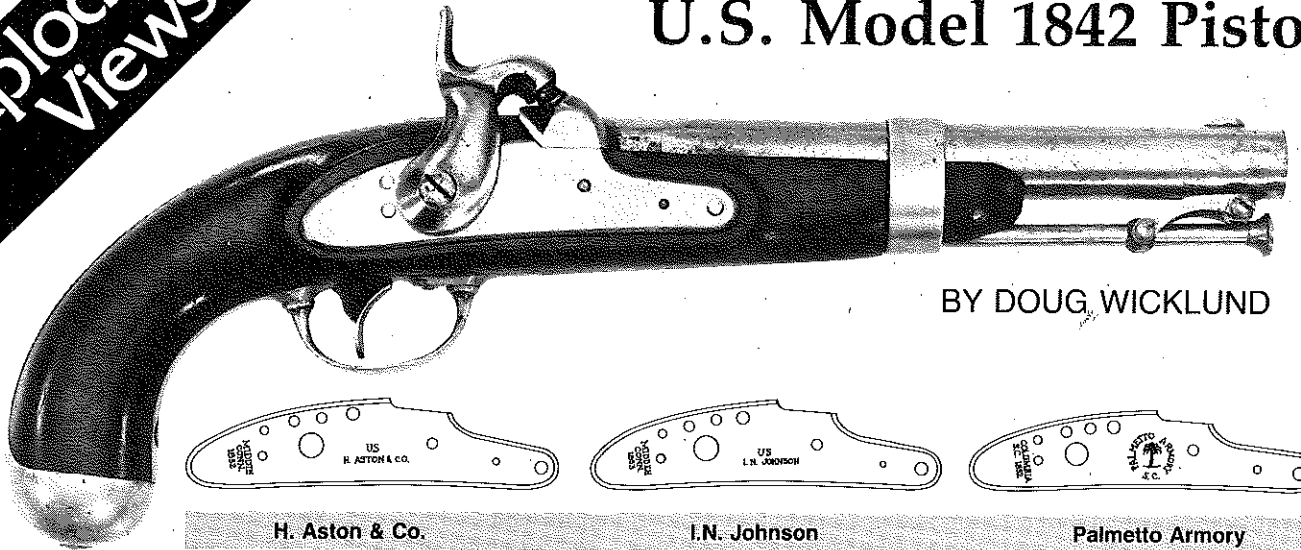


Exploded Views:

