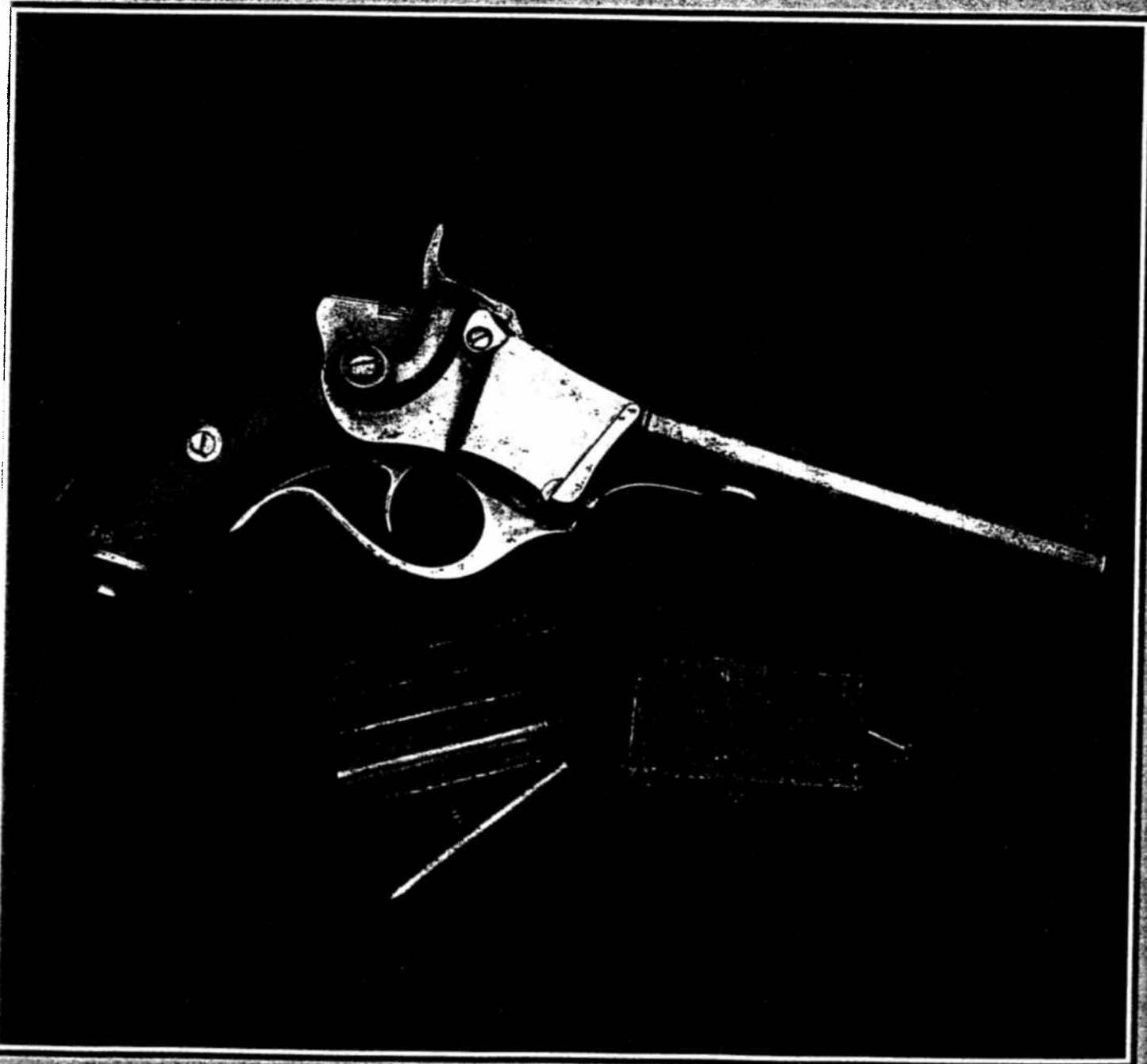


The **GUN REPORT**

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The Canadian Militia & Defence Marked Colt 1878 Double Action Frontier Revolvers

by John Fera



A group of frontiersmen just after the Louis Riel Rebellion of 1885. The two on the left are military men, the one on the right with Militia issue holster and Model 1878 revolver.

The year was 1885, one of the most turbulent years in Canadian history, and one that Canadians would remember for all time.

The event was the Northwest Rebellion. This campaign which resulted in the suppression of the hostilities was the first conducted by Canadian troops alone, without any assistance from the British regular army.

The Rebellion marked an exciting chapter in this young country's life – for this time Canadians from different provinces fought side by side, shedding their blood to enforce the authority of the federal government.

The Royal Northwest Mounted Police along with the Canadian Militia, under the command of Major General Middleton, and with a little help from a Gatling gun, defeated Louis Riel at Batoche in May of 1885. Louis Riel, a miller's son, who had led the Red River Rebellion 15 years earlier, was back with help from Gabriel Dumont, famed buffalo hunter and plainsman, he managed to anger the Indians and the Metis over fear of losing their lands. Riel was captured, tried and convicted of treason. He was hanged on Nov. 16, 1885.

Just prior to and during these events of which I have very briefly outlined the Canadian government was faced with several problems. The Militia was

armed with aging Spencer rifles and obsolete Colt 1851 Navy revolvers (upper and lower Canada). Steps had to be taken quickly to update this equipment before confrontation with the Indians and the Metis became a reality.

Updating the arms was the responsibility of the Department of Militia & Defence. With all-out rebellion looming ever so close, they acted very quickly. By order of the department and using funds allocated by special vote of the government, the New York-based firm of Hartley & Graham was selected. Hartley & Graham one of the Colt allies was by far one of the largest arms dealers in North America. Why



Close-up view of serial #14733 Militia & Defence marking. (John Fera collection.)

the Canadian government didn't contact Colt directly is not known.

