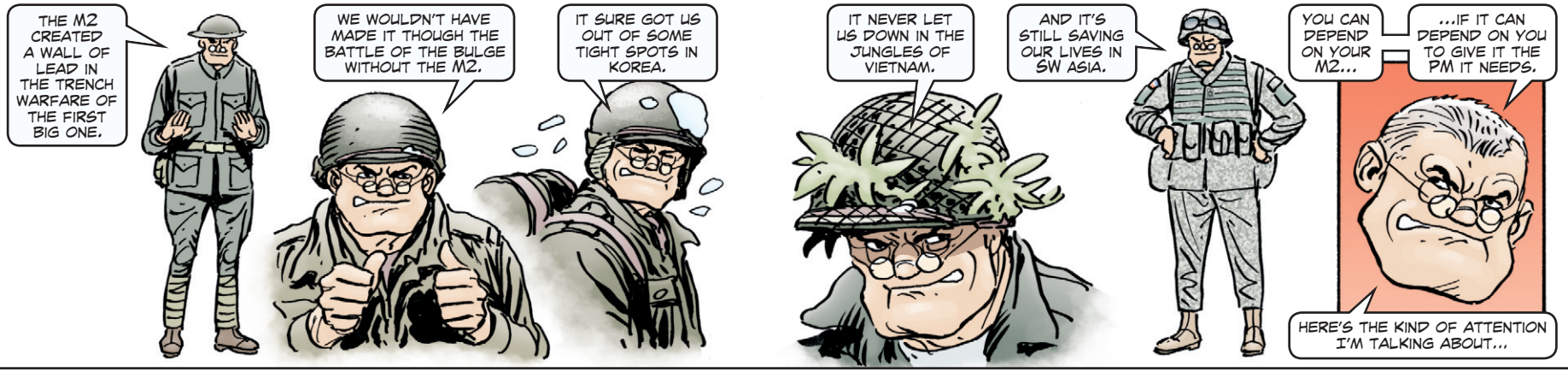
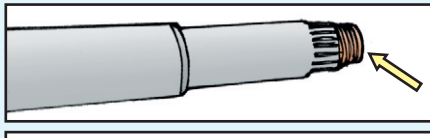
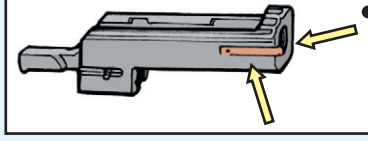
M2 Machine Gun:
It Won't Quit on You...
If You Don't Quit on It



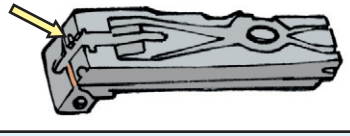
Look for Problems



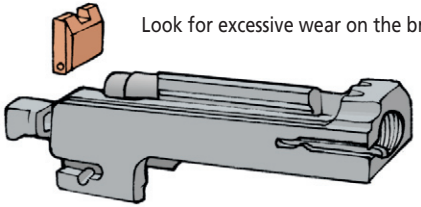
- barrel liner and threads (don't forget the spare barrel)



- barrel extension's threads, locking spring, both sides of the extension side plate, rear shank slot and breech lock slot

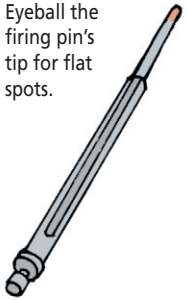


- bolt's firing pin slot, T-slot and breech lock slot



Look for excessive wear on the breech lock.

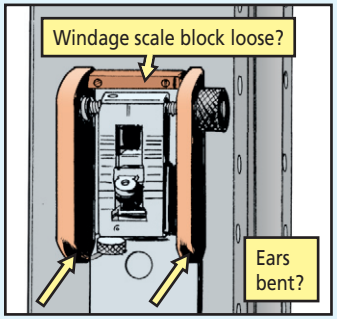
Eyeball the firing pin's tip for flat spots.

