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DOPE BAG continued

the cylinder and blocking cylinder rotation in those early Colt Model 1917 revolvers lacking cartridge stop shoulders in the chambers.

During the World War I period, cal. .45 ACP cartridges for use in Model 1917 Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers were regularly packed in small cartons holding eight three-round loaded clip assemblies. This pack provided for a full 18-round pouch of reserve ammunition as well as a full six-round loading in the revolver.—M.D.W.



Components of 7.62 mm. Duplex Ball Cartridge M198, showing hollow base of forward bullet and slanted base of rear bullet to give desired dispersion.

7.62 mm. Duplex Cartridge

A 7.62 mm. NATO cartridge obtained for my collection had a steel or steel-jacketed bullet (as shown by magnet) with a light-green tip. Since I could not identify this, I disassembled the cartridge and found it contained two bullets, the forward one having a hollow base into which the tip of the real one fitted, and the base of the rear one being crooked, apparently by defective manufacture. Would you please identify and explain this cartridge?

Answer: You have the Cartridge, 7.62 mm: Ball, Duplex, NATO, M198. It was standardized on May 7, 1964.

This is one of the approaches intended to improve the hitting rate of small arms in combat by more or less radical developments in the arms and ammunition used. This particular development was done by Winchester-Western under contract to the U.S. Army. There have been other multiple-ball rounds, old and new.

The M198 contains two copper-plated steel bullets weighing 80 gr. each, the tip of the rear bullet fitting into the hollow base of the front one as you found. Base of the rear bullet is intentionally angled to give it the desired dispersion. Muzzle velocity of the front bullet is 2800 f.p.s. and of the rear bullet approximately 2600 f.p.s.

The front bullet shoots into approximately 1½" mean radius at 100 yds., cor-

responding to a 10-shot group of about 5" diameter; and the rear bullet into 12" mean radius or about a 40" group. At 300 yds., mean radius of the front bullet is 6" and of the rear about 3 ft. corresponding to 10 shot groups of 1¾ ft. and 10 ft. respectively. One bullet thus gives roughly the dispersion of the ordinary rifle cartridge and the other six times as much. This designed, controlled spread is the feature of this cartridge.

Tests in various situations indicated 25% to 100% increase in hits, an improvement of very considerable practical importance.

The M198 cartridge functions in all U.S. standard arms of 7.62 mm. NATO caliber—the M14 rifle, M60 general purpose machine gun, M73 tank machine gun, and GAU-2B/A Minigun (high-speed Gatling-type aircraft gun).

Efforts have been made to develop a similar duplex cartridge in 5.56 mm. caliber for use in the M16-M16A1 rifle, but without success. The 5.56 mm. M16-M16A1 has replaced the M14 rifle in combat units. The other 7.62 mm. arms, however, remain in combat service.

Experience with the M198 cartridge in Vietnam was reported to show a highly desirable improvement in effectiveness of machine gun fire from helicopters. It delivers twice the number of bullets in a given amount of firing, as well as a greater number of hits. However, the M198 appears not to have been procured in quantities beyond those required for service testing. The reason for this has not become clear.—E.H.H.

Alexander Martin Shotshell

An old 12-ga. shotgun shell is marked on the body with the names Alex Martin, Glasgow, and Alex Henry & Co., Edinburgh. It has a low brass head and red paper body, and the headstamp is made up of words Martin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. I know it came from Scotland about 60 years ago with a friend of my father's. Can you tell me anything further about this shell, and something about the makers?

Answer: "Proprietary" ammunition such as this has been sold on a large scale in Great Britain and to a much lesser extent in Europe and the United States. These are cartridges produced by an ammunition manufacturer to the order of a gunmaker or dealer, and marked with his name instead of the manufacturer's. Some British gunmakers and many local gunsmiths and dealers also had primed shells imprinted with their names, and loaded them to individual order. Some of these were marked with a coined name which indicated a game, wildfowling, or trap load. Otherwise the load would be specified on the box.

Alexander Henry of Edinburgh was famed for his pattern of rifling, which was used in the Martini-Henry rifle of the British Army, and for his fine single-shot target and stalking rifles.

Alexander Martin had shops at 20-22 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow, and at 128 Union Street, Aberdeen, during the period 1922-1956 and possibly earlier. It