An order was placed for 1001 Colt Model 1878 double action frontier

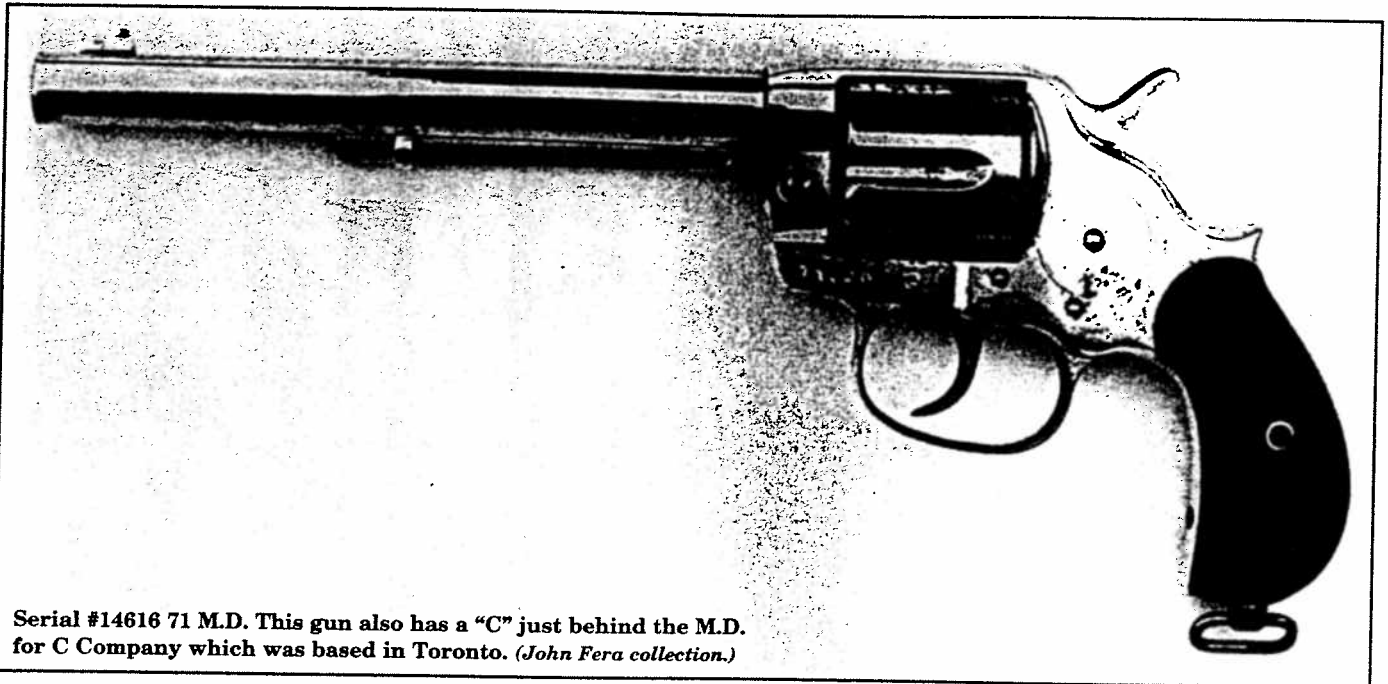
revolvers; .45 cal. Colt with 7-1/2" barrels all to be nickel plated finish with trigger, screws and hammer of heat treated blue, and at a cost of \$13 each. Within days the first lot of 1878s was on its way to Col. Jackson, the quarter master for the field force.

Hartley & Graham shipped from their extensive stock immediately and proceeded to order the balance from Colt on a rush basis. There must have been a number of blue finished revolvers in stock, both at H&G and at Colt. At this time as I

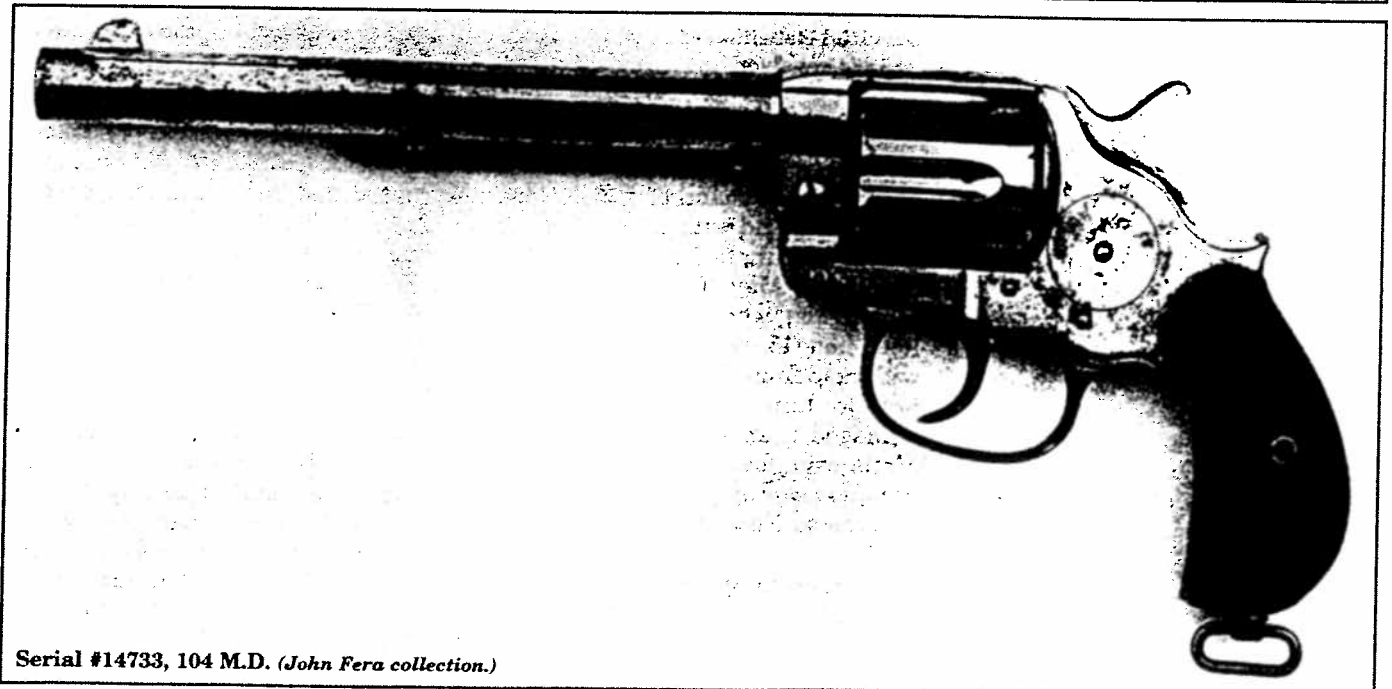
have observed an over-stamping on a high majority of these guns. This over-stamping is located on the trigger-guard, a very faint .45 cal. can be seen below a fresh stamping which would indicated that polishing would have taken place. A factory letter on serial #11760 lists the gun as blue, however, the gun was unmistakably shipped nickel.