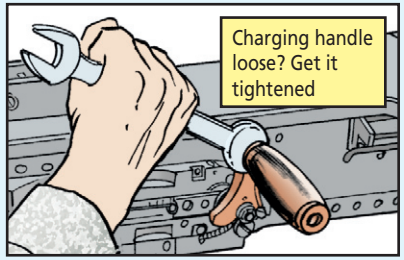


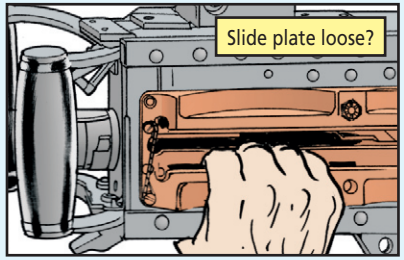
Check the driving rod spring for flat spots and make sure the driving rod and its locking pin are not bent.

Make sure the rear sight's ears aren't so bent that the sight can't be raised. Check that the block for the rear sight's windage scale isn't loose. If it is, the scale won't stay in position.

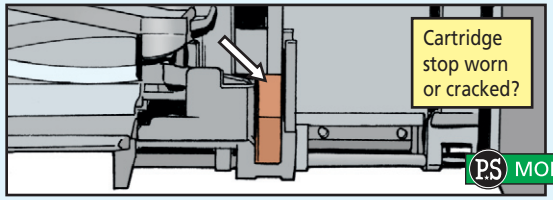
Feel the charging handle for looseness. If it gets too loose, it can come off completely during firing. Your repairman can quickly tighten the handle with a $^{3}/_{4}$-in wrench. Also feel the charging handle's slide plate for looseness. If it has any play, it could cause charging problems.







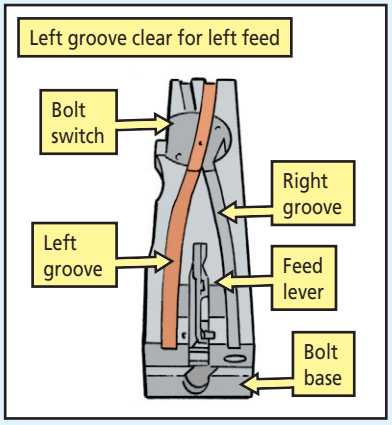
Eyeball the cartridge stop for wear and cracks. A worn stop is often a sign that a feed pawl is out of adjustment. That could cause the M2 to lock up.



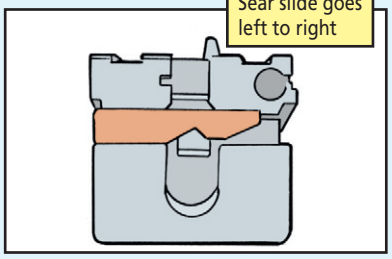
PS MORE

Put It Together Right

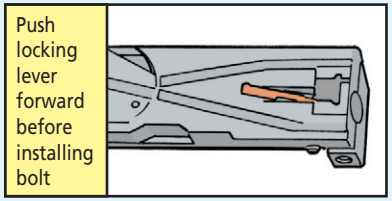
Feed assembly–If the feed assembly is put together wrong, the feed lever lug and bolt switch bang against each other during firing and are damaged. Most gunners feed from the left, so the left groove should be unblocked. If you do feed from the right, turn the bolt switch so the right groove is unblocked.



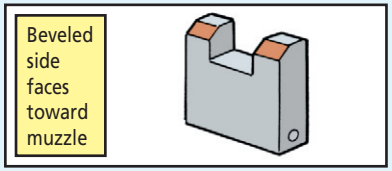
Sear slide–The sear slide **always** goes in from the **left**. If you install it from the right, your M2 won't fire from the M63 mount.



Cocking lever–Make sure to push the cocking lever forward before pushing the bolt in the receiver. If you push the bolt in with the lever back, the bolt jams and your repairman has to unjam it.



Breech lock–It's easy to put it in backwards. The beveled side should face forward toward the muzzle. Once installed, the lock should easily move up and down in the guideways of the barrel extension.

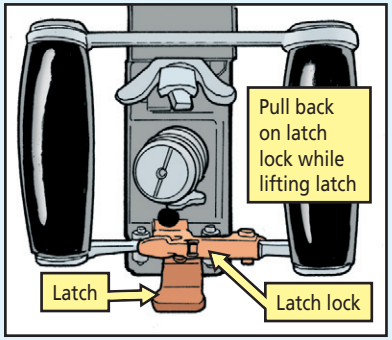


Bolt, buffer and barrel extension– Put them together as one piece before putting them in the receiver. That's much easier than putting them together in the receiver.

