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## Tabatiere rifle muzzle

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Data de publicació: 21-06-2017

A while back I picked up an interesting single shot shotgun with a bronze receiver. A little research showed it as a ZULU shot gun.

The history of this weapon goes back to the end of the muzzle loading era. With the civil war ushering in the era of the breech loading metallic cartridge firearm. With large stocks of muzzle loading weapons on hand countries needed a way to convert these weapons to a breech loading weapon. One of the first methods was the Snider or Tabatiere conversion.

By the late 1870's large quantities of French converted rifle were on the surplus market with no buyers. A decision was made to convert them to a inexpensive shotgun. This was accomplished by reaming out the rifling in the barrels to make them smooth bore, scrubbing all the original marks off the rifles and then proof them with Belgium proof marks, cut down the stocks to a sporter configuration and removing the rifle sights and installing a front sight bead.

This example is a bronze receiver that was made during the Franco-Prussian war from French church bells that were donated because of the material shortage at the time.

Right side view

Left side view

Close up of the receiver area

Belgium proof marks on the breech block

Marking on the inside of the breech block

The spring that acts as a breech locking device and firing pin retaining pin.

The angle of the hammer and the lack of a gripping surface make it very difficult to pull the hammer back and to drop the hammer by hand. The spring pressure on the hammer is quite high

The trigger guard is from a M1857 rifle musket

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The standard butt plate from a M1857 rifle musket

The front barrel band looks like a piece of copper pipe hammered to fit.

August 30th, 2016 | Category: Brass, converted rifles, French weapons, Historic weapons, single shot rifles, snider conversion