

Smith & Wesson Military & Police Revolver

By James M. Triggs

DURING the Spanish-American War, Smith & Wesson, Springfield, Mass., was tendered a government contract for 3000 cal. .38 double-action revolvers, of which 2000 were for the Navy and 1000 for the Army. The war ended before delivery of a single gun had been made, but the contract was

not canceled, and first deliveries were eventually made early in 1899. Designated the .38 Hand Ejector, Military & Police Model, this revolver was the first cal. .38 side-swing model to be made by Smith & Wesson. It was chambered for the .38 Colt long cartridge. The military version was made with

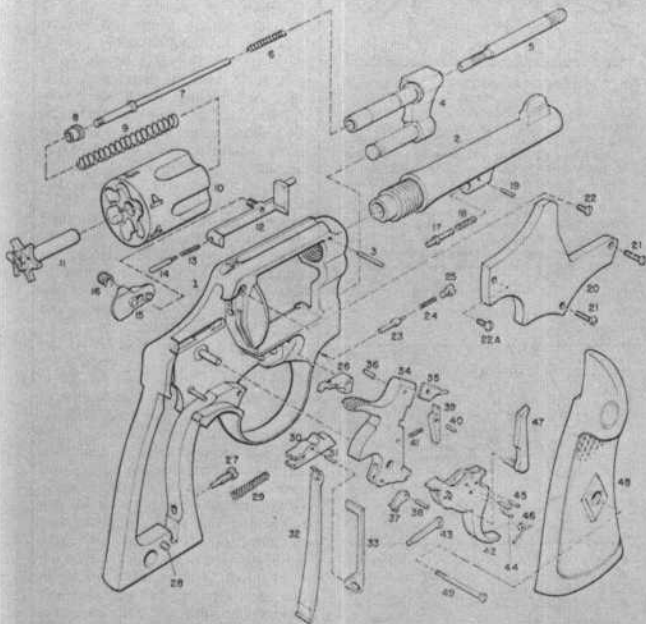
6 1/2" barrel and walnut grips. The commercial model had hard rubber grips and 4" barrel.

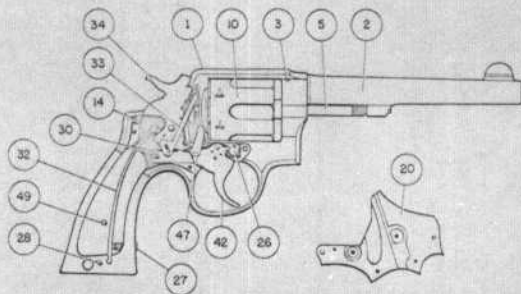
The improved Model 1902 M&P introduced in that year was chambered for the new cal. .38 S&W Special cartridge, and also featured a front lock for the extractor rod.

The Model 1905 that superseded the Model 1902 also incorporated significant improvements. By 1942 over 1,000,000 M&P's had been manufactured. Under pressure of wartime need, Smith & Wesson in April 1942 began production of the Victory Model M&P with gray sandblasted finish. Serial numbers were preceded by the letter 'V' and a new numbering series was begun. In December 1944 an improved hammer block was instituted and serial numbers were preceded by the letters 'VS' to indicate incorporation of this feature in the lock mechanism. With the coming of peace, and cancellation of government contracts, Smith & Wesson resumed production of commercial

Parts Legend

1. Frame
2. Barrel
3. Barrel pin
4. Yoke
5. Extractor rod
6. Center pin spring
7. Center pin
8. Extractor rod collar
9. Extractor spring
10. Cylinder
11. Extractor
12. Bolt
13. Bolt plunger spring
14. Bolt plunger
15. Thumbpiece
16. Thumbpiece nut
17. Locking bolt
18. Locking bolt spring
19. Locking bolt pin
20. Side-plate
21. Side-plate screws, roundhead (2)
22. Side-plate screw, large head (discontinued)
- 22A. Side-plate screw, flathead
23. Cylinder stop plunger
24. Cylinder stop plunger spring
25. Cylinder stop screw
26. Cylinder stop
27. Strain screw
28. Stock pin
29. Rebound slide spring
30. Rebound slide
31. Rebound slide pin
32. Main spring
33. Hammer block
34. Hammer
35. Hammer nose
36. Hammer nose rivet
37. Stirrup
38. Stirrup pin
39. Seat
40. Seat pin
41. Seat spring
42. Trigger
43. Trigger lever
44. Trigger lever pin
45. Hand spring torsion pins (2)
46. Hand torsion spring
47. Hand
48. Stocks
49. Stock screw





Drawing of revolver with side-plate removed shows proper relationship of interior parts

M&P's but continued the serial number sequence begun in 1942. Serial numbers were preceded by the letter 'S'.