Backplate–If you need to take off the backplate, first ease the bolt forward. That takes pressure off the spring and prevents the drive rod from springing out of the receiver and spearing you.

When you put the backplate back on, don't jam it on. That wears out the locking latch. Then the backplate could come off when you lift up on the backplate handles. If the M2's cocked, the drive rod shoots out and into you.

The right way to put on the backplate is to fit it in the receiver grooves and then pull back the latch lock while lifting up on the latch. Slide the backplate down until it locks in the receiver.



How to Carry

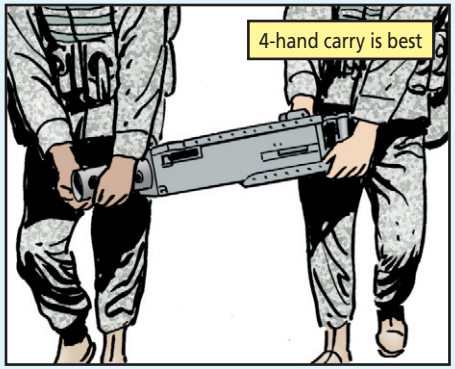
Many M2s have to go for repairs each year because Soldiers don't carry them correctly and end up dropping them. The M2 weighs more than 80 pounds, so the best way to carry it is with four hands.

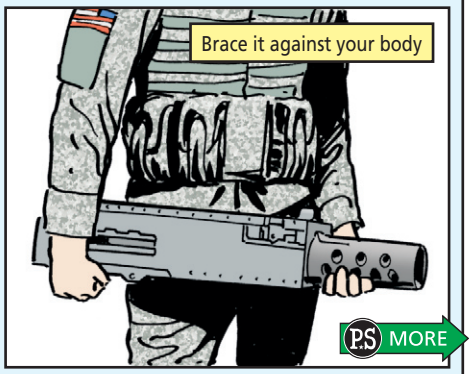
After the barrel is removed, have a buddy lock his hands under the barrel support while you lock your hands under the receiver five inches from its end.

If you're alone, hold the barrel support with your left palm out and the receiver with your right palm in. Brace the receiver against your legs for more support.

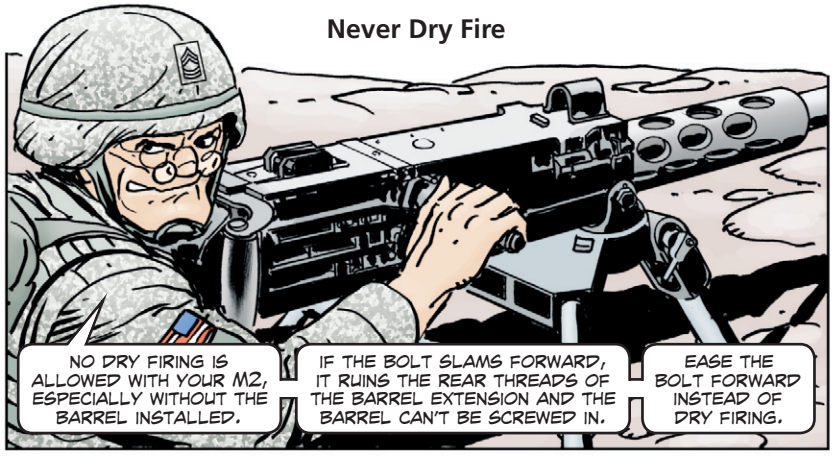
Never use the backplate handles for a carrying handle. The backplate can slip out and the receiver takes a tumble in the vicinity of your toes.

If you don't have a rack, the M2 should be stored flat so it can't fall. But don't put M2s on top of each other. That will break things like sights.