U.S. Model 1842 Pistol

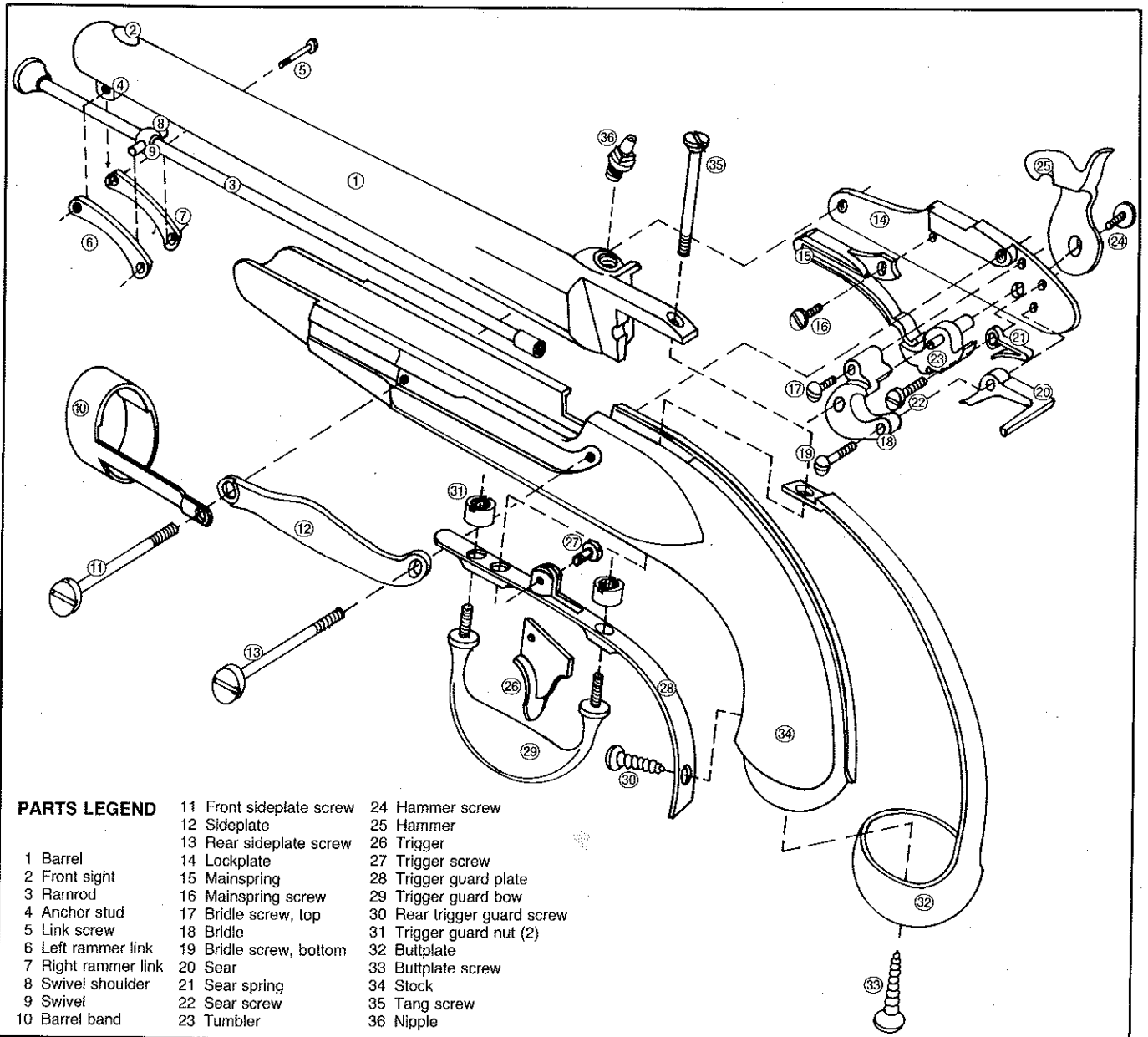


BY DOUG WICKLUND

H. Aston & Co.

I.N. Johnson

Palmetto Armory

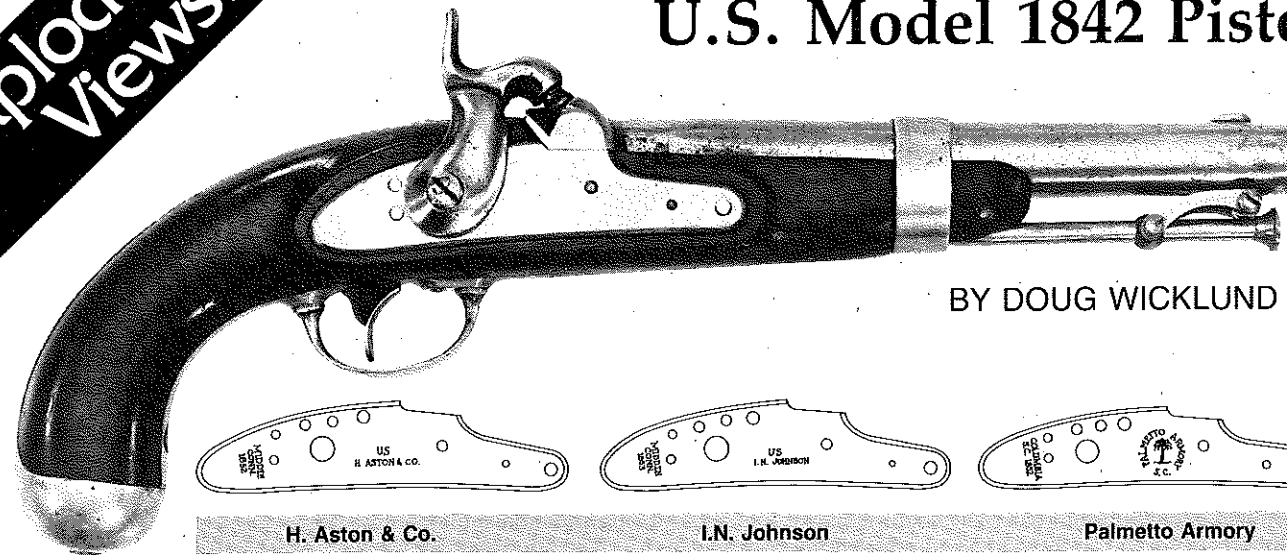


PARTS LEGEND

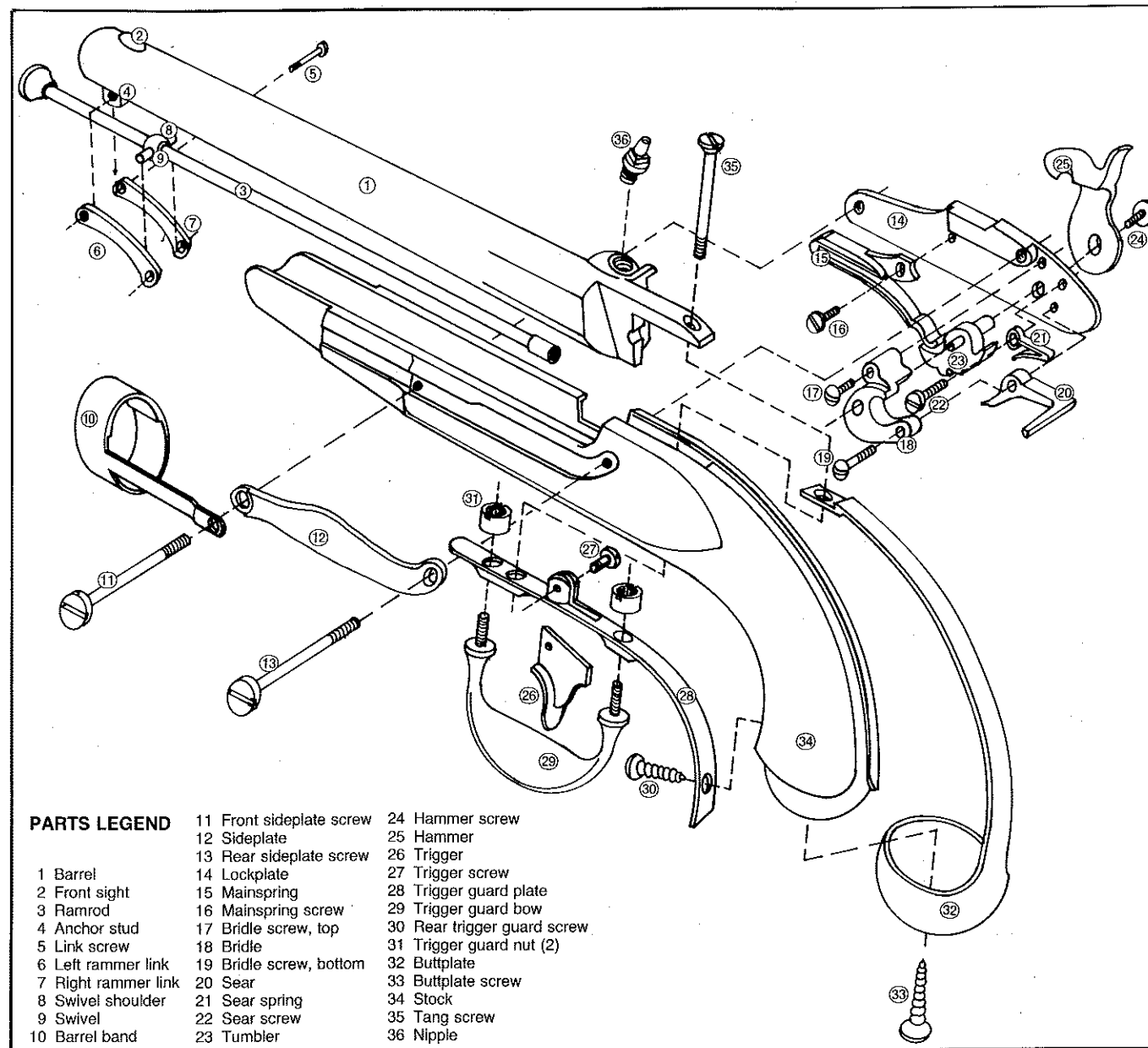
- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Barrel | 11 Front sideplate screw | 24 Hammer screw |
| 2 Front sight | 12 Sideplate | 25 Hammer |
| 3 Ramrod | 13 Rear sideplate screw | 26 Trigger |
| 4 Anchor stud | 14 Lockplate | 27 Trigger screw |
| 5 Link screw | 15 Mainspring | 28 Trigger guard plate |
| 6 Left rammer link | 16 Mainspring screw | 29 Trigger guard bow |
| 7 Right rammer link | 17 Bridle screw, top | 30 Rear trigger guard screw |
| 8 Swivel shoulder | 18 Bridle | 31 Trigger guard nut (2) |
| 9 Swivel | 19 Bridle screw, bottom | 32 Buttplate |
| 10 Barrel band | 20 Sear | 33 Buttplate screw |
| | 21 Sear spring | 34 Stock |
| | 22 Sear screw | 35 Tang screw |
| | 23 Tumbler | 36 Nipple |

Exploded Views:

