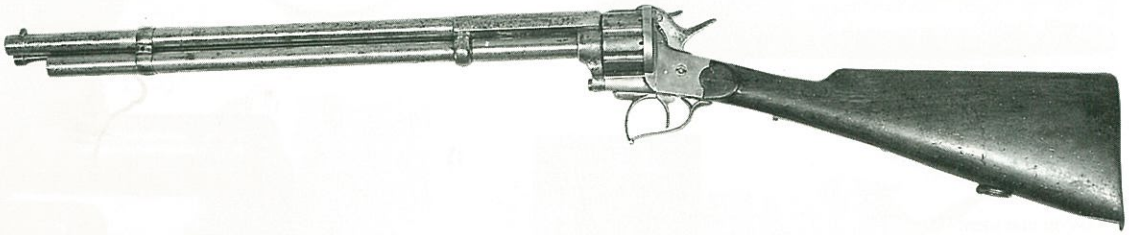
Colonel François A. LE MAT

15 avril 1821 - 28 juillet 1895

Collection Serpette

Marie-Antoinette SERPETTE
Alain F. SERPETTE
avec la collaboration de Valmore J. FORGETT

Belgique Carabine Modèle 1863 carcasse laiton. coup central piston



Collection François Massa

Marquage côté droit du canon

Poinçon Mariette

N° de série 101

Marquage au dessus du canon

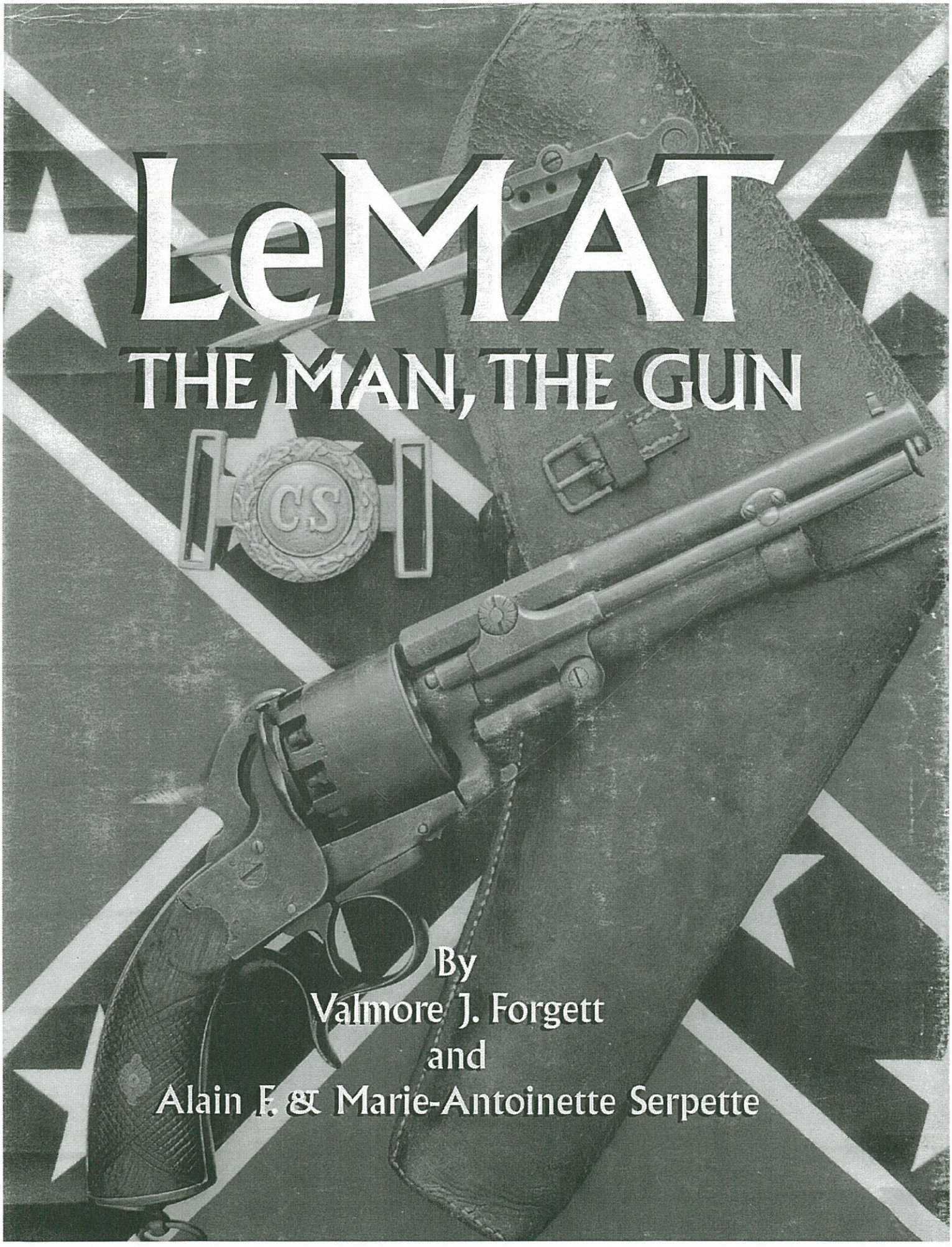
Poinçons d'épreuve et d'inspection de Liège