Due to the rush nature of this order all existing nickel guns were shipped immediately and blued guns nickeled and shipped as soon as possible.

There seemed to have been several shipments from Colt to H&G, the last



Serial #14616 71 M.D. This gun also has a "C" just behind the M.D. for C Company which was based in Toronto. (John Fera collection.)



Serial #14733, 104 M.D. (John Fera collection.)



August 30, 1978

John Fera
 64 Linkdale Road
 Brampton, Ontario L6V 2Y7

Dear Mr. Fera:

In response to your request for historical information, we have researched our records and located the following pertinent data:

COLT DOUBLE ACTION ARMY REVOLVER
 (Model of 1878)

Serial Number:	14673
Caliber:	45
Barrel Length:	7-1/2 inches
Finish:	Nickel
Type of Stocks:	Not listed
Shipped to:	Hartley & Graham
Address:	New York, New York
Date of Shipment:	April 14, 1885
Number of Same Type	
Guns in Shipment:	120

We trust the information supplied above will be of interest.

Sincerely,

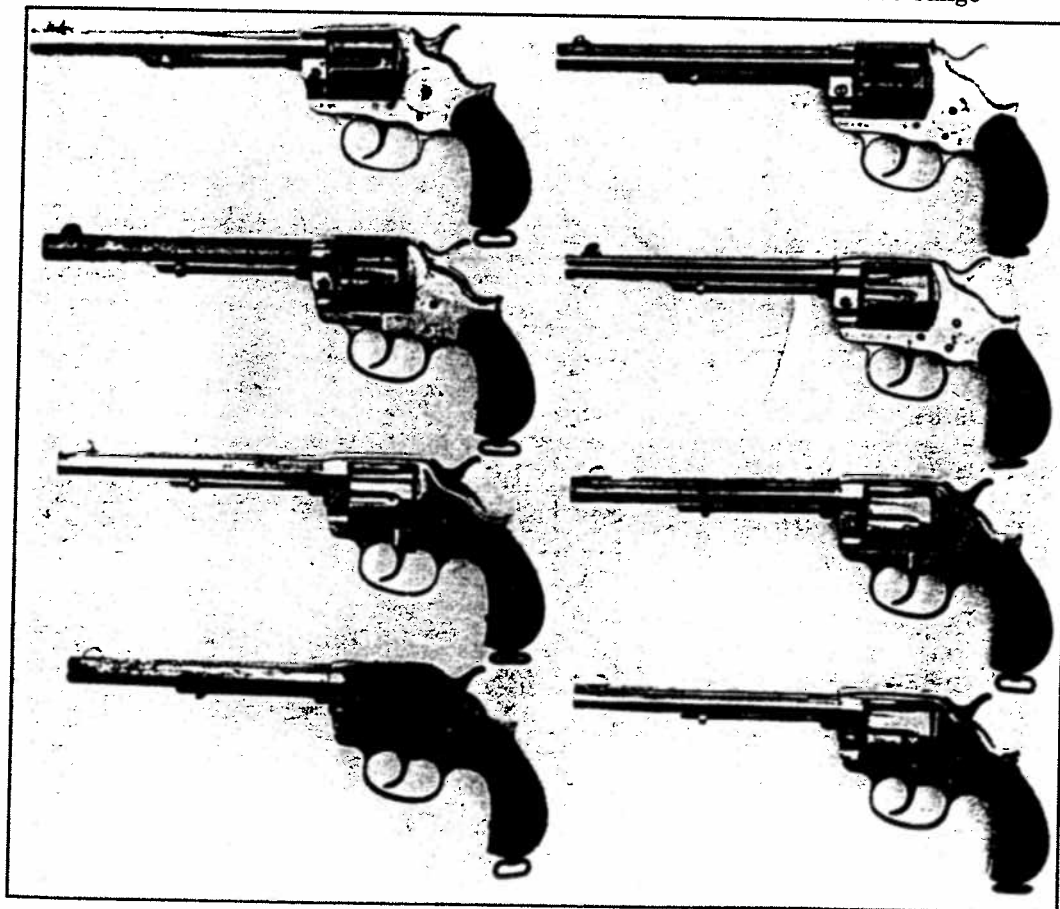
M. S. Huber
 M. S. Huber
 Historian

Copy of Colt letter showing shipment of April 14, 1885.

leaving
 Hartford on
 April 14,
 1885 with
 120 guns in
 the shipment.

The serial range according to my survey is between #8731 and #14996. Both of these guns are in my collection. To date I have surveyed 35 examples; of the 35 examples only two are in the four digit range; three in the 11000 range; two in the 12000 range; and the balance are in the 14000 range

Holster for serial #11760 inside flap stamped A. Laurie.



Together again. These eight 1878s were all shipped together on April 14, 1885 to Hartley & Graham, then shipped to the Canadian government for issue to the militia. All are in the 14000 serial range. (John Fera collection.)

(28). I believe that the earlier serial numbered guns were already in stock at H&G when the order was received.

Special markings were applied to most of these guns. Yes, I did say most. For some reason a few of these guns escaped government markings. Twenty-one of the 35 in my survey are marked, the balance are not. The marking was applied to the front left side of the frame and read as follows: issue number followed by M.D.; the marking on gun #14996 is 22 M.D. The highest issue number in my survey is #289 which appears on gun #12128 in the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The M.D. stands for Militia & Defence.

When, and by whose orders this marking was applied remains a mystery today. Many of these pistols were on loan to the Northwest Mounted Police immediately following the rebellion, and it is possible that these marking were applied by them. Just how long the Northwest

ORIGINAL OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

No. 44137

Date of Registration Jan 24 1935

Owner John Fawcett

Address 1899 Army issue South Africa

Occupation Private

Use for which small arms required

NOTE - This is NOT a permit to carry any weapon



Serial #14616 showing 71 M.D. and "C" on right side of frame.

(1) I hereby certify the following to be a true description of the small arms now registered by me on behalf of:

John Fawcett

(2) Manufacturer's Name: Long Colt Revolver

Caliber: 45

Serial No: 399

(3) Signature of Applicant: John N. Fawcett

Address: 1899 Army issue South Africa

Occupation: Private

Signature of Registration Officer: J. N. Fawcett

Above, original 1935 Canadian registration for serial #11760. Note 1899 Army issue South Africa and Keepsake gun issued to A. Laurie. Lieut. J.N. Fawcett was in the same contingent and they went over to Africa together.

Mounted Police held on to some of these pistols is unknown - some were never returned.

