

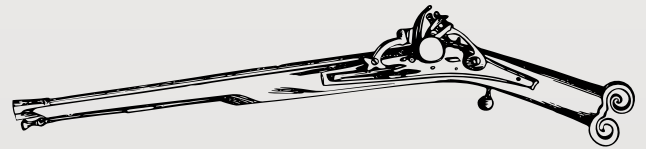
KEEP YOUR POWDER DRY!

Part 4.2:

Unusual Firearms II



THE PREVIOUS ARTICLES IN THIS SERIES focused on the main types of firearms found within each “era.” Every era, however, saw plenty of innovation in the desire to produce more efficient and effective firearms. Not all such innovations worked; among those that did, some simply never gained enough traction to become staples of their era. This article in the series looks at the latter, offering a list of unusual firearms in which to pepper your campaign.



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FIRST AND SECOND ERAS (TO 1700 AD)

The first and second eras of firearms were discussed in “Keep Your Powder Dry!: Unusual Firearms, Part 1.”

THIRD ERA (1700–1860 AD)

The third era of firearms saw the creation of many weapons with unbelievable destructive capacity, completely altering the way wars were fought. Traditional fantasy weapons like the sword and spear were all but entirely obsoleted by this new technology. As such, use caution when introducing these weapons to your campaign world in large quantities.

Barrel Chain Rifle. This rifle has a barrel that is fed by chambers attached to a belt wrapped around the outside the gun, like a machine gun belt. Where it differs from the later belt-fed machine guns is that the chain rifle must be manually loaded and the chamber locked in place before the bullet is fired.

Elephant Gun. The elephant gun is simply a large caliber rifle that was designed to bring down large game. In a fantasy setting it may be named after a more exotic creature (Drake gun, Giant Killer, etc). It might also be the preferred firearm of a larger race such as a bugbear or ogre. The elephant gun does more damage than a comparable rifle but is a breechloader with a smaller capacity.

The pistol-sized version of an elephant gun is commonly known as a “howdah pistol” because it was originally used by riders in a howdah (the covered saddle of an elephant).

Flintlock Revolver. This early attempt at a revolver uses flintlock technology. It still has a smoothbore barrel common to flintlocks, but lacks



the weight of a pepperbox. Musket versions have been made, but the tendency of chain fire to rend the hand holding the barrel grip has made the larger version quite unpopular.

Grapeshot Revolver. This cap & ball revolver has a 9-shot cylinder that revolves around a single-shot smoothbore shotgun barrel. A lever on the hammer enables the shooter to switch between firing bullets or the shotgun shell.

The grapeshot revolver is also available as a carbine, which greatly increases its range.

Gun Cane. Created as a “surprise weapon” for self-defense, this walking cane conceals a smoothbore single-shot carbine within its length. The handle is weighted so that it can also be used as a club.

Harmonica Gun. These early attempts at true multi-shot guns are cap & ball firearms that use a “slide” to move the next bullet into position (the slides resemble harmonicas, hence the name). There are three big disadvantages to this. The first is that the slide must be manually moved, turning even a pistol into a two-handed weapon. The second is that, given the manual action, it’s easily to misalign (and, after the first shot or two, the slide can become hot). The third is that the heft of the slide tends to unbalance the weapon.

Hexagonal Rifle. This single-shot muzzle-loaded rifle has a hexagonal barrel, which enabled