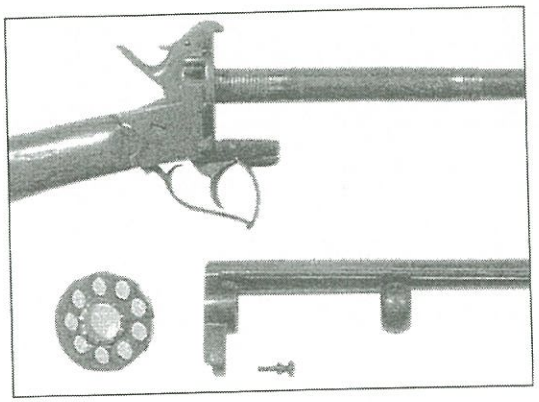
Carabine N° 101
Fabrication MARIETTE

Curieusement, la carcasse est en laiton et porte la signature de "MARIETTE Bté". La pièce d'assemblage des canons est galbée.
Le barillet est à 8 coups.
Deux inscriptions se trouvent sur le canon supérieur octogonal, l'une en français, l'autre en anglais.

Sur le dessus COLONEL LE MAT PATENT
Sur le côté droit COL. A. LE MAT BRté.

N° 101 Belgique 1863
920 x 205 mm
Chambrage 12 mm
Rayure 11.00 mm
Rayer 14 13,2 mm
Poids 2 kg 900


LeMAT
THE MAN, THE GUN
CS
By
Valmore J. Forgett
and
Alain F. & Marie-Antoinette Serpette



NO. 233 Belgian

Belgian Pinfire Carbine, No. 233, appears to have been made in 1863. It shows one of the first of the French double-detent assembly pins. The central shot barrel remains muzzleloading. Frame and mating barrel lug are squared off, as on early revolvers.

Pinfire Carbine Serial No. 101 (Manufactured by Mariette)