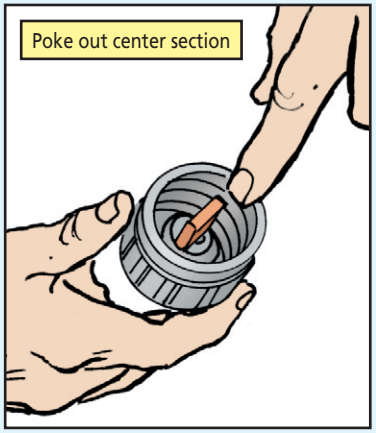
Never Dry Fire

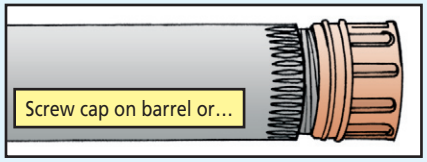


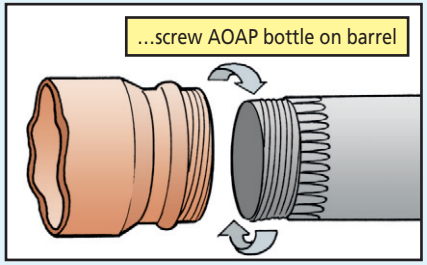
Protect the Barrel

One of the most vulnerable parts of the M2 is the barrel, particularly its threads. If the barrel is tossed around or left to roll around in the back of a truck, its threads are damaged and you can't screw in the barrel. Never leave a barrel standing on end where it can take a fall. During travel, tie down a barrel or block it in place. Don't store heavy items on the barrel.

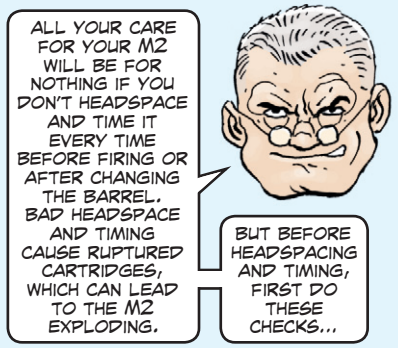
Some units give the barrel threads extra protection by screwing on an old canteen cap or AOAP bottle. For the canteen cap, push out the cap's center section and then screw it on the barrel. For the AOAP bottle, cut the bottle in half—an inch below the threads—and then screw it on. Keep the cap or bottle on the barrel as much as possible.



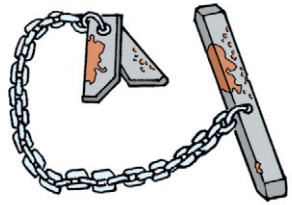




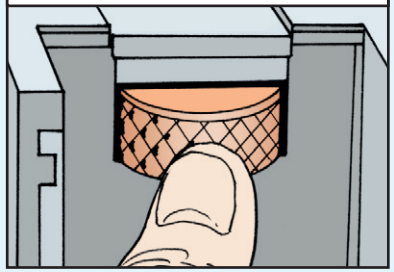
Timing and Headspacing



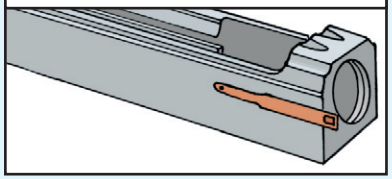
Gages–If the headspace and timing gages are bent, rusted or pitted, you can't accurately gage. Get new gages with NSN 5250-00-535-1217. Also check that the gages have been calibrated in the last year.



Timing nut–If the timing nut can be moved with one finger or it doesn't click as you move it, its spring is weak and it won't hold timing. Tell your repairman.

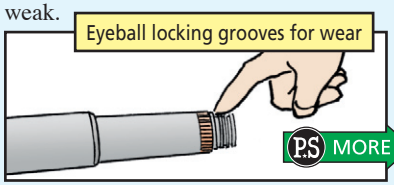


Barrel locking spring–If the spring can't hold the barrel in place, the barrel can turn during firing and headspace is lost. So test the spring by getting the correct headspace and then trying to unscrew the barrel. If the barrel turns, the spring is weak or loose.



Barrel and barrel extension threads—If the threads are chipped or burred, it will be difficult to screw in the barrel. What's worse, you may think you've screwed in the barrel, but you haven't–that means bad headspace. Your repairman can usually stone chips and burrs smooth.

Also check the barrel locking grooves for wear. If they're too worn, the barrel will work loose. If you have doubts about the grooves, try to turn the barrel with the bolt in the forward position. If the barrel turns at all, either the grooves are too worn or the locking spring is weak.



