
The '03 Springfield and the Mauser Patents

While it's well known the Model 1903 design infringed certain patents belonging to Paul Mauser it's less well known precisely what the patents covered.

Following is a very brief description of the patents involved plus a little background on the issues. Several readily available sources are cited for readers who are interested in more detail as well some guidance for accessing the patent office website. Regarding the patent office site I believe it may be necessary to download some software to view the images. I believe the instructions for the free download are available from inside the site. In the interest of brevity I am keeping this short but there is more to the story and I would encourage those interested to plumb the sources listed below.

A little background:

In the spring of 1904 General Crozier, Chief of Ordnance, communicated with Mauser indicating some concerns over three patents related to the design of the charger (stripper clip) for the new U.S. Rifle. Mauser detailed their US agents Von Lengerke and Detmold to look into the matter. The Mauser patent attorneys in turn requested samples of the chargers and the new rifle which they were provided.

Good News and Bad News!:

Von Lengerke and Detmold and their attorneys having completed their review of the clips and the rifles got back to General Crozier. Of the three original clip patents they advised only two were considered to have been infringed. On the other hand there were five features of the new rifles design they were concerned about. To settle the matter Mauser proposed the US pay royalties in the amounts of \$1.00 per rifle and \$1.00 per thousand chargers.

The parties met and negotiated a settlement whereby royalties would be paid at rates of \$.75 per rifle and \$.50 per thousand chargers. The amounts were to be paid at the agreed rates until the sum totalled \$200,000. At that point the royalties would cease. The agreement was finalized and the first check issued just about one year after General Crozier contacted Mauser. The last royalty payment was issued in 1909 and the matter was officially closed. By and large the transaction was all very businesslike and gentlemanly.

Sources:

More detail on this matter is available from several sources. Chief among them are:

"The '03 Springfield Era", Clark Campbell, Campbell Books 2003

"American Rifle: A Biography", Alexander Rose, Bantam-Dell, 2008 (Available via Amazon Kindle/Ipad)

Credits:

Special Thanks to **Mr Michael Petrov**, who several years ago provided the list of the pertinent patents in the form of a response to a reader's inquiry authored by Col. Townsend Whelen from a 1915 "Outers". Mr Petrov was also kind enough to review an early draft of this writing.

Some Notes on the Notes:

The notes which accompany the patent description are my attempt to summarize what are, in some cases, fairly lengthy legal documents. In some cases multiple claims are covered under a single patent. Any discrepancies or shortcomings in the notes are mine alone. — Jim Gaynor

The Mauser Patents

U.S.

Letters

Patent	Type	Description	Date Issued	Date Expired	Royalty Paid	Notes
590271	Arm	"Small Lock for Bolt Guns"	9/21/1897	11/13/1909	\$.25/rifle	a.
547933	Arm	"Safety Lock for Breech Bolts of Guns"	10/15/1895	4/13/1908		
527869	Arm	"Magazine for Breech Loading Firearms"	10/23/1894	8/12/1907	\$.25/rifle	
477671	Arm	"Shell Extractor for Bolt Guns"	6/28/1892	2/15/1906	\$.05/rifle	b.
467180	Arm	"Shell Extractor for Bolt Guns"	1/19/1892	3/29/1906	\$.20/rifle	c.
547932	Charger	"Cartridge pack for Magazine Guns"	11/15/1895	4/14/1908	\$.50/k clips	d.
482376	Charger	"Cartridge Holder for Magazine Guns"	9/13/1892	9/13/1909		e.

Notes:

- a. This patent accounts for multiple improvements to the ‘small lock’ which seems to be Paul Mauser’s term for what we would call the bolt sleeve. One important improvement is the “Improved Catch” which prevents rotation of the “small lock” or bolt sleeve when the action is opened. It also discusses improvements to the safety lock and the means of coupling the firing pin to the bolt.
- b. This the rotating collar featured in most Mauser designs.
- c. This the extractor design which per the inventor can be adapted to solid or two-piece bolt designs.
- d. Further improvements to the charger including the pairs of “dimples” intended to limit how the charger can be inserted into the receiver.
- e. An improved means of manufacturing the charger.

Using the patent office Website:

- <http://patft.uspto.gov/>
- From the list on the left side select:
- **NUMBER SEARCH**
- Type the patent number in the box labeled “Query” – Select “Search”
- The system will respond with the patent date and some basic information.
- At the bottom of the page will be a box labeled “View Images” - click on it
- The system will respond with images of the patent documents and drawings.
- Use the arrow keys in the yellow box or the menu on the left to scroll thru the pages/sections.
- To search a different patent use your browser “back” button to return to the
- “USPTO Full Text and Image Data Base Screen”
- Click on the “Patent Number” box
- Enter the number in the “Query” box and select “Search”