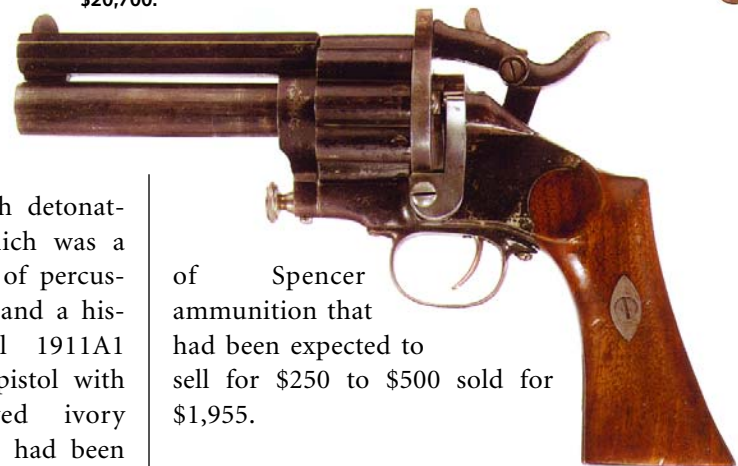
Many less expensive firearms also brought good prices at the sale. Those included a 7.65 mm Mauser Hsc semiautomatic pistol, serial No. 898XXX, with an extra magazine, well-worn grips, an "EAGLE/N" proof on the right side of the trigger-guard and "EAGLE/M/6" on the left side. Though estimated at \$250 to \$450, at least two bidders believed they had recognized a rarity, and the gun

sold for \$2,588.

Several lots of ammunition also sold for more than their estimates. A lot of old Luger ammunition, estimated at \$200 to \$350, sold for \$3,163, and a lot



A Confederate Navy LeMat percussion revolver, above, owned by an assistant engineer on the Civil War raider *CSS Alabama*, sold for \$21,850. An outstanding 1877 Baby LeMat, below, winner of an NRA silver medal in 1991, sold for \$20,700.



of Spencer ammunition that had been expected to sell for \$250 to \$500 sold for \$1,955.

Upcoming

The next major Rock Island Auction Co. sale is scheduled for April 30 to May 2. The three-day event will showcase the final portion of the collection of Winchester firearms, ephemera, advertising, related products and factory items formed by Peter and Patty Murray. Color catalogs for the three-day auction can be ordered online or by calling (800) 238-8022.

Other major 2005 sales will showcase U.S., European and Japanese military arms, a huge collection of Colt handguns from the percussion era to the 20th century, and a high-quality collection of more than 100 single-shot rifles and pistols.

For information regarding RIA auctions, call the aforementioned number, or visit www.rockislandauction.com ■