

cc: F. Woodrick - Arms Service

May 17, 1963

Mr. Lanier M. Schlegel
641 E. 4th Street
Boyetown, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Schlegel:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the Model XP-100 Fireball Pistol. It is interesting that you have noted this pistol will accommodate the shooter with either hand. Actually, our tooling which was basically set up for rifles in its origin was intentionally involved with a right hand operated bolt. This is because only 10% of the shooters are left handed, and therefore a left handed bolt, we feel, could not be justified. The pistol being an heir to some of the machinery involved fell into the same category.

This was given considerable thought in the development of the grip. If you will note, the grooves provided for the forefinger and thumb for the right handed shooter are exactly equal in opposite and will fit the left handed shooter as well.

Now as far as the operation of the bolt handle is concerned, it is advisable when shooting a pistol to take a new grip from shot to shot if extreme accuracy is needed, and from a safety point of view it would be well to hold the gun around the barrel and trigger guard with the left hand during the functioning of the bolt in the ejection and extraction cycle with the right hand. This makes a natural and safe movement for the right handed shooter. It is not desirable nor safe to function such a gun as this, or any bolt action rifle, with the trigger finger near or pressing against the trigger during the manipulation of the bolt. For the left handed shooter the same procedure should be used. So in this respect we feel that the design is very adequate for either shooter.

Your second question regarding modifying the pistol to accommodate a clip magazine; this approach was of course given careful consideration, but we did not want to sacrifice the fine balance of this pistol by installing a magazine up through the grip and having to move the grip rearwardly, which would create an unbalanced condition and make for more muzzle preponderance. Then, too, if considering installing a magazine from the left hand side of the receiver, feeding problems would exist in feeding off the left lug of the bolt. This could have been accomplished, however, if the lug had been removed and feeding from the rim of the

Mr. Lanier H. Schlegel

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shrouded head on the bolt would have functioned satisfactorily. However, for extreme accuracy we like a well balanced bolt during the thrust load exerted against the bolt by the cartridge during obturation.

So considering all of these elements it was decided to leave well enough alone and not get involved with a feeding magazine. Actually, the pistol itself is very easy and handily fed by single shot operation, and we felt that this particular model would primarily be used for target shooting and long range varmint hunting, which necessarily does not require rapid feed from a magazine.

As far as strength is concerned, of course, one locking lug would have been more than adequate for the .221 Fireball or even larger and more powerful calibers.

The pistol has been very thoroughly tested in all sections of the United States. I believe the most elaborate testing was conducted by the writer in Idaho and Wyoming against jackrabbits and coyotes, and also Mr. Les Bowman of the northern area of Wyoming has probably subjected this pistol to more testing than any of the other sports writers. It has been used successfully against mule deer, bobcats, golden eagles, coyotes, badgers, etc., and has proven to be a very vicious and practical pistol for the varmint or game hunter.

If you have the opportunity to shoot one of these pistols I am sure that you would be delighted at its extreme accuracy and strength, and fine balance. You will find that it is easily fired offhand with open sights, or from supporting positions with one of the many fine long eye relief telescopes that have been developed for pistols such as this one.

If you have any further questions concerning the XP-100, please drop me a line.

Very truly yours,

W. E. Leek,
Manager - Firearms Design & Development
Illion Research Division

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