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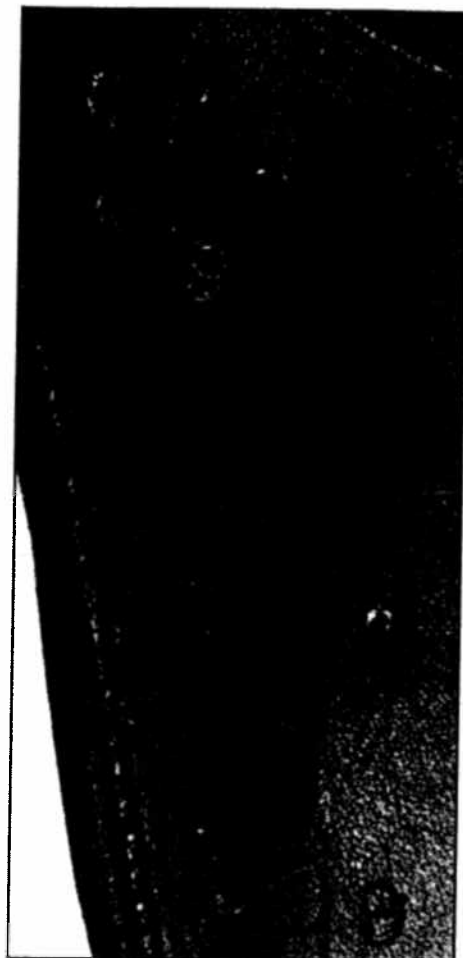
Most of these pistols were returned to government stores and remained there until 1899, when they were re-issued to the officers of the militia being shipped to South Africa for the Boar War.

Serial #11760 pictured with its original holster along with its 1935 Canadian registration card, shows it registered to John N. Fawcett and describing the gun as an 1899 Army issue South Africa, and also showing that it was a "Keepsake." The inside flap of the holster is stamped with the name A. LAURIE. Upon preliminary investigation I find that both of these men were shipped to South Africa in 1899 in the first contingent and were from the same city, Toronto. A. Laurie was Lieut. and J.N. Fawcett was a private. The gun was obviously issued to Laurie by the government, as only officers were issued pistols. Why it was brought back by Fawcett is something I am still investigating and may be the subject for another article.

I purchased my first M.D. marked Colt over 20 years ago. At that time the seller told me the gun had belonged to a doctor. I paid him \$75. Since then I have purchased 16 more. Thanks to all the research the secret of the mysterious MD marked Colt would still be unknown.

Special thanks to Mr. Clive Law of Nepan, Ontario who has just published a new book *Canadian Military Handguns, 1855-1985*. Clive has put in many hours of research at the Canadian War Museum and some of this information was made possible by his efforts.

I'm sure that there is still a lot to learn of this 1001 gun shipment of 1885. If anyone out there has one, I would love to hear from you. My address is: John Fera, 12 Lindhurst St., Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6S 4C2



Left, markings on holster for serial #14616 71 M.D. and "C" on frame. Markings show C.M.R. for Canadian Mounted Rifles "A" and 399 - these markings were applied for issue to militia going to South Africa.



Serial #11760 no M.D. number. Although there are no M.D. numbers this gun was definitely shipped in 1885 to H&G then to Canada for the Riel Rebellion. Shipped from Colt Oct. 27, 1883. It sat in stock at H&G for almost 2 years before being nicked and shipped to Canada. It is in near mint condition. (John Fera collection.)

SOUTH AFRICA MEDAL.

1899-1901.

Roll of Individuals of the Canadian Contingents entitled to the South Africa Medal and Clasp, under the Army Order granting the Medal, issued on 1st April, 1901.

No.	NAME	CORPS	FURTHER ENTITLED TO CLASP															MEDAL DELIVERED	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Place	Date
0051	Lieut. Laurie	at R.C.D.																18-10-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0052	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																15-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0053	Major Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0054	Major Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0055	Lieut. Hughes	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0056	Lieut. Hughes	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0057	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0058	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0059	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0060	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0061	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.
0062	Lieut. Howard	at R.C.D.																20-1-1901	Presented by H.R.H.

South Africa Medal roll showing Lieut. A. Laurie received his medal in Montreal on Sept. 19, 1901 from her Royal Highness Queen Victoria. His medal with three bars for action in Johannesburg, Cape Colony an organized free state.

PERMANENT CORPS.			MILITIA—DOMINION OF CANADA										M. & D. ACCOUNTS—Form 84	
Army, Artillery and Infantry			Corps Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry										2,000-5-8-2	
Militia R. & O., 1895.			Special Service Battalion School, stationed at Sea S.S. Gardiner in route to S. A.											
Pay List of the Officers of the above Corps for the Undermentioned Period.														
RANK	NAME	PERIOD	FROM	TO	DAYS	P.A.T.		STOPPAGE		For Account Due to		REMARKS	REMARKS	
						Rate per day	Total	Rate per day	Total	Rate per day	Total			
Lieut. Col.	After	W.D.	1.11.99	30.11.99	30	6.45	192.90	60	152.90					
	Bushaw L.	do	do	do	30	4.75	142.50	60	82.50					
	Pelletier O.C.	do	do	do	30	4.97	149.10	60	126.00					
Capt.	Arnold	W.A.	21.10.99	do	41	2.52	103.32	60	55.62					
	Woods	W.A.	19.10.99	do	43	2.52	108.36	60	61.26					
	Stewart D.	do	do	do	43	2.52	108.36	60	61.26					
	Pelletier J.C.	do	15.10.99	do	44	2.52	110.88	60	64.08					
	Duggan	do	do	do	44	2.52	110.88	60	64.08					
	Stairs H.C.	do	26.10.99	do	36	2.52	90.72	60	41.52					
	Barrow L.R.	do	20.10.99	do	42	2.52	105.84	60	57.44					
	Fraser G.R.	do	21.10.99	do	41	2.52	103.32	60	55.62					
Lieut.	Conant H.A.	do	1.11.99	do	30	2.50	75.00	60	15.00					
	Burton H.C.	do	1.11.99	do	30	2.75	82.50	60	22.50					
	Macdonald A.H.	do	1.11.99	do	30	3.00	90.00	60	30.00					
	Waggoner H.F.	do	26.10.99	do	35	2.75	96.25	60	16.25					
	Ogilvy H.C.	do	1.11.99	do	30	3.00	90.00	60	30.00					
	Lawless W.	do	18.10.99	do	44	2.75	121.00	60	28.00					
	Jones J.	do	do	do	44	2.75	121.00	60	28.00					
	Hodgins A.C.	do	16.10.99	do	46	2.75	126.50	60	32.50					
	Robb J.M.	do	20.10.99	do	42	2.75	115.50	60	24.00					
	Moore J.C.	do	21.10.99	do	41	2.75	112.75	60	22.00					
	Armstrong G.S.	do	23.10.99	do	39	2.75	107.25	60	18.00					
	Swift A.C.	do	25.10.99	do	34	2.75	93.50	60	8.00					
	Willis R.B.	do	26.10.99	do	35	2.75	96.25	60	10.00					
	Marshall H.C.	do	26.10.99	do	35	2.75	96.25	60	10.00					
	Kaye J.H.	do	1.11.99	do	34	2.75	93.50	60	10.00					
	Ledger L.	do	1.11.99	do	30	2.75	82.50	60	10.00					
	Wheeler G.S.	do	21.10.99	do	41	2.75	112.75	60	12.00					
	Galdwell A.C.	do	25.10.99	do	37	2.75	101.75	60	14.00					
	Rayburn S.P.	do	1.11.99	do	30	2.75	82.50	60	10.00					
	Laurie A.	do	26.10.99	do	40	2.75	110.00	60	20.00					
	Pelletier E.A.	do	21.10.99	do	41	2.75	112.75	60	22.00					