U.S. Model 1842 Pistol



BY DOUG WICKLUND



PARTS LEGEND

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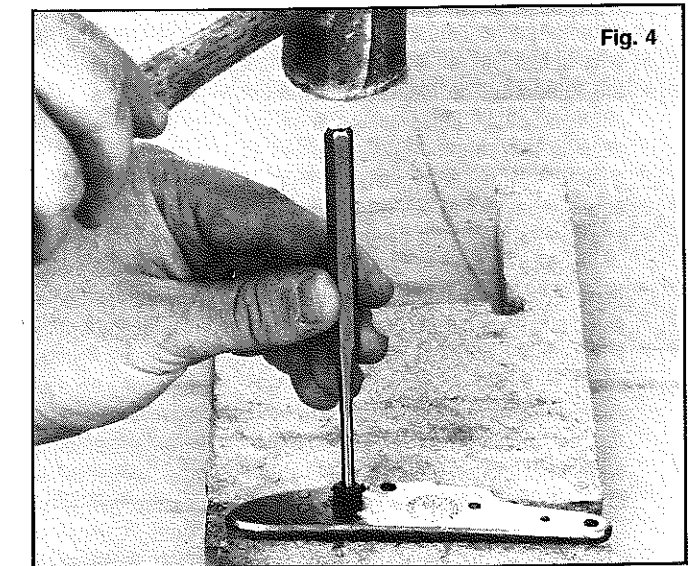
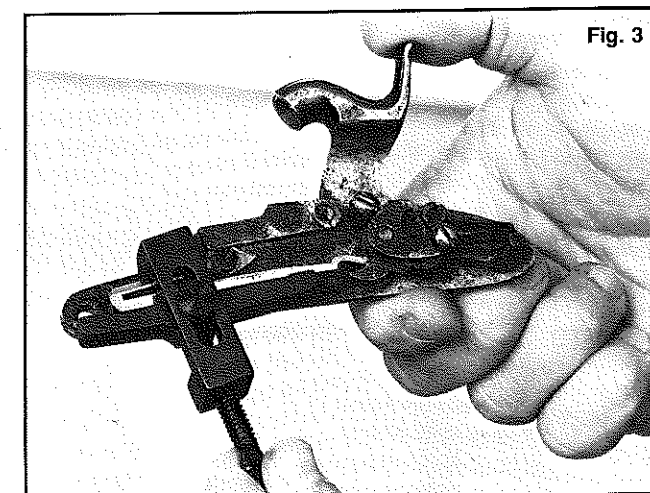
THE U.S. Model 1842 .54 cal. percussion pistol with 8½" barrel was manufactured by Henry Aston and Ira N. Johnson, both operating in Middletown, Conn. While the majority of pistols encountered are from either of these two contractors, pattern pistols were produced at Springfield Armory and a variant was made at the Palmetto Armory in South Carolina prior to the Civil War.

The graceful lines of earlier U.S. martial flintlocks (many of them later converted to percussion) were continued with this percussion smoothbore. Henry Aston, a former employee of Simeon North at Springfield Armory, received a contract for 30,000 pistols at \$6.50 each on February 25, 1845. Specifications for the Model 1842 included all brass furniture, even to the blade front sight, and attachment of the trigger guard was by two spanner nuts instead of riveting as in earlier models. After the reorganization of Aston's company in 1850, his former employee, Ira N. Johnson, received an

independent contract for 10,000 pistols at \$6.75 each. Date stamping on the barrel tang as well as the lockplate was commonly done by both makers of this 2-lb., 12 oz. pistol. Government inspection stamps are found usually on the barrel tang and on the left side of the stock near the sideplate. Original finishing called for all metal surfaces to be left bright except for the blued trigger.

Firing a half-ounce .54 cal. round ball, the Model 1842 provided a potent single-shot package in the Mexican War period, and the guns saw limited use as late as the Civil War. The rarer Palmetto Armory variation, produced by William Glaze & Co. in Columbia, S.C., can be characterized as a Model 1842 pistol with changes in both barrel and lockplate markings and saw service with Southern forces of this period.

While many other percussion firearms of U.S. military origin have been reproduced by foreign and domestic manufacturers, the Model 1842 has yet to get such attention.



Disassembly Instructions

After checking the bore for an unfired charge, the hammer (25) should be drawn back to the half-cock position so as to clear the nipple (36). Loosen the front and the rear sideplate screws (11 & 13) slightly. Once the screw heads have risen above the surface of the sideplate (12), a light, non-marring mallet can be used to gently tap them and free the lockplate (14). Prying the lockplate out from

the other side may result in scarring of the surrounding wood (Fig. 1).

After the lockplate mechanism has been removed from the stock (34), pull out the ramrod (3). Unscrewing the link screw (5) will free the ramrod assembly. The barrel band (10) can be tapped off the stock using a wood drift. The barrel (1) is held in place by the tang screw (35) which terminates in the trigger guard plate (28) (Fig. 2).

To disassemble the lock mechanism, apply

pressure to the mainspring (15) with a main-spring vise or a shop vise (Fig. 3). After removing the mainspring screw (16) the compressed mainspring can be withdrawn from the lockplate. After removing the bottom bridge screw (19) the sear can be taken out. Remove the top bridge screw (17) and the bridge (18). The hammer (25) is held in place by the hammer screw (24). Remove the sear spring screw (22) and the sear spring (21). Tap the tumbler (23) clear of the lockplate (Fig. 4). ■