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Mr. Valentino

Senior Composition

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John Moses Browning

My research essay will be about a certain inventor's inventions. All my life I have been interested in learning how things work; from the vehicles we drive today to the computers and chips in them. However, I will focus on a man in history that few people know about that has made some of the greatest and longest-lasting inventions. His name should be known for the inventions he contributed to the world and America. His name is John Moses Browning.

John Moses Browning has made some of the most influential firearms and firsts in firearm history, and his work should be known. Some of his work is still in use today. John made his first firearm around the age of 10-13 and was able to kill a prairie bird with it. John's father said that he should have taken more time and been more careful with his design. What his father said to him stuck with him his entire life, making very carefully crafted designs for the rest of his life. **(Gale)**

One of the firsts that Mr. Browning has made today is the slide mechanism and short recoil on handguns. It is still used on modern handguns today. The M1911 technical Manual by Pentagon Publishing explains this: "As the expanding combustion gases force the bullet down the barrel, they give reverse momentum to the slide and barrel which are locked together during this portion of the firing cycle. After the bullet has left the barrel, the slide and barrel continue rearward a short distance. At this point, a link pivots the rear of the barrel down, out of locking

recesses in the slide, and the barrel is stopped by contacting the lower barrel lugs against the frame. As the slide continues rearward, a claw extractor pulls the spent casing from the firing chamber and an ejector strikes the rear of the case, pivoting it out and away from the pistol through the ejection port. The slide stops its rearward motion and is propelled forward again by a recoil spring to strip a fresh cartridge from the magazine and feed it into the firing chamber. At the forward end of its journey, the slide locks into the barrel and is ready to fire again.”

(Pentagon) This quote explains how the “automatic” (what they called auto-loading firearms back then) feature works. This means the shooter must only press the trigger, let go, then press the trigger again to fire the entire magazine. Today, this is called semi-automatic. The M1911 was so simple and effective with fifty-two parts that the weapon was able to fire six thousand rounds in 2 days with no malfunctions, while the opposition’s submission had thirty-seven when submitted as a new handgun for the US Military. **(Poyer)** The US military adopted it in 1911, giving it its name, M1911. They used it in many wars, for example WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War, and the Korean War. The M1911 is so influential that it is one of the most copied firearms in the world. **(Joseph)** It is still even used today, in civilian and some military use 112 years after its creation.

Another one of Browning’s firsts was the first semi-automatic auto-loading shotgun, named the Browning Auto-5. John M. Browning called his Auto-5 his best achievement.

(Wallack) It was based on the long recoil operation, long recoil used two springs to resist the barrel and bolt moving rearward. The spring for the barrel is stiffer than the one for the bolt so there is a window of time to allow the spent shell to be ejected and a fresh one inserted into the chamber. How long recoil worked was when the shell was fired, it pushed the barrel backward due to Newton's 3rd law of motion. This, in turn, moved the bolt back as well. It then travels to

the rear of the gun, and since the recoil spring on the barrel is stiffer than the one for the bolt, the barrel returns to its firing position first. This allows the shell to be caught by the extractor and extracted from the chamber. Then, the bolt moves back to the barrel, where a special mechanism inside the gun moves the shell into the bolt's path via the loading ramp, chambering the round and making the shotgun ready to fire again. The shotgun was so good that as of 1983 (85 years after its creation) it was the second best-selling auto-loading shotgun in American history.

(Wallack)

These two weapons, the M1911 and Browning Auto-5, helped win both World Wars for the American and allied troops, as well as change the outcome of the Vietnam war. The designs were simple and effective and revolutionized the firearms of the era. Browning considered his Browning Auto-5 design to be one of his best achievements.

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