Pay list for Militia - Dominion of Canada. Laurie second from the bottom.

CANADIAN MILITARY HANDGUNS 1855-1985

by Clive M. Law





MILITIA ORDERS, 1907.

No. 212.

HEADQUARTERS, OTTAWA.

Saturday, 14th September.

Mark on militia stores.

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Subsection 1 of Section 432 of "The Criminal Code" is amended by adding thereto, under the marks appropriated for use on stores the property of His Majesty in the right of his Government of Canada, the following :—"Militia stores, the broad arrow within the letter C." (H.Q. 96-1-14.)

F. L. LESSARD,
Colonel,
Adjutant General.

IDENTIFYING MARKS

With the obvious exception of the Inglis pistols, nearly all handguns bought for official use by Canada's military were manufactured in either Great Britain or the United States. This fact makes it almost impossible to point at a pistol and state unequivocally that it was a Canadian issue. One of the few ways to recognize some of the official issues is by knowing the different marks applied by, or for, the military.

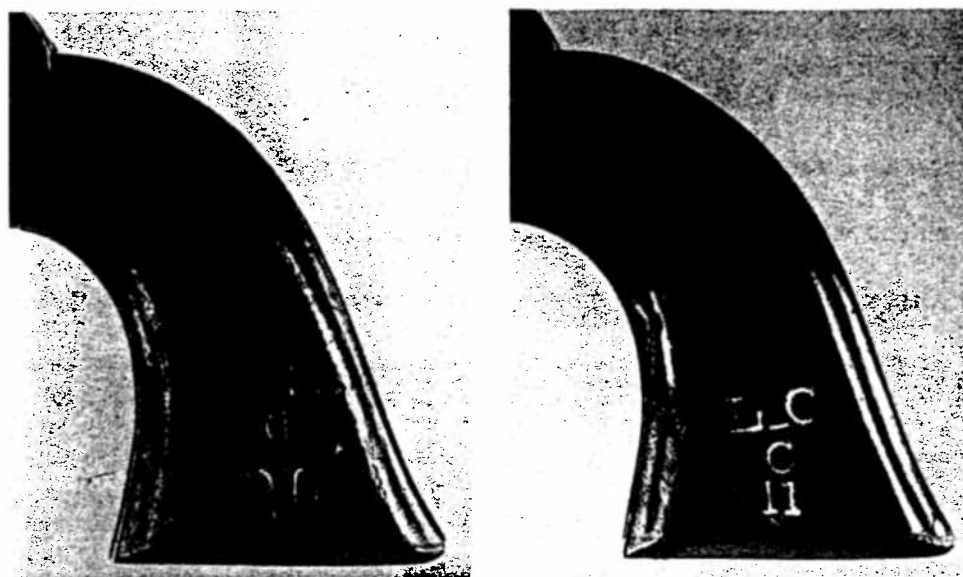
Various marks were used to denote ownership, proof, and sometimes the unit of issue.

The method of marking the Colt Model 1851 Navy was explained in detail in the *Militia General Order* of May 16, 1856. Although a military document, it was basic in its instruction and readily understood. The stocks were marked first with the province to which they belonged, either U-C (Upper Canada) or L-C (Lower Canada), then the letter denoting the Troop of Cavalry to which it was issued (A, B, C, etc.) and finally the individual number of the Arm in that Troop (1 to 50).¹ There have been some noticeable variations to this procedure, the 1st Montreal Troop have the pistol grips marked upside down in comparison with other pistols. This is likely due to that Troop being the only troop in Lower Canada to receive the Colt Pistol from the second shipment. It is therefore possible that the armourer responsible simply could not remember how the first shipment was marked.

On September 25th, 1867, the Militia Department printed a circular outlining the method of marking the new Snider Enfield rifles with the DC/Diamond and the numbering system for Arms and Accoutrements of Infantry and Rifle Battalions and for the Grand Trunk Brigade. These instructions did not apply to the Colt Model 1851 Navy revolver, nor were any subsequent handguns marked with the DC/Diamond.

The next revolver to be marked was the Colt Model 1878, sometimes known as the Double-Action Frontier Model. These were originally bought for use by the

Fig. 1. The Militia General Order outlining the government's right to the C/Arrow mark. CWM Collection.



volunteer mounted scouts raised for the North West Rebellion and were still in use during the Boer War. The markings, up to three digits and the letters MD, would appear to be the property marks of the Department of Militia and Defence. However no documentation exists to substantiate this. The question remains as to when the marks were applied and by whom.

