

Deadlands Armory



FIREARM RULES

Introduction

If there's one thing the Wild West has plenty of, it's guns. Rifles, cavalry carbines, shotguns, revolvers, derringers, Gatling guns—there are hundreds of different makes and models of firearms in 1876, from one-of-a-kind Kentucky rifles to derelict smoothbore muskets left over from the Mexican War. The Deadlands Armory profiles the more common firearms of the period, particularly those employed during the Civil War or used to “tame” the Wild West. It also features a few historical oddities and “non-historical” firearms, whether shouldered by the Nauvoo Legion or rolling from Confederate armories. In no way is this list meant to be exhaustive, and the player is free to coordinate with the Marshal to adapt historical firearms, or even invent new ones if desired. The *Savage World* core rules may be used for the majority of nineteenth-century firearms, most of which are variations of standard models or use similar caliber rounds.

Notes on Profile Statistics

Date Range

The first date in a firearm's date range represents when the firearm went into production, as opposed to patent dates or prototypes. Because nineteenth-century recordkeeping was not exactly flawless, some dates have a question mark, which represents a “best guess.”

Caliber & Damage

In *Deadlands 1876*, the damage caused by a bullet is directly related to its caliber. (Although larger powder charges may add a bit more heft, usually in the form of a “+2” bonus.) The following table offers generalized DAM statistics, which vary slightly from the *Savage World* core rules. Calibers falling between two values may be rounded to the closest range. European metric units should simply be converted to inches; with 9mm corresponding to .354, etc.

Caliber	DAM
.22-.29	2d4
.30-.34	1d4+1d6
.35-.36	2d6
.37-.436	1d6+1d8
.44-.451	2d8
.455-.49	1d8+1d10
.50-.55	2d10
.56-.59	1d10+1d12
.60+	2d12

Range

Many factors affect the range of a firearm, including the length of the barrel, whether that barrel is rifled or smoothbore, the shape and caliber of the bullet, the amount of gunpowder in the charge, the accuracy of the gun's sights, and the integrity of the breech seal. The Armory attempts to be as accurate as possible, using all available data to establish range statistics, from vintage sales brochures to the eyewitness accounts of Civil War reenactors using replica weapons. When such data is not available, listed ranges represent estimates based on similar firearms.

S/E/L Range Values

The range of a firearm is given in yards, and should be considered "Short/Effective/Long." The listed numbers represent the extremes of each range; for instance, a shooter using a rifle with a range of 40/400/800 should consider anything falling between 41 and 400 yards as Effective Range and anything between 401 and 800 as Long Range. (Players wishing to convert yards to the standard *Savage World* "tabletop inches" may simply divide by 2.) To a character with the Shooting skill, these S/E/L ranges provide the standard Shooting roll modifiers of 0/-2/-4. To players with no Shooting skill, the modifiers may be considered -2/-4/-8.

Crack Shots

Some rifles and carbines feature special long-range sights, such as ladder sights or volley sights. These represent extreme ranges, and are often graduated quite optimistically. The shooter must have perfect visibility and zero wind conditions, and must angle his rifle upwards to account for the bullet's trajectory. The Long Ranges listed in the Armory do not take these "Hail Mary" shots into account. Indeed, it's extremely challenging for someone without training to hit anything past Short Range! Any player wishing to shoot beyond a firearm's listed Long Range must make a heroic "crack shot." This is entirely at the Marshal's discretion, and should involve a certain number of raises on the player's Shooting roll. A crack shot requires a full action round to set up, but does not receive the usual +2 Aiming bonus. Most rifles and carbines may attempt a crack shot at twice the listed Long Range; while certain firearms such as Sharps rifles may offer crack shots up to *three times* the standard Long Range!

Point Blank

Sometimes a target is simply "too close to miss." The Marshal may provisionally offer a +2 Shooting roll modifier for "point blank" range, which is considered anything within the range of close-quarters combat. Because rifles are too unwieldy for effective close-quarters combat, this point blank bonus applies only to handguns, carbines, and sawed-off shotguns.

Rate of Fire

For single-shot firearms, the Rate of Fire is presented as a ratio that incorporates loading time. Muzzle-loaded rifles have a Rate of Fire 1/5, taking four action rounds to load and one to fire. Requiring one less round to reload, smoothbore muskets have a Rate of Fire 1/4. Muzzle-loaded pistols have a Rate of Fire 1/3. A breech-loaded firearm with a Rate of Fire 1/2 takes one action round to aim and shoot, and another round to extract the spent casing and load a fresh cartridge.

Repeaters & Revolvers

Lever-action repeaters, pump-action shotguns, and single-action revolvers have a Rate of Fire 1. This represents the time it takes to chamber a new round, whether pulling the lever, pumping the slide, or cocking the hammer. A double-action revolver may be fired with a single long trigger pull, achieving a Rate of Fire 2. Double-barreled longarms may also achieve a Rate of Fire 2. However, firing two shots in a single action round always results in a sacrifice of accuracy, incurring a -2 penalty to both Shooting rolls.

Reloading Revolvers

Properly reloading a black-powder revolver takes two action rounds per chamber; however, if the shooter wishes to trade safety for speed, one action round per chamber may be obtained by forgoing greased chambers and risking imprecise charges. Reloading a paper cartridge revolver takes one action round per two chambers, and reloading a metal cartridge revolver takes one action round per three chambers. As a variant on the *Deadlands* rules, reloading a metal cartridge revolver may be done on the same action round as shooting it, incurring a –1 Shooting penalty per chamber reloaded. Also, moon clips, speed loaders, and spare cylinders may increase the rate to one action round per cylinder.