On Oct. 21, 1947, with gun No. S 924,878, the manufacturer instituted an improved short action, and external shape of the hammer was modified for easier cocking.

Production of the 'S' series continued until March 1948 when the present 'C' series was started. It is significant that over 1,000,000 M&P's, including the Victory Model, were manufactured from April 1942 through March 1948. As of this date Smith & Wesson has produced well over 500,000 M&P revolvers in the 'C' series.

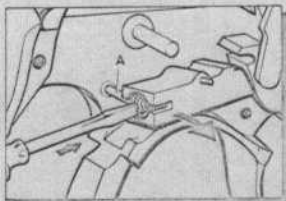
DISASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

Swing out cylinder and check to insure that revolver is unloaded. Cylinder and yoke assembly are removed by loosening forward side-plate screw (21) and drawing entire assembly to front and out of frame (1). Further disassembly of cylinder, yoke, or extractor is not recommended and should be undertaken only by a qualified gunsmith. Remove stock screw (49) and stocks (48).

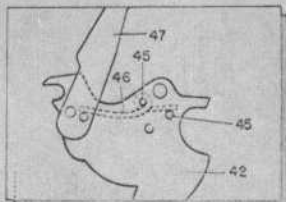
Remove side-plate screws (21 [2], 22, 22A). Side-plate (20) is loosened by tapping opposite surface of frame sharply with a wood or fiber hammer until it can be removed from frame. Attempts to pry out side-plate will deform its edges and those of the frame.

Manufacture of slide is easily removed by loosening stud screw (27). All interior parts of lock mechanism are now easily removed for cleaning or replacement. However, for normal cleaning purposes, it is seldom necessary to carry disassembly beyond removal of side-plate. The accompanying drawings point out some methods for further disassembly.

Exercise care in removal of lock mechanism to replace all parts in proper relationship.



1 To remove rebound slide (30), pry up rear end of slide with blade of small screwdriver but do not allow spring to clear end of rebound slide stud (A) in frame. Compress rear end of rebound slide spring (29) with screwdriver blade as shown and draw rebound slide up of stud (A), taking care not to let compressed spring escape. In replacing rebound slide in frame, spring must again be compressed inside slide so that it will clear stud before slide can be pressed down into position. Note that the stud (A) and other pivot studs in frame are permanently installed and their removal should not be attempted.



2 The drawing shows proper position of hand (47) installed in trigger (42). Hand can be removed from trigger by pulling it free. When replacing hand in trigger, take care that hand (losing spring (46)) is in correct position with respect to hand spring torsion pin (45) in trigger and small torsion pin installed in hand.

HENRY DERINGER

He gave his name to a whole class of firearms

Born—Easton, Pa., 1786
Died—Philadelphia, Pa., 1868

THE son of an immigrant German gunsmith, Henry Deringer was destined to follow in his father's footsteps. At an early age he was apprenticed to a gunsmith in Richmond, Va., and made rifles and other firearms there until he was ready to set up business for himself in Philadelphia in 1806. In 1808 he succeeded in obtaining his first government contract, and thereafter he continued to manufacture rifles, muskets, and pistols for the United States until 1845.

Although it was these government contracts which firmly established Deringer, his civilian arms, particularly during the days of the gold rush, really brought prosperity. His rifles and dueling pistols were very well received, and above all there was the short, single-shot percussion pistol that made the Deringer name famous. According to his own account, Deringer first began the manufacture of this pistol in 1825. In so doing, he was one of the first gunsmiths in the United States to adopt the percussion system of ignition, and he steadfastly clung to that system, refusing to the very end to consider the manufacture of breech-loading cartridge arms.

Deringer's contribution lay in the structural design of his pistol. It was compact, sturdy, and lethal; it suited exactly the mood and needs of the times when a man never knew at what moment he might need to defend his life and property and thus was thankful for an easily carried and unobtrusive but effective weapon. Deringer held no patents on his pistol, and so had many imitators, but the fame of his design and craftsmanship spread so quickly that almost all of them were forced to do homage by trying to associate their products in some way with his name. Thus, the origin of derringier, with 2 r's.—HAROLD L. PETERSON

Commission Exhibit No. 593

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COMMISSION EXHIBIT 593—Continued