The symbol most commonly seen on Canadian issue sidearms, indeed on all Canadian militaria, is the Canadian Broad Arrow, henceforth, C/Arrow. This mark was approved as a Government Mark on 14th September, 1907 by *Militia General Order* Number 212. An amendment to the Criminal Code made the fraudulent use of the mark, or ownership of any item bearing the mark, to be a criminal act.² In point of fact, the C/Arrow quickly became viewed as a mark denoting not just Government property but also a mark of approval and passage of inspection. In 1912, the British War Office wrote to the Minister of Militia and Defence for permission to apply the C/Arrow stamp to Imperial military goods sold to Canada. This mark would replace the British Double-Arrow that the War Office was applying to denote goods sold out of (British) store.³

The C/Arrow stamp was available in several sizes and during World War II, *Canadian Army Overseas Routine Orders* referred to the fact that ordnance inspectors would be looking for the stamp.⁴ It should be pointed out that the location of the C/Arrow was fairly consistent depending on the pistol. Most World War One Smith & Wesson revolvers display the mark on the left side, just below the hammer. Enfield revolvers tend to have the mark stamped on the right side directly behind the makers mark and all Inglis Hi-Powers have the C/Arrow stamp on the right side, behind the trigger. Of course, a good deal of deviation from the norm will be found as unit armourers were responsible for marking those small arms that bore no C/Arrow.

A variation of the C/Arrow mark was that of the Royal Canadian Navy. The official mark to be used by the RCN was a C/Arrow/N. Unfortunately, there was no standard to be followed in the pre-World War II era. The Halifax (Atlantic) depot consistently stamped their revolvers in three places, on the frame, cylinder and barrel.⁵ On the West coast however, the Esquimalt (Pacific) depot stamped the C/N on rifles and satisfied themselves with marking revolvers with a broad arrow on the top of the barrel. With the start of the War in 1939, consistent marking of handguns was put aside.

Fig. 2, 3. Two variations of the grip markings found on the Colt Navy Model 1851. CWM Collection / Kent Photo

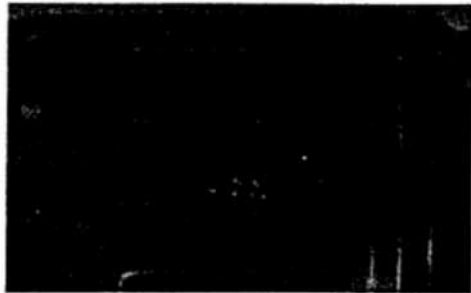
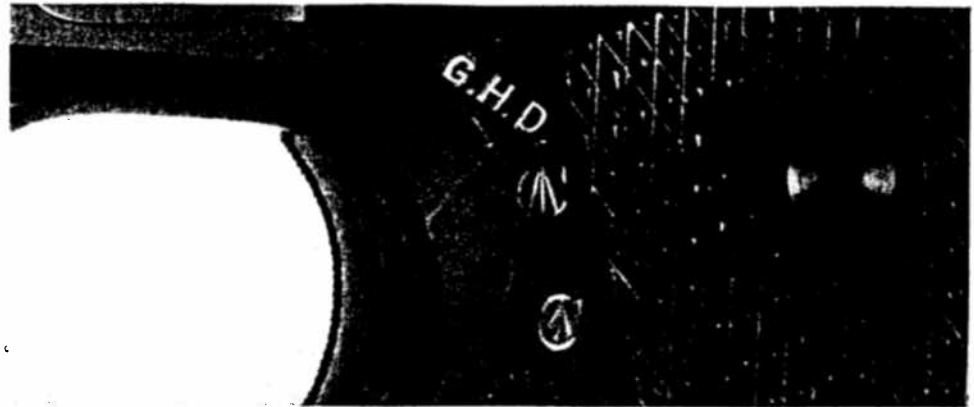
MARKINGS

Property Marks

Fig. 4. Two styles of the C/Arrow stamped on a Colt Model 1911, s/n 936929. *Karash Collection.*

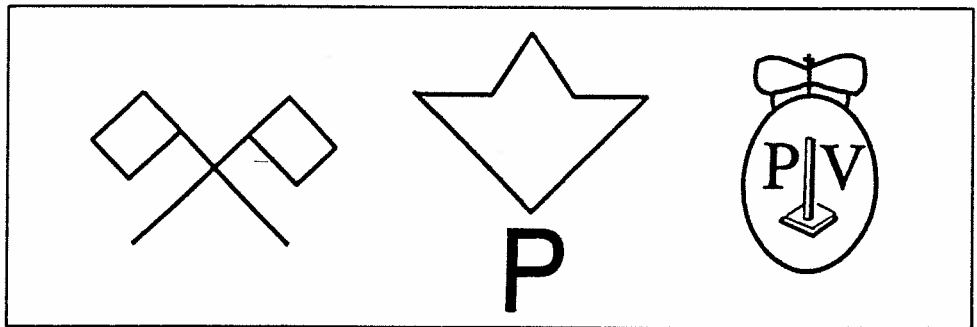
Fig. 5. Typical mark and location of Royal Canadian Navy marked revolvers. Regulations stated that the C/Arrow/N was to be stamped on the frame, cylinder and barrel. *Rewers Collection.*

Fig. 6. Property stamp identifies this Enfield No. 2. Revolver as being one of the few bought for the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1937. *Perocchio Collection / Kent Photo.*



Proof Marks

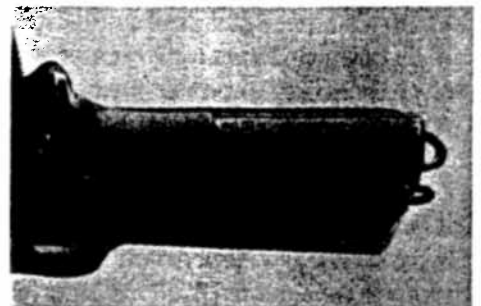
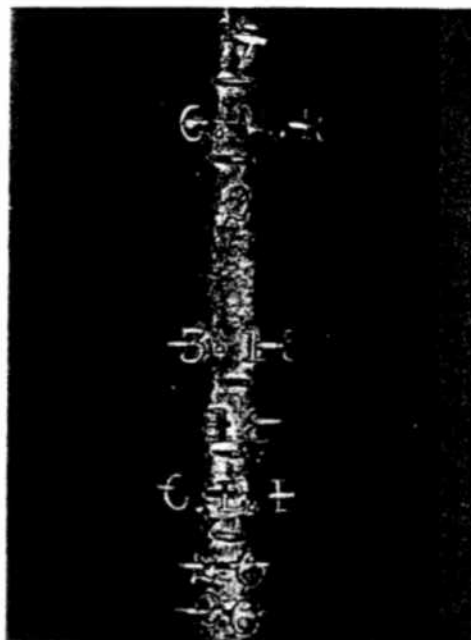
Fig. 7, 8, 9. Left to right: The Dominion of Canada Proof is electro-pencil engraved on the barrel of the Inglis pistols. The Canadian Forces Technical Services mark was used in the 1960s and '70s. The Belgian (Liège) proof will be found on commercially obtained barrels.