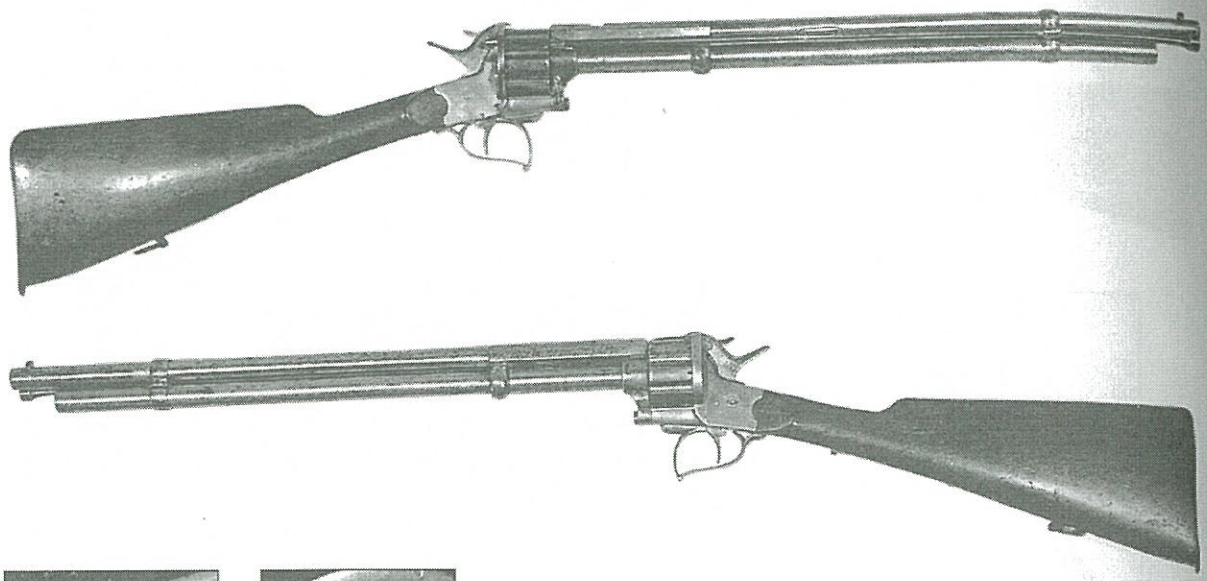
The mechanism for assembling the revolver barrel to the frame is rounded and marked, "Mariette Bte." Bte. abbreviates Brevete (patent) in French.

The octagonal section of the revolver barrel is marked in French and English. The top flat is marked, "COL. A. LE MAT BRte." The right flat reads, "COLONEL LE MAT PATENT."

Chances are that this finely finished, bronze frame carbine was a display model, which would account for the English and French barrel markings. Obviously, it was made before Mariette closed down in 1865.

Serpette also has a full-fluted brass cylinder (see page 36 and 37) that seems to be a prototype for a similar LeMat carbine. It has four teeth on the back face which are part of the rotating mechanism. The separate rear section fits into a flat-bottomed groove around the front part of this bronze cylinder. It would appear to be chambered for a special cartridge that loaded from the front. The shape of the chamber indicates that the cartridge had a rounded base with a projection at the rear for the fulminate. Apparently this design was somewhat similar to the U.S.-made Moore titfire revolver and cartridge designed to get around the American Rollin White patent for cylinders bored all the way through so that cartridges could be inserted from the rear. There were many attempts in the U.S.A. to get around this patent, which was held by Smith & Wesson and vigorously defended in court. Until it ran out in 1873, there were many ingenious front- and side- and even divided-cylinder designs for loading revolver cylinder chambers with equally strange tit-, lip-, cup- and center-rim primed cartridges. Herschel C. Logan, in *Hand Cannon to Automatic—A Pictorial Parade of Hand Arms,* (Huntington, West Virginia, Standard Publications Inc., 1944), shows them all.

This LeMat cylinder would appear to have been developed for the same reasons—to circumvent the LeFaucheux pinfire and Flobert rimfire patents in Belgium and



NO.101 Belgian

Made by Mariette, No. 101, has a rounded rather than squared, and bronze rather than iron, frame with barrel markings in both French and English. Made before 1865 when Mariette closed down, this pinfire would appear to be a display model.

France. Perhaps, unlikely though it may seem, the rest of this prototype arm will be discovered so that it can be put back together. Of course, there is always a chance that the cylinder was made to demonstrate the cartridge design and there never was a complete arm made to fire it. Pictures of this cylinder appear in the chapter on Belgian rimfire LeMats.

Judging by their mechanical features, all three of these LeMat carbines, No. 208 (pinfire), No. 6 and No. 102 were made in 1863 in Liège by Mariette.

Serial Numbering Sequence

All of these pinfire LeMats, whether they bear LeMat markings or not, seem to have been in the same serial numbering sequence. Their Belgian makers seem to have run into the same duplicate numbering problem as the British making percussion models. They seem to have solved them in the same way—in this case by jumping into the 3,000-serial number range. The car-