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ceiver calls for its replacement. You may even have to buy an entire old junk gun for the parts. If damage is only minor, locate the spots in the receiver that are binding the bolt. A mixture of lampblack and oil, or Prussian blue may be needed to find them. Then, carefully reduce these places with fine files, trying the bolt frequently for fit. When it is almost clear, lap it in with valve grinding compound. Be cautious that none of the compound gets on the bolt locking surface or its seat in the receiver.

File down the weld on the action slide to match original contours. With a good steel straightedge, check all sides of the slide extension for twists or bends. Straighten, and file down any high spots. Try the action slide with the bolt in place for fit, and correct as needed. Polish with fine abrasive cloth or paper in the areas where the finish is removed or worn; clean thoroughly with denatured alcohol or lacquer thinner, and touch up with cold blue.

Clean the entire gun carefully and inspect it for any additional damage. Slight pimpling of the barrel may be found, which can be removed with a special tool such as the shotgun barrel dent remover sold by Brownell's, a gunsmithing supply house in Montezuma, Iowa.

Once all damage has been restored, oil the gun as usual, reassemble, and fire a half dozen or so heavy or magnum loads at a distance with a string on the trigger and the gun supported in a cradle or old tire. Disassemble it once again, and examine carefully for any additional damage detected by the test firing. Examine the heads of the fired shells for swollen rims, or other signs of trouble. Any further difficulty that cannot be repaired as outlined above calls for professional attention.—A.F.R.

Overhead Fire Ammunition

I have a few 7.62 mm. NATO cartridges in a box labeled "Overhead Fire Cartridges, XM178". Since they appeared to be ordinary ball cartridges I broke one down looking for some distinctive feature. The bullet was longer than normal, and by filing I found it to be one piece of metal, apparently bronze. What is the story of this ammunition?

Answer: The Ball XM178 was one of a group of 7.62 mm. cartridges originated during the early 1960's for special use in firing over the heads of friendly troops. The distinctive solid gilding metal bullets were designed to eliminate any possibility of fragments injuring the troops. These

cartridges are named in the table.

The tracer bullets had cavities smaller than normal and were not designed to trace the full 800 meters of standard tracers. In accordance with the design purpose there were no sealing disks. The ball round was required for trajectory match between ball and tracer in this group.

The development was judged unsuccessful because of inadequate security of tracer pellets in the cavities, probably incident to dispensing with sealing disks, and also because of inadequate trajectory match between ball and tracer which the ball round was to provide. The project was dropped around 1963.—E.H.H.

Shotgun Fore-End

My foreign 16-ga. double-barrel shotgun was acquired second-hand in Germany about 1953. It is in almost perfect condition except that the fore-end is very slightly loose and engraving on the fore-end iron does not perfectly match engraving on the frame. Also, unlike other foreign double guns I have encountered, the fore-end iron does not bear the serial number of the gun. It seems strange that an otherwise almost perfect gun should have such a fore-end. Can you offer comment?

Answer: Evidently your gun has a replacement fore-end.

When the Allies occupied Germany at the end of World War II in Europe, the Germans were required to turn over their arms to the occupying forces. Many of these guns were made inoperative before they were turned over. This was commonly done by removing fore-ends of top-break shotguns, rifles, and combination guns, and by removing bolt assemblies of turnbolt rifles.

Some of these guns were later restored to use by fitting other fore-ends and bolt assemblies. It was generally not difficult to supply a bolt mechanism for a turnbolt rifle. However, replacing a fore-end for a top-break gun usually required skilled hand fitting. The fore-end iron presented the greatest difficulty since it had to fit the frame and barrels properly. Also, the latch mechanism and cuts for the cocking levers had to match those of the original fore-end. A fore-end that matched the original fairly well was often used, but in some instances a completely new fore-end was fitted. This work was done by German and other European gunsmiths.

If your gun functions properly, it is best not to attempt replacing the fore-end since to do so would be expensive. Correcting the slight looseness you mention is a job for a gunsmith.—L. O.

OVERHEAD FIRE AMMUNITION

Cartridge	Bullet Characteristics	Bullet Identification
7.62 mm., Ball, Overhead Fire, XM178	149-3 grs., solid gilding metal	None
7.62 mm., Tracer, Overhead Fire, XM179	142-6 grs., solid gilding metal, .417" deep tracer cavity in base	Red lacquer covering 5/16" of point
7.62 mm., Tracer, Overhead Fire, XM180	147.5-3 grs., solid gilding metal, .1625" deep tracer cavity in base	Red lacquer band 1/16" wide on point