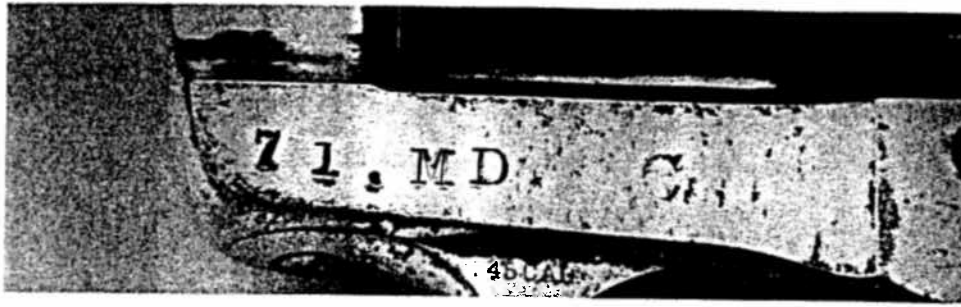


Ownership Marks

Fig. 10. Originally issued as pistol number 2, 7th Canadian Mounted Rifles, this Colt Model 1911 was reissued in March, 1915 as pistol number 26 to the 18th battalion, C.E.F. Fig. 11. This Colt New Service revolver was carried by Lt.-General Turner, VC, while a junior officer in South Africa.

Fig. 12. Crude field stamped pistol, the property of Lt. H. M. Campbell, 2nd Canadian Division, Cavalry. *CWM Collection / Kent Photos.*





The Royal Canadian Air Force had no specific mark of its own and when it bothered to mark its revolvers, the Air Force tended to content itself with the C/Arrow by itself or the letters RCAF with or without a Broad Arrow. These were either professionally stamped or engraved with an electric pencil.

In addition to ownership marks, all firearms adopted for use by the Canadian Military had to pass scrutiny by the Inspection Board of the United Kingdom and Canada. This organization was responsible for inspecting clothing, chemicals, communications equipment, vehicles, etc. During World War II, the Board inspected 8,000 Argentinian-made 9mm Bollester pistols destined for Britain's SOE (Special Operations Executive). The SOE then parachuted the pistols into Occupied Europe.⁶ The Board was equally responsible for proving the Inglis-made Hi-Power pistols. Pistols that have successfully passed proof display the crossed Guidons and the letters DCP for Dominion of Canada Proof. This is the same mark that Sir Charles Ross used on his rifles in the early years of the 20th Century. However Canada does not have a proof law legislating such a mark. The Inspection Board proof for Hi-power pistols consisted of a single dry high pressure proof round, followed by a single oiled round to test the locking parts. It is possible that, in the absence of a national proof law, Inglis applied the mark both as a marketing tool and to satisfy China and any other prospective clients. In the 1960s and 1970s, the proof mark on Hi-power pistol barrels included the letter "M" on the base of the barrel lug as a mark denoting Magnaglo, and later the DND Technical Services mark over the letter "P". This latter mark was introduced in 1967 and was to be

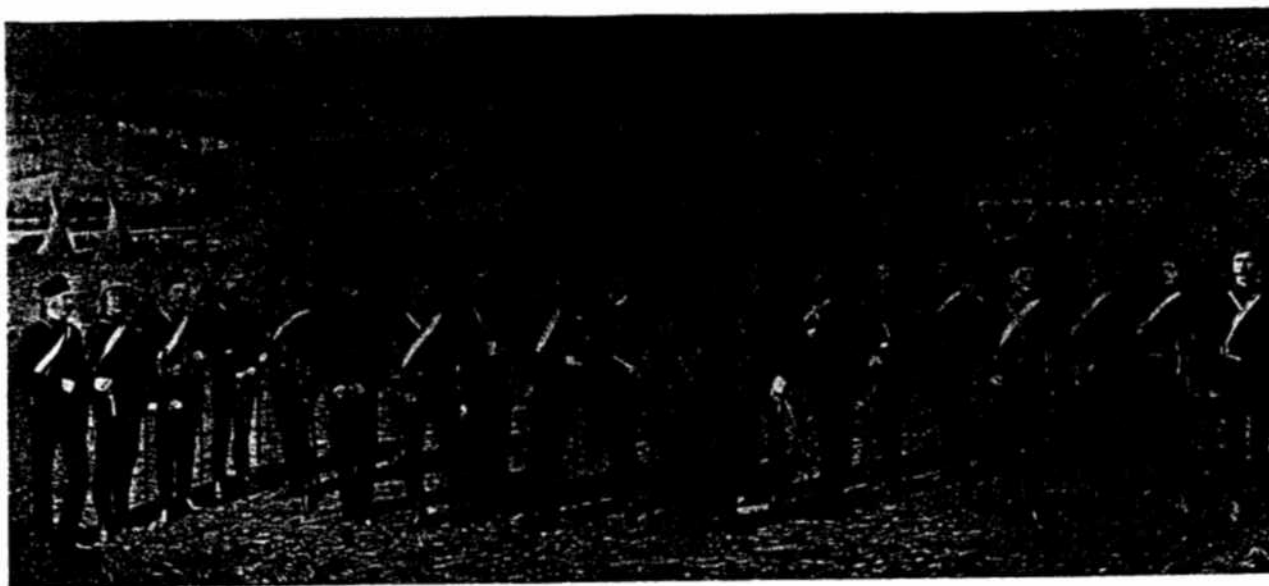
Fig. 13, 14, 15. Three variations of the numbering found on Colt Model 1878 revolvers used by volunteer mounted scouts and the Canadian Militia during the Riel uprising, 1885. It is still not known who marked the pistols. *Fera Collection.*

applied to the base of the barrel, ahead of the barrel lug. In 1971 this mark was moved to the right side of the barrel lug. A final proof mark acceptable to Canadian military authorities is the Belgian proof. This mark will be found on barrels that were bought in the 1970s to augment Canada's depleting stock.

The next most common mark is that applied by the parent or issuing unit. During the First World War, the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), following the example of British Army armourers, started to mark their arms with the unit abbreviation and the month/year of issue. This practice was neither wide-spread nor official, but enough pistols were marked that they can still be found today. It is the author's belief that this practice was taught to CEF armourers when they went on course with the British Army. With no instructions to the contrary, they proceeded to mark the Small Arms. Most handguns marked in this manner are dated 1915. By the start of the Second World War, security put an end to marking the units name on any of its matériel.

