

9/16/69

Dear Dick,

Sorry it has taken me more than a month to do what you asked with the three hulls. As I wrote you, I have no cleaning rod and, as you know, empties have hung in my rifle. I could not find an inexpensive rod that will fit in this area, so, after I cleaned up the writing and found large enough pliers, I cut a heavy wire coat ~~was~~ hanger to use instead.

Several things surprised me. Before I get into them let me tell you that I have numbered the hull with red, felt-tipped pens, but because I believe they will not show and do not want to make scratches, I have wrapped each hull separately, with one, two or three red marks on each Kleenex.

I am not certain the shells got marked enough. There may be none on the third, I cannot be sure. I know the first did and there is, I am reasonably confident, a small spot on the second.

Well, the first, the bolt didn't want to close. I had to hit it several times, hard, with the palm of the hand to get it to close. Then, as I'd expected, and as you did, it did not eject. Nor could I push it out with the rod. They I did what I didn't want to, I lifted and plunged with the rod, harder and harder, to no avail. I had given up, it was so firmly bound. They I thought I'd try a hammer. After several hard raps, the shell finally came out.

No. 2 let the bolt close without difficulty. I pulled back on the bolt hard and to my surprise, the shell ejected, at a 90 degree angle- and it went only about three feet, which also surprised me. I was in the livingroom, so it fell on the sofa rag. It may have picked up some lint. I was sitting down.

No. 3 repeated No. 2, in every way, including the surprise.

I presume you blackened the ends so marks would show. My conclusion from this is that, without blowback, there would be little or no marking, in my rifle, from dry runs. I would also deduce that, if the bullet had been removed and the cap left intact, there might still be no marking save, possibly, on the primer cap. But I cannot imagine why, at that early date, Frazier would have done such a thing.

If this test was not adequate, of course, I'll be glad to repeat it. However, there seems to be enough space so that the shells will not mark easily, if at all. I was also surprised that the bolt didn't want to close on No. 1.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Late July 1969

Harold Weisberg and John Nichols

Dear Harold/John:

I would like to write up a memo on the three sets of unidentified marks on the base of cartridge case CE543. The explanation will probably be in accordance with what I mentioned in a previous letter. Before I write, however, I would like to see test cases from other rifles than the one that I use.

Enclosed are three cartridge cases especially prepared to make the desired marks noticeable. Please do the following with each of the three cases:

- (1) Insert the case manually into the chamber of your rifle. Do not use the clip at all; just slip the case by hand into the open breech.
- (2) Thrust the bolt vigorously forward over the chambered cartridge case, and-- if you can-- turn the bolt so that it locks over the case.
- (3) Draw back the bolt. If I understand your rifles correctly, the cartridge case will not be extracted from the chamber. To remove the cartridge case, push a rod through the rifle bore from the muzzle end, and push out the cartridge case.
- (4) Examine the base of the case and be sure that it is marked near the rim. If not, try the same process again until you either get a set of marks or are satisfied that your rifle will not produce them.

When you have done this with all three cases, please re-pack them in the box and return them to me.

It is my understanding that your respective rifles will function as follows:

- (1) Harold's bolts will completely close and turn over the chambered cartridge case, but the extractor will not grip the rim and the case will not be extracted.
- (2) John's bolt will not completely close and turn over the chambered cartridge case. Naturally, the case will not be extracted.

If the rifles you use function differently from that, please tell me.

There is no rush on this, so you can do it at your convenience.

Thanks.

Still,

Dick

Dick Bernabei