

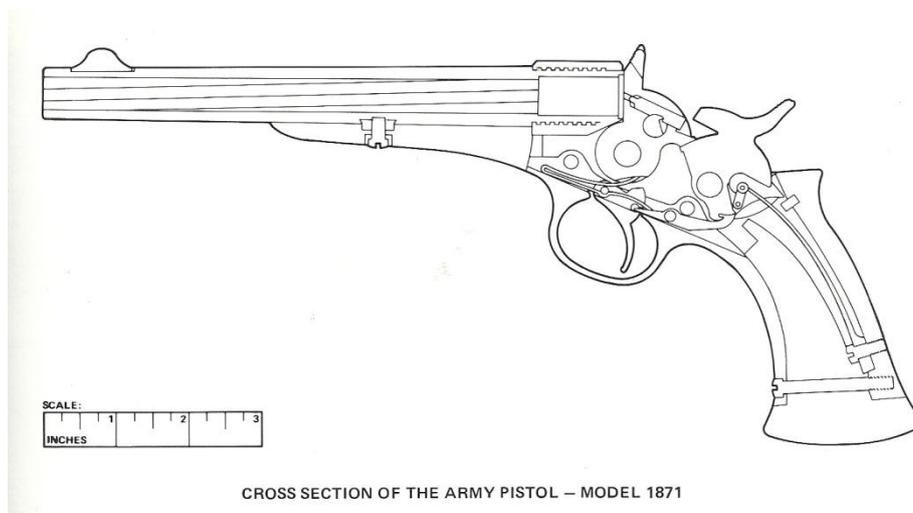
## FROM MY COLLECTION - THE REMINGTON ROLLING BLOCK PISTOL

One of my favourites is the Army Model 1871 Remington “rolling block” single shot pistol in .50” calibre.

I first saw one in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich in England many years ago but it was several decades before I was able to acquire one.



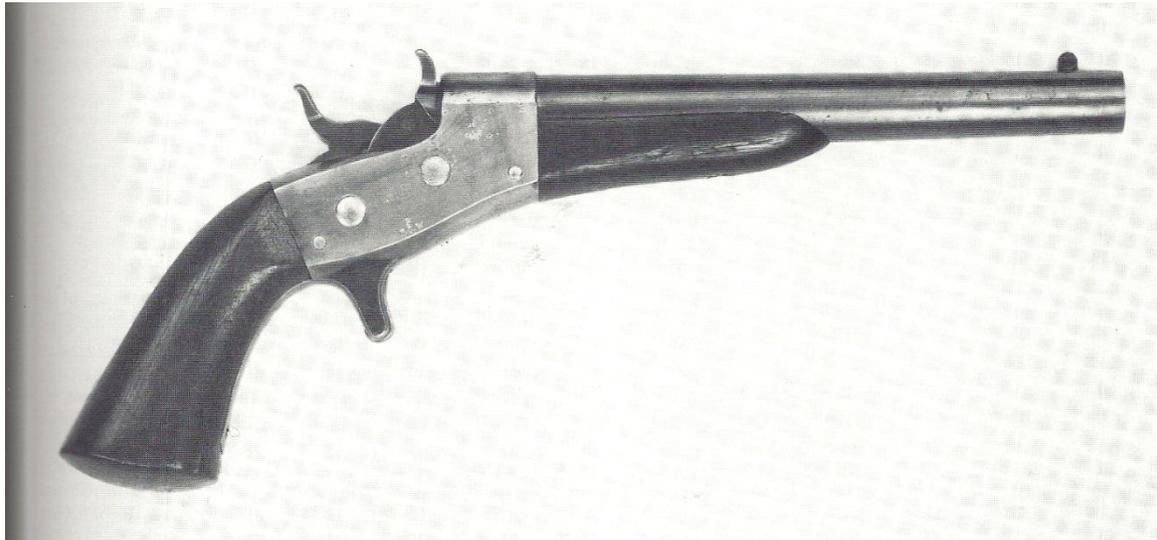
The rolling block mechanism was the inspiration of Joseph Rider who, in May 1864, obtained a patent for a breach loading cartridge gun incorporating an arrangement of the hammer and breach block where the hammer is located behind the breach block and both pivot on independent axis pins. Further refinements were patented over subsequent years.



To commercialise on his invention, Rider joined forces with Eliphalet Remington of the Remington Arms Company, founded in 1816 at Ilion, New York, along the banks of the Erie Canal. The company had prospered throughout the years of the war between the American states from 1861 to 1865 but, at war's end, the demand for guns collapsed. Remington's one valuable asset was the new technology for a low cost modern centre fire military cartridge weapon. On the brink of financial

ruin, the company embarked on a bold sales drive that saw the Rider rolling block system adopted by the military in many countries in South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Commercial sales in America were solid due to the cost advantage over the rival Winchester lever action repeaters.

Remington rolling block pistols and carbines saw service in the latter part of the American Civil War, in a rim-fire configuration, with the Union navy. A centre-fire version was introduced post-war and an Army model in 1871, with a larger frame to accommodate a more powerful round. To avoid the Army cartridge being fired in the Navy pistol, it had a slightly larger rim. However, the Navy cartridge will chamber in the Army pistol.



Remington Rolling Block Navy model of 1866

The American sloop-of-war USS Brooklyn carried 119 Remington Rolling Block carbines and 104 pistols whilst stationed in the Mediterranean Sea in 1871.

Rolling Block pistols were used by the US Cavalry in the transitional phase between the Colt 1860 Army percussion revolver and the 1871 Single Action Army cartridge revolver.

Remington Rolling Block target pistols ranging from .22 up to .50 calibre were popular into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Navy Arms brought out rolling block target pistols in .22 and .357 calibre in the 1980's.

Apart from its historical interest, the Rider patent rolling block system is a supremely simple and elegant engineering solution to the need for a fast firing weapon that can be produced at no great cost, and effectively used with little training.