



Illustration courtesy of Library of Congress



Predator Model 58 Little Eagle

Review by Eric Garland

Since I began metal detecting about 25 years ago, I have been a dedicated user of the military E-Tool for all my digging needs. Through the years, I have also seen fads come and go amongst the digging community touting claims of being the greatest shovels on the market guaranteed to cut through the toughest ground like a hot knife through butter. Therefore, I was skeptical after one of our staff meetings, when Butch handed me a box and asked if I would be interested in field-testing one of the latest products from Predator Tools, the Model 58 “Little Eagle.”

As Butch and I met up to hunt bottles at an old dumpsite the next day, I made sure to carry this little tool along to see if it could perform to my high standards. Immediately, I was impressed with its lightweight and the agility it afforded me to carefully excavate the fragile bottles. However, the real test to see how this small shovel would hold up would not come until the following weekend when Butch, Anita, and I were off to a dig in Virginia for a marathon metal detecting extravaganza.

Fortunately, early on day one we located a trash

pit that had been used by the Union Army. After a few test holes, we realized that this was a fairly large pit so we prepared to settle in for an extended dig. Amongst the many hand tools we brought to the site was the Model 58 “Little Eagle”.

Initially I resorted to using my trusty E-Tool, but remembered that I needed to give the “new kid on the block” a test run. I was sure that I would be back to using my old shovel in a matter of minutes. After several hours of hard digging with the “Little Eagle,” I was surprised how well it performed and that due to its light weight, I was not nearly as fatigued as I normally would have been.

This pit was full of oyster shells and beef bones, with a few bottles, inkwells and other relics scattered throughout. What impressed me about this tool was that it allowed me to get a “feel” for the type of material that I was coming in contact with, as the different sensations were transmitted through the shovel handle. This sensory awareness made the recovery of several very delicate relics possible.

Day two found my E-Tool patiently waiting to be used, but the “Little Eagle” was fast proving to be all that I needed. The 27 ½-inch overall length provided sufficient leverage, with the 7 7/8-inch blade cutting through tree roots easily. Plus, the step on the upper shovel blade had ample width to not mar the bottom of your boots, while applying the pressure needed to dig a hole, the way some smaller shovels do. Even though it weighs in at just over 2 pounds, it is solidly built.

By day three, my E-Tool remained in the car, while the Model 58 enjoyed a trek to the hunt site. As we had finished with the pit and filled it back, we opted for some good old fashion surface hunting. The T-handle grip allowed me to easily and comfortably carry the item the entire day. The sharpened edges of the shovel also made for a handy brush whacker when necessary.

Therefore, because of its durability, lightweight, and ease of use, I will be carrying the “Little Eagle” to the woods with me from here on out. One thing I did fail to mention is that it can also be a great addition to the tools you use in your yard, as you easily dig holes to plant bulbs or shrubs. However, I hope my wife does not read this last line.

***For information on ordering, visit
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