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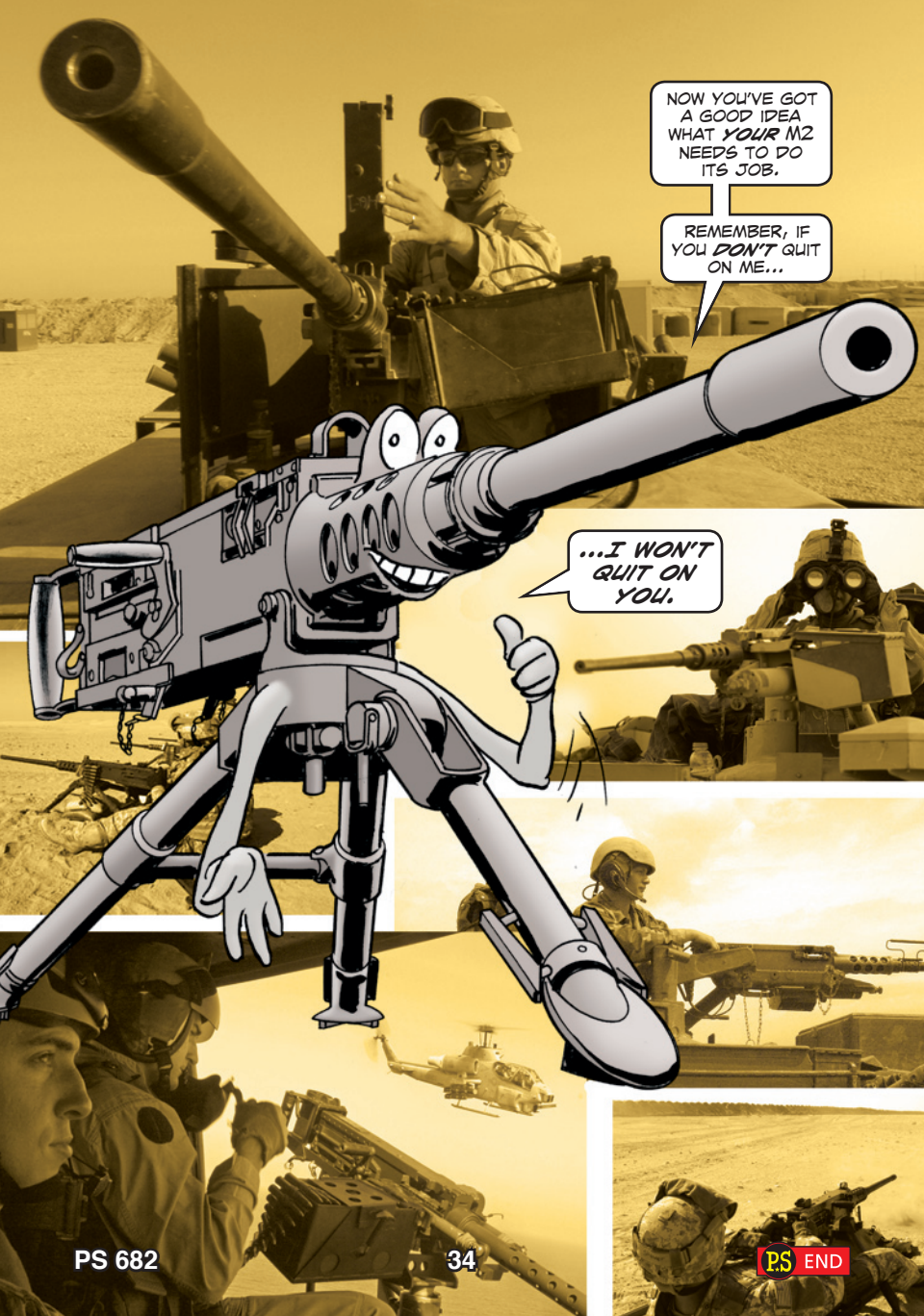
NOW YOU'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA WHAT *YOUR* M2 NEEDS TO DO ITS JOB.
REMEMBER, IF YOU *DON'T* QUIT ON ME...
...I WON'T QUIT ON YOU.
P.S END