

The History of Remington Large Bore Conversion Revolvers

The Remington New Model Army revolver was first introduced in 1863, replacing their model 1861 Army revolver. 128,575 Remington percussion revolvers were supplied to Union Armies during the Civil War.

After the War the United States ordnance department was in possession of countless thousands of the then obsolete percussion revolvers from Remington, Colt and other manufacturers. Many of these pieces were sold to mustering out soldiers; thousands were sold at public auction, while thousands remained in the government's possession. Numerous iterations and experimental examples of cartridge conversion methods were tried by the government, various manufacturers and many individuals.

In February 1868 Remington signed an agreement with Smith & Wesson, licensing Remington to use S&W's Rollin White patent. With this agreement, Remington converted 4,574 of their percussion Army revolvers to cartridge. These converted revolvers were delivered to S&W along with a \$1.00 per revolver royalty; the majority of them were, in turn, delivered to Benjamin Kittredge, a major arms dealer in the Mid-West and Western United States. These revolvers were produced during 1868 and 1869 in a bare bones configuration to keep costs down. By the end of 1869 Remington had completed the contract and Rollin White's Patent had expired. Those 4,574 Remington Army conversions are today classified as the Remington *First Type* conversion revolver, or the Remington/Smith & Wesson conversion.

After Rollin White's Patent expired, Remington was free to manufacture conversion revolvers without the cost burden of royalties. They added a cartridge ejector to the *First Type* configuration and classified it as the *Second Type* conversion revolver. Next, they added a recessed ramp preceding the cylinder stop-bolt notches, thus creating the *Third Type* conversion revolver. The *first*, *second* and *third* type conversion revolvers were all manufactured with a 5-shot cylinder chambered for the .46 caliber short rimfire cartridge.

1863 Remington "Thin Plate" Cartridge Conversions by Walt Kirst

In 2017, Walt Kirst of Kirst Konverter LLC reproduced a total of 6 Remington "Thin Plate" conversion revolvers. Walt used 1858 Pietta frames and custom machined parts to recreate these rare Remington revolvers, which are historically correct firearms, except that they are now chambered for the popular .45 Colt cartridge.

Walt produced only 1 of the *First Type* conversion revolvers using a roll engraved frame to give it a true, one-of-a-kind look.





Close-up of the roll engraving on the Kirst *First Type* Remington New Model Army revolver.

The photo below shows the loading lever lowered and the base pin pulled forward to easily remove the conversion cylinder from the frame for reloading.



Walt Kirst produced a total of 5 *Second Type* conversion revolvers complete with an ejector, for quicker removal of the spent cases.



Note the Thin Plate attached to the frame of the conversion revolver.

