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THE WEBLEY-FOSBERY AUTOMATIC REVOLVER.*

By Captain Frederick S. Foltz, 2nd U. S. Cavalry

In this arm the principle of utilizing the recoil of the first shot to operate the mechanism and prepare the arm to fire the next shot, upon the simple pressure of the trigger, is, for the first time, applied to the familiar revolver.

The weapon in appearance closely resembles the regular British service Webley, and is very similar to the Smith & Wesson with its hinged frame.

The recoil of the first shot slides the barrel, frame, and cylinder to the rear, upon the lower portion consisting of the grip and trigger. During this rearward movement, a large stud in the lower frame travels in the "W" shaped channel cut on the surface of the cylinder, (see illustration) and revolves the chambers half way to the position for the next shot; and, at the same time, raises the hammer to the full cock. A powerful spring located in the grip now comes into play, and returns the upper carriage to its firing position; during this movement, the cylinder, traveling over the stud once more, is given the remainder of the revolution necessary to place the loaded chamber opposite the barrel, and the stud, remaining in the channel, fixes this position most positively.

When the last cartridge has been fired the hammer is left at full cock, a foreward pressure of the right thumb on the catch, seen at the side of the hammer, unlocks the frame and allows the arm to be thrown open and the empty shells ejected by a single jerk of the wrist.

New cartridges are now inserted, singly or all at once by the use of a patent loader, and on throwing the frame shut the weapon is ready to fire at a touch of the trigger.

On the left side of the grip is a safety lever, easily

*Made by the Webley & Scott Revolver & Arms Co., Birmingham; Wm. Read & Sons, 107 Washington Street, Boston, Agents.
operated by the right thumb, by means of which the hammer can be locked at the full cock and the weapon so carried in the holster; otherwise it must be cocked on drawing, like an ordinary revolver.

In case of a defective cartridge, the hammer is grasped with the thumb and fore finger of the left hand and pulled back, bringing it to the full cock and also drawing back the upper carriage, the spring then returns the parts to the firing position, and the arm is ready.

The cylinder is instantly removable for cleaning and all the parts are large and strong. The substitution of the stud and channeled cylinder for the always delicate pawl that revolves the cylinder of the ordinary revolver, is a distinct gain.

A very useful device is the blade like projection from each side of the frame, just in front of the cylinder, this serves as a spreader to open the mouth of the holster an the revolver is inserted.

The grip of the handle seems about perfect; it fills and fits the hand like the grip of a carpenters’ saw; with the weapon well settled in its place, you feel as though you could point it in the dark.

The arm was originally made to use the British service cartridge throwing a .455 bullet of soft lead weighing 265 grains, with 6\(\frac{1}{4}\) grains of cordite; but the makers have just gotten out a new and lighter model using the same cartridge as the .38 Colt Automatic Pistol; a cannular cartridge with smokeless powder and a bullet with a hard, metal jacket.

The weights and dimensions of the two models are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>.455 model, 6 shot</th>
<th>.38 model, 8 shot</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of pistol</td>
<td>13 inches</td>
<td>10(\frac{1}{4}) inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of barrel</td>
<td>6 inches</td>
<td>6 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of cylinder</td>
<td>14 inches</td>
<td>1(\frac{1}{4}) inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight of Revolver</td>
<td>2 lbs, 8(\frac{1}{4}) oz</td>
<td>2 lbs, 5(\frac{1}{4}) oz</td>
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</table>

The loading clip for the .455 is a brass disc of the thickness of the rim of the cartridge, or slightly thicker; the cartridges are set in holes in this disc, and the metal is then slightly reamed over against the heads of the shells.

While this clip might answer under some circumstances, I have found it unfit for service; as the cartridges shake out, in spite of the most careful packing, when it is carried in the pouch on a long ride.
On the other hand, the loading clip for the .38 caliber promises well; it is a brass disc resembling a small circular saw with eight long, curved teeth. The cartridges are sprung under these teeth, which embrace them and fit snugly in the cannelures of the shells. I have only been able to give these latter clips a slight trial, but believe that, with a little paper packing, they will carry well in the cartridge pouch.

The working of these arms is very regular; the jerk or kick of the .38 is very slight, while that of the .455, though considerable on account of the man stopping bullet and charge, is not disconcerting after a few shots.

These arms are sure to recommend themselves to those who have already served an apprenticeship to the revolver and delight in the familiar forms.

The .38 has the advantage of lightness, smaller size, eight shots instead of six, a good loading clip and, most important, its ammunition is made in this country.

The .455 has one advantage, but a very big one: It is a "man stopper," and is probably as near to a "horse stopper" as a revolver is likely to be.

As to accuracy, I have found both models to shoot extremely well, quite as well as other revolvers of the best makes under the conditions of Army pistol practice.

The famous revolver shot, Walter Winans, says in his "Hints on Revolver Shooting in Competitions:"

"The writer disapproves of double-action revolvers in competitions, finding it almost impossible to make accurate shooting with them. A word as to authentic pistols may, perhaps, be of use. Messrs. Webley have produced a "Webley-Fosbery" automatic revolver in both .455 and .38 caliber, which the writer prefers to any of the automatic pistols that have yet come to his notice, and, for rapid firing, even to any other make of revolver. With it it is possible to fire shots at the rate of one a second with approximately the same accuracy as with any single-action revolver at the rate of one in two seconds. In both cases a good shot should be able to put most of his bullets into a two-inch bull's-eye at a 20 yards' range."