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SIMPLE RANGED WEAPONS

Name	Cost*	Damage	Weight	Properties
Barrel Chain Rifle	800 gp	2d8 piercing	10 lb.	Ammunition (range 200/800), capacity (14), loading, loud, misalignment, two-handed
Elephant Gun	500 gp	2d10 piercing	15 lb.	Ammunition (range 50/150), capacity (2), heavy, loading, loud, two-handed, volley
Elephant Pistol	300 gp	2d8 piercing		Ammunition (range 20/60), capacity (2), heavy, loading, loud, two-handed, volley
Flintlock Revolver	500 gp	1d10 piercing	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 20/60), capacity (5), chain fire, loading, loud
Grapeshot Carbine	800 gp		10 lb.	
Bullet		2d6 piercing		Ammunition (range 100/400), capacity (9), chain fire, loud, two-handed
Shot		special		Ammunition (range 20/60), loud, misfire, shot (2d6 piercing), two-handed
Grapeshot Revolver	700 gp		5 lb.	
Bullet		2d6 piercing		Ammunition (range 50/200), capacity (9), chain fire, loud
Shot		special		Ammunition (range 10/30), loud, misfire, shot (2d4 piercing)
Gun Cane	300 gp	1d10 piercing	2 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/90), loading, loud, misfire, two-handed
Harmonica Pistol	600 gp	2d6 piercing	6 lb.	Ammunition (range 200/800), capacity (10), loud, misalignment, unwieldy
Harmonica Rifle	800 gp	2d8 piercing	12 lb.	Ammunition (range 200/800), capacity (10), loud, misalignment, two-handed
Hexagonal Rifle	1000 gp	2d8 piercing	9 lb.	Ammunition (range 300/1200), loading, loud, two-handed
Lever Action Carbine	700 gp	2d4 piercing	9 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), capacity (30), loading, loud, misfire, two-handed
Lever Action Pistol	600 gp	2d4 piercing	2 lb.	Ammunition (range 50/200), capacity (10), loading, loud, misfire
Needle Rifle	600 gp	2d8 piercing	9 lb.	Ammunition (range 200/800), loud, misfire, two-handed
Rotating Revolver	1000 gp	2d6 piercing	12 lb.	Ammunition (range 30/120), capacity (48), chain fire, heavy, loud, unwieldy
Turret Pistol	500 gp	2d6 piercing	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 50/200), capacity (5), loud, turret chain fire
Turret Rifle	700 gp	2d8 piercing	9 lb.	Ammunition (range 200/800), capacity (5), loud, turret chain fire, two-handed
Volley Musket	1000 gp	special	15 lb.	Ammunition (range 40/120), heavy, loading, loud, misfire, two-handed, volley (1d12 piercing, disadvantage)
Volley Pistol	800 gp	special	4 lb.	Ammunition (range 20/60), loading, loud, misfire, volley (1d10 piercing)

* Costs are for settings where such firearms are commonly available. The GM should feel free to increase the cost if the weapons are sufficiently rare; in some settings they may even be considered priceless “magic” items!

it to be more accurate and effective at longer ranges. While popular with sharpshooters, this rifle is expensive to make and requires special bullets to use.

Lever Action Gun. The lever-action rifle is ubiquitous in American Westerns, but this early version had a second innovation – a bullet that had powder inside it, making it caseless. The bullets are loaded into the gun and each is deposited into the barrel when the creature pumps the lever. A lever action gun holds more rounds than a typical revolver, but due to the smaller amount of powder the bullets don't do as much damage. Lever action guns were made as pistols and carbines (the latter often being called a "rifle").

Needle Rifle. Despite its name the needle rifle doesn't shoot needles; it is named for the way in which it fires bullets. This early breech-loading design includes a cartridge that expels a bullet when it is hit with a needle that is driven into it when the trigger is pulled.

Rotating Revolver. This beast of a pistol is a revolver-within-a-revolver; eight six-round cylinders are attached to a wheel that, when turned, deposits each into place behind the barrel. While this gives the creature a whopping 48 shots before the weapon needs to be reloaded, it is difficult to hold and carry. That said it could become a terrifying weapon in the hands of a large creature or if the technology were refined into a more manageable carbine or rifle.

Turret Gun. This early attempt at a revolver slots the bullets into a wheel. Pulling the trigger sparks the bullet at the front of the wheel so that it travels through the barrel. Unfortunately, the turret gun is prone to a special kind of chain fire that effectively makes the creature shoot itself!

Volley Gun. Volley guns are pepperboxes that are designed to fire all barrels simultaneously so that groups of enemies can be shot at once (one interesting variation, the "duck's foot" pistol, has four barrels spread apart not unlike spreading one's fingers).

WEAPON PROPERTIES

The following weapon properties new to firearms in this article are described below.