Handguns purchased since the end of World War II have been procured from commercial sources and have not displayed any Canadian markings. Although the C/Arrow was discontinued in Canada in 1949, recently there have been rumours that the Department of National Defence may resurrect the mark or some other mark to denote DND ownership.

The final category of marks are those applied by the individual owner or user. These marks vary from the jeweller-engraved name, rank and unit, to the crudely stamped mark of proprietorship.



THE NORTH-WEST REBELLION 1885

The early months of 1885 found Canada moving closer towards a confrontation with the Native people and Métis in the North-West Territories. When confronted with open rebellion, the Government ordered the Militia westwards.

Armed with ageing Spencer rifles and tired Colt Model 1851 Navy revolvers, the Department of Militia and Defence took quick steps to modernize. Using funds allotted by special vote of Parliament, the Department contacted the New York firm of Hartley and Graham. This retailer had, for several years, been one of the largest firearms dealers on the East Coast. Within a matter of days, the first lot of Colt Double Action Army Revolver, Model 1878, was on its way to Col. Jackson, the Quartermaster for the Field Force.

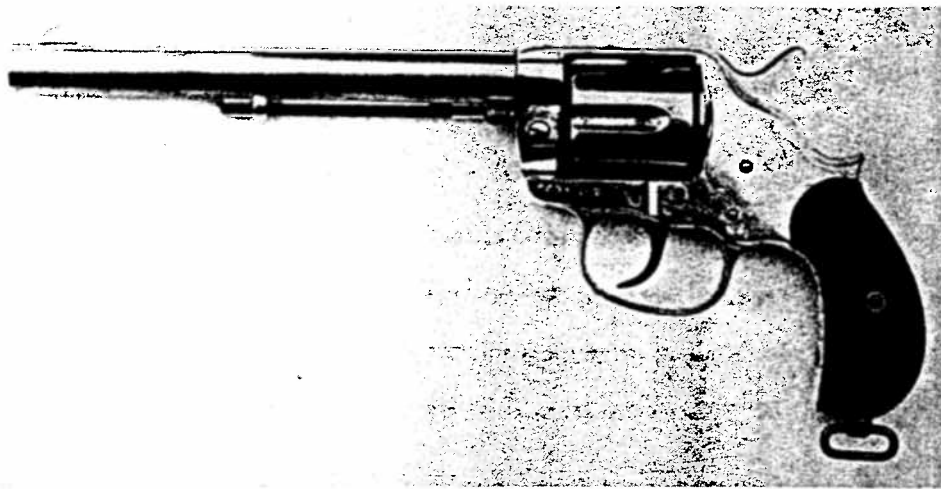
The revolvers were all in .45 calibre and sported a 7½ inch barrel. The finish was nickel, however the trigger and hammer were heat-treated blue.¹ Several examples have been seen with a "MD" stamp on the left side of the frame, below the cylinder. This stamp is preceded by an issue number. When, and by whose direction this stamp was applied remains a mystery as no Militia General Order to this effect has surfaced. Many of these pistols were on loan to the North-West Mounted Police immediately following the uprising, and it is possible that this stamp was applied by them.²

The marks are applied by hand and it appears that the same dies were used for all the revolvers. Two exceptions are known to the author. The first is a revolver with a three digit number (100) and no "MD" marking and the second displays the letter "C" in addition to the "MD" mark. All known property marks are below number 300.

The total quantity of Colt Model 1878 revolvers acquired was 1,001 at a cost of \$13.00 each.³

It would appear likely that Hartley and Graham shipped whatever stock they had at hand, and then ordered the outstanding quantity from Colts at Hartford. This

Fig. 27. Composite photograph showing a group of officers who took part in the suppression of the Riel Rebellion. Officers were responsible for arming themselves, ensuring that they conformed with the Service ammunition.
NA C21422.



would explain the earlier serial numbers and the single large block recorded in Appendix D.

Meanwhile, the Department had commissioned a certain Mr. Roberts as an agent to purchase arms in Chicago. His mission does not appear to have been too successful as the only surviving correspondence is a telegram from the Minister, Alphonse Caron, advising him to stop making excuses and to find the arms (including pistols) for which he was engaged.⁴

The Minister of Militia & Defence, confirmed the purchase of the pistols in a speech to the House of Commons. Minister Caron stated that "to meet the needs of the Mounted Corps specially organized in the North West, a supply of 'Colts', Army Revolvers . . . were sent forward to Winnipeg."⁵

Records show that the hastily raised irregulars were not prepared to wait for either the Minister or his Department to arm them and proceeded to purchase revolvers from the local Hudson's Bay Company stores and charge them to the Government account.

One group, Boulton's Mounted Corps, made an initial purchase of 25 Colt revolvers at \$25.00 each, 5,000 Cartridges, 25 Belts and 25 Holsters.⁶ Obviously pleased with the product, Boulton returned and bought six more revolvers at a later date. In all, 118 revolvers were bought from merchants in the Northwest Territories.

Some of the revolvers made their way to the Militia units. After the surrender

Fig. 28, 29. Two Colt Model 1878 Revolvers. The upper, s/n 8731 has been stamped 251MD on the frame, the lower, s/n 14616 still shows its original nickel finish and the heat-treated blue trigger. *Fera Collection.*



Fig. 30, 31. This holster was used in the North West Rebellion of 1885 and is marked to indicate that it was later carried to South Africa by the Canadian Mounted Rifles in 1900. *Fera Collection.*

tia until the turn of the century. It was the initial revolver carried to South Africa by the Canadians and some holsters will be found marked to the Canadian Mounted Rifles.

of Riel, Colonel Jackson, the Quartermaster of the Field Force, complained to Ottawa that men of the 9th Battallion, from Quebec, had left for home without returning their pistols into Stores. Ultimately, all the revolvers were returned to Ottawa. This led at least one District Headquarters, the 11th at Victoria, B.C. to suggest that a dozen Colt revolvers be sent to them and held locally. The reasoning was that "it must be evident that in case of a call to active service it would be of little use to apply for these (the revolvers) to Ottawa, 3,000 miles away . . ." In the face of such logic, Headquarters had no choice but to agree and in due time 12 Colt B.L.(Breech loading) revolvers each complete with Holster and Belt and 1,000 rounds of ammunition, were dispatched to Victoria subject to issue on repayment.⁷

The Colt Model 1878 Double Action remained the primary side-arm of the Mili-