

4/2/69

Dear Dick,

Your letter of 3/26 and my rifle both arrived yesterday.

C
I have absolutely no trouble with your theory at all. If you recall WHITEFACE, I think the chapter, "The Number of Shots", I felt that way about the lip. It is I who brought to light the fact that the lip was dented, would not have fit the chamber in the condition it was in, and that the cartridges or shells had all been in a rifle and the action operated on an earlier occasion (as I recall, one was in a different rifle). I do not now recall damage to the shoulder. Looking toward some such experiment, do you recall - have some 6.8 empty casings and some with the ammo removed? I think you saw them when you were here. So far as I am concerned, until I can experiment, you have answered it for me.

O
The boys in California (I got the rifle from Eastern Arms) who wanted to borrow it never did return it. I bought it 14 months ago (same rifle, slightly longer barrel). Not until they tried was I able to motivate them. I asked them to send it to N.C. and they did. Louis has just returned it. But the clips are missing. I had a brass and a black clip.

P
I will take it to the local gunshop after daylight this a.m., when I take Lil to work. They will mount the "Hollywood Optics" sight John Nichols gave me. They have a little military ammo for this (would you like me to get you some?) and the Norma (I've had a few shells of that make a couple of years).

Y
The best part is that the local chief of police will help me. They have a range here and a retired colonel as range officer. The chief, who has always been friendly, thinks the range officer will be interested in the experiments I had wanted to do. I had wanted to just blunder around, trying to see how the casings could be damaged. Now we will duplicate your theory. My next-door neighbor is a good amateur photographer, with a good camera....I do not know how soon this will be, because I do not know how long it will take to mount the sight, etc., if they are busy. I also want to get pictures of the clip falling out, which was my original interest in getting the gun.

Hed to get up 4 a.m. to catch up on all and other things I must do, for several old things have simultaneously come to a head - and I so much want to begin writing the epilogue to SCUP. Everything I see justified my belief, including a careful reading of LOCK and Foreman (who went on conjecture only), Hué (who I can explain as only wrong or mercenary, for I do not think he did this over the contempt citation) and Hones, who concedes his former client was guilty, even with fingers crossed. The windows at the PO opened for the first time after receipt of your letter from Lincoln, and I sent him the book special handling. By the way, you should have gotten your Overstreet. I mailed it some time ago. Thanks for everything,

Hurriedly,

26 March 68

Harold:

Keep in mind that presently what I say is based on theoretical knowledge of ballistics, and requires physical tests for verification. With that stipulation I can assert that I am almost certain about what happened to the dented cartridge cases.

I wrote to Nichols and asked him to make certain observations in connection with his regular experiments, for I did not wish to impose on him greatly by getting him to do my work. Still, if you think this matter is important (I think it is), then write to him and ask him to make a special effort to do as I instructed in my last letter to him.

Enclosed ~~xxxx~~ are diagrams showing how the cartridges were dented.

I reviewed Robert Frazier's testimony re his examination of the case. So far I can find nothing that refutes what I ~~xx~~ am going to say, and some things that tend to confirm me. Still, regard this as tentative, for I need to know test results, and I must review many more things. What I will give are tentative conclusions; I regret that I don't have time to discuss on what I base them.

The case with the dented lip was fed unbulleted from the clip to the chamber. Offhand, I would say that the bulleted case was first fired in the rifle, and that later the case only was thrust into the chamber. This may be confusing to you, but it requires considerable explanation, which I cannot undertake now. It involves eliminating other possibilities. It is significant that this case does not have a dented shoulder.

This is apparently what happened to the two cases with dented shoulders (I'll describe this with reference to one, since both are the same): The bulleted cartridge was thrust vigorously into the chamber from the clip; at that time it received the dent on the shoulder (see diagrams). Later, the bullet was pulled from the case (not fired). After that, the case was placed directly in the chamber (not fed from the clip), the bolt was closed over the unbulleted case, the trigger was pulled, the firing pin struck the primer and detonated it.

Presuming that those dents will be blasted out when test firing is done, I can conceive of no other explanation. Frazier's analysis (his observations) support this, as far as I can see. ~~xxxxxx~~ I must recheck, especially the comparison photos that he put in evidence, but so far everything looks good for me.

In what I describe above, do not be confused by my describing events taking place one after the other. The sequence is correct, but I make no reference to time. One action need not necessarily have immediately followed another; that is, any lapse of time may have intervened.

I am helpless without tests. I may be able to get an M-C carbine, which has the same action as "Oswald's" M-C.

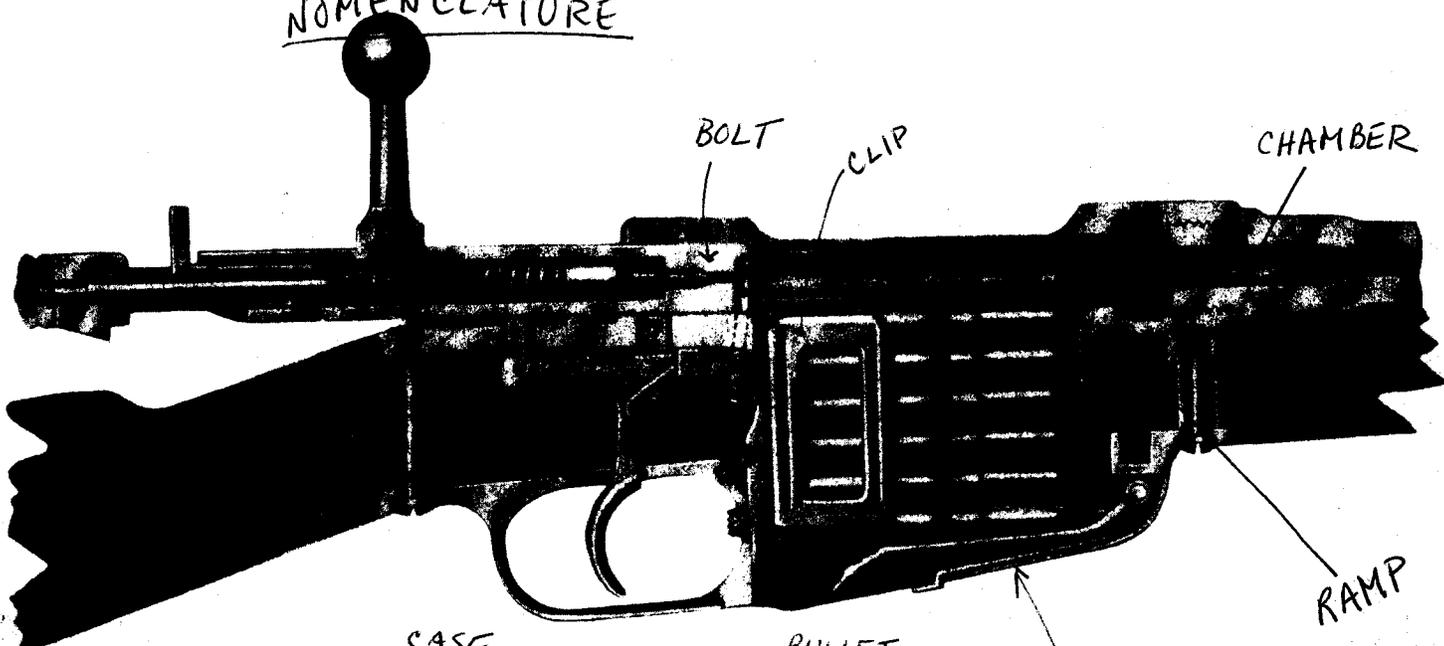
I think that I know perfectly what is going on. If the test results are as I expect, I'll write up a report like the one on the scope sight. I am very excited about this, but I urge you to reserve final judgment until test result are in.

Dick

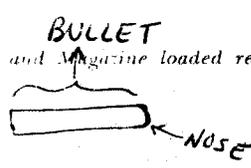
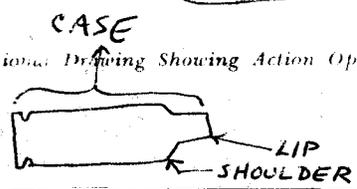
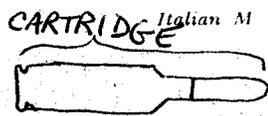
Bernabei.



NOMENCLATURE



ITALY



Italian M1918 Sectional Drawing Showing Action Open and Magazine loaded ready for forward bolt stroke.

MAGAZINE (THE WELL INTO WHICH CARTRIDGES AND CLIP ARE PLACED)

HOW THE SHOULDER OF CASE WAS DENTED (CARTRIDGE [BULLETED CASE] IS THRUST FROM CLIP TO CHAMBER)

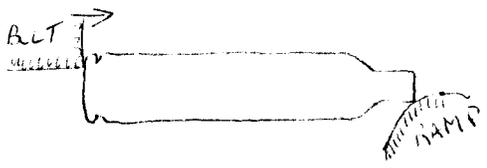


1) ~~MAGAZINE~~ BOLT THRUSTS CARTRIDGE FORWARD; NOSE OF BULLET STRIKES RAMP.



2) CARTRIDGE TIPS UPWARD AS BOLT THRUSTS IT FORWARD. SHOULDER OF CASE STRIKES RAMP AND IS DENTED (THE DEGREE OF DENTING DEPENDS ON HOW VIGOROUSLY THE BOLT IS THRUST FORWARD).

HOW THE LIP OF CASE WAS DENTED (CASE ONLY [NO BULLET] IS THRUST FROM CLIP TO CHAMBER)



BOLT THRUSTING UNBULLETED CASE FORWARD; LIP OF THE CASE STRIKES RAMP AND IS DENTED.

6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano ammo available
from the following:

EASTERN ARMS CORP.

796 S. ARROYO PARKWAY (DEPT. AR-1)

PASADENA, CALIF. 91105

(#6 per 100)

~~REMEMBER~~

You best bet is to call the NRA in Washington and find
out from them who is currently distributing this ammo.
The military surplus is obsolete and running out of
stock, but Norma (mangacoccus) makes them new