



ARMORERS CATERING TO HOLLYWOOD

Westerns spawned a host of improbable arms, including the incredible "Mare's Leg," the favored lever-action sidearm of bounty hunter Josh Randall, portrayed by Steve McQueen in the 1958-1961 television series "Wanted Dead or Alive." Based on a cut-down Winchester Model 1892 carbine, his hybrid gun had a shortened barrel and buttstock, as well as an enlarged lever for faster cocking. The unusual firearm was intended to blend the best attributes of a handgun and a rifle.

Carried in a special waist holster, the ultra-short rifle was hook-suspended from its sling swivel and could be quickly brought into action from a hip firing position. Adding dramatic emphasis in the grainy black-and-white film of the day, the cartridges carried in the holster's belt were usually .45-70 rounds, though the lever-action rifle that formed the basis of the Mare's Leg could not have utilized this size of cartridge. A total of 17 Mare's Leg guns were built for the three-season series, including this solid-barreled example used for non-shooting riding scenes.

Steve McQueen's Mare's Leg and dozens of other Hollywood arms are part of the National Firearms Museum exhibition "Real Guns of Reel Heroes," on display through the end of the year. ☺

For National Firearms Museum information and hours, call (703) 267-1600. Admission is free (donations are encouraged) and children are welcome.

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presents

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE