



# The SAFN-49 Battle Rifle (A Shooter's and Collector's Guide)

*Joe Poyer*

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Three semiautomatic battle rifles had been designed by the mid-1930s, but only two reached the production stage. This is the story of the third, the SAFN-49 which did see production and service until the Nazis were forced out of Belgium and defeated.

Designed in the mid-1930s by Dieudonn, J. Saive, a former assistant to the great firearms designer, John M. Browning, the SAFN-49 was kept out of production by the Nazi invasion of the Low Countries in May 1940. Saive and certain of his colleagues fled to England with the engineering drawings and were immediately put to work by the British on variety of armament development projects. Work on the new semiautomatic battle rifle resumed late in the war and by mid-1945, prototypes in .30-06 caliber ready for testing. Ammunition problems delayed the project and by the time the solution was found, the British had moved on to other designs. But the Fabrique Nationale factory persevered and ultimately, the SAFN-49 was built in four different calibers and adopted by a number of countries.

Today, the SAFN-49 is sought after by collectors of military battle rifles is also little known. The FN factory has rarely released information about any of its projects. But the author, a collector of SAFN-49s for years, by gathering information from secondary sources and examining well over 70 SAFN-49 rifles in detail has produced a comprehensive guide for both collectors and shooters.

The author begins with a complete history of the rifle's development and use, followed by an extensive analysis using the part-by-part system for which North Cape Publications has become well known, of every part in each rifle by each of the four calibers. A chapter is devoted to the first analysis ever of the sniper version of the rifle, including the scopes and mount which have never been completely described in an English-language publication before.

For shooters, the author tells how to improve the rifle's already fine accuracy to that approaching a fine target rifle, with simple fixes. Shooting positions and the use of a good shooting sling something not taught in most European armies are included. Complete assembly/disassembly instructions are included as are maintenance instructions for conditions ranging from the target range to the battlefield.

The SAFN-49 Battle Rifle is in large format (8 x10.5 inches) and is illustrated with over 100 photographs and line drawings.

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