

Field Stripping the M4 Rifle



given an m4-series rifle, place the weapon on a clean flat work surface. ensure the weapon is on safe, remove any magazine,

pull back the charging handle and observe there is no round in the breach, return the bolt to the front. remove the sling and the rifle's hand guards, note the few grains of Hajj sand that fall out, left over from that almost good enough weapons cleaning right before flying home

remove the lower receiver from the upper, take out the bolt carrier, checking the face of the piece for carbon residue

bolt and the rifle's bolt carrier, checking the face of the piece for carbon residue...

...must have popped off a few good ones to have this much...put the bolt assembly in the locked position and remove the firing pin retaining block

let the components drop—drop—just where they are, like that patrol when we smoked that hajj—let them drop, onto the working surface, watching him fall down

set the components aside and remove the spring from the butt stock assembly by recalling how young he was and how scared his [-----] brown eyes seemed lay the components

out and ensure none
have rolled off of your
working surface ‘cause
losing one of them
won’t [-----] fly, not
here, not in combat

not when its your job
to bring young dicks like
jefferson home when
he flakes on patrol.
when your heart stops and
you don’t know where the
kid has got off to.

to reassemble,
put the spring back in
the butt stock, making
sure the hammer is
cocked; put together
the bolt and its carrier
in reverse order

sliding the face of
the bolt forward,
sliding—the face of
that man dress ‘raqi
kid with the AK;
sliding it; pointing
it at jefferson,

put it into the
groove within the top
receiver, back
into the—I said
back. i said get back,
son of a bitch, the
[----] you think you’re
doin’?
jefferson, move this
way, i’ve got a bead

on him; [---]damnit,
soldier, stop shaking
and get over here.
jefferson! jeff, hey,
just look at that kid,

he’s more nervous than
you, [----- -----],
and probably younger;
see, he’s...holy [----].
put it down. put it
down now! drop it! drop
it now or i’ll...click
put the receivers
together. charge the
weapon, set it to
“safe.” attempt to fire.
it won’t. switch to “fire,”
pull the trigger, and
the hajj boy is dead

—Maj. L. Burton Brender, U.S. Army