Reloading Magazines

Tubular magazines may be reloaded at the rate of three cartridges per action round, unless the design of the magazine adds further complications. Detachable magazines may be reloaded at the same rate, but a fully-loaded magazine only requires one action round to insert.

Rapid Reloading

The Rapid Reloading Edge reduces many of these reloading times; see “Deadlands Rules—New Skills” for details.

Minimum Strength

Made entirely from iron, wood, and brass, nineteenth-century rifles can be surprisingly heavy to modern shooters accustomed to alloys, plastics, and ceramics. Some rifles have a “Minimum Strength” rating, such as “STR d6.” This represents the minimum STR a shooter must possess to use the rifle without penalty. Weak characters using these rifles detract –1 on their Shooting roll per STR die below the required number. In other words, if a character with STR d4 is using a rifle with a STR d8 rating, he suffers a –2 on his Shooting roll. His slightly stronger STR d6 partner only suffers a –1 penalty. The Marshal may reduce or eliminate this penalty if the shooter is supporting the rifle on a wall, a Y-shaped stick, a dead comrade’s body, etc.

Availability

This statistic represents the general availability of the firearm in the campaign world of *Deadlands 1876*. A firearm listed as “Unique” is one-of-a-kind, and may only be found within a specific campaign scenario designed by the Marshal. An “Exceptionally rare” firearm has been produced in numbers under twenty, and is nearly impossible to find outside of a specific campaign scenario. “Very rare” guns have usually been produced in numbers under one thousand, and may be obtained only at the Marshal’s discretion. “Rare” guns are difficult to locate, but not impossible, and may be obtained with some degree of effort. An “Uncommon” firearm is usually available only regionally, or from specialized dealers in large cities. “Common” guns are widely available in most gun shops, while “Very common” firearms have often been adopted by large armies, and may be found wherever firearms are sold, or simply picked up on the battlefield!

Special Rules

Carbines

Many rifles have a shorter “carbine” variant, generally carried by cavalry troopers or mounted artillery soldiers. Frequently lacking a bayonet attachment, carbines have reduced ranges, but decrease the standard –2 penalty for shooting from horseback to –1. They may also be granted a point blank bonus. Most carbines have saddle ring attachments.

Telescopic Sights

Telescopic sights are uncommon in the nineteenth century, and are rarely more powerful than 4x magnification. They are usually fixed to the left side of the rifle, and require constant adjustment and calibration. A shooter using a scope must spend an action round to “aim” as per the standard *Deadlands* rule. To this usual +2 Aiming bonus is added a +1 Scope bonus, for a total of +3 on the next Shooting roll. A failed Shooting roll requires the scope to be adjusted to be of further use, which takes an additional action round. At the Marshal’s discretion, a scope may increase the rifle’s S/E/L ranges by 5% for each Power of Magnification. For instance, a 100/1000/2000 rifle using a 4x scope (+20%) may be treated as 120/1200/2400. Crack shots do not receive a Scope bonus, as the rifle must be elevated beyond the scope’s line of sight.

Bayonets

Unless listed otherwise, assume a rifle may be fixed with a bayonet, a maneuver that requires one full action round. Such weapons are treated like spears in terms of close-quarters combat. Note that a bayonet may also be wielded by hand, in which case it is treated like a knife or short sword.

Maynard Priming Tape

Some caplock firearms from the mid-nineteenth century are equipped with a Maynard “priming tape” system. Developed by New York dentist Edward Maynard, this system uses a roll of paper tape fixed with explosive pellets of mercury fulminate. This coil is placed into a small casing near the hammer. When the hammer is cocked, the tape automatically advances the next priming pellet over the nipple or other such touchhole. By eliminating the need for the shooter to manually place a percussion cap, the gun may be fired more quickly, especially from horseback. Sharps carbines, for instance, make extensive use of this system. Firearms equipped with Maynard tape—or any other automatic priming system—have this advantage already built into their Rate of Fire statistics.

A Note on Naming Conventions

Modern historians and collectors sometimes use names and designations not found in contemporary sources. The firearms profiled in the *Deadlands* Armory are described as authentically as possible; but sometimes modern terms are used for the sake of clarity, especially when differentiating between variations of a particular pattern or referring to a broad range of similar models. For instance, the endless number of “Springfield Rifles” were historically designated by their date and type, such as the “U.S. Model 1855 Rifled Musket.” The Armory uses whatever nomenclature is most appropriate; so in one situation the rifle may be described by its historical name, in another context it may be referred to as the “Springfield Model 1855.” Capitalization is only used when necessary, usually when the word is part of the official designation; so it’s “U.S. Model 1855 Rifled Musket” but “Sharps carbine.” For foreign weapons, the native language is preserved when it adds flavor without sacrificing intelligibility. For instance, “fusil modèle 1777” seems just as clear as “Model 1777 Musket,” but evokes the sunlight glinting from golden eagles as Napoleon’s legions are drummed across the lowlands of Europe. And don’t get me started on the poetry of *Der Zündnadelgewehr!* “Needle rifle,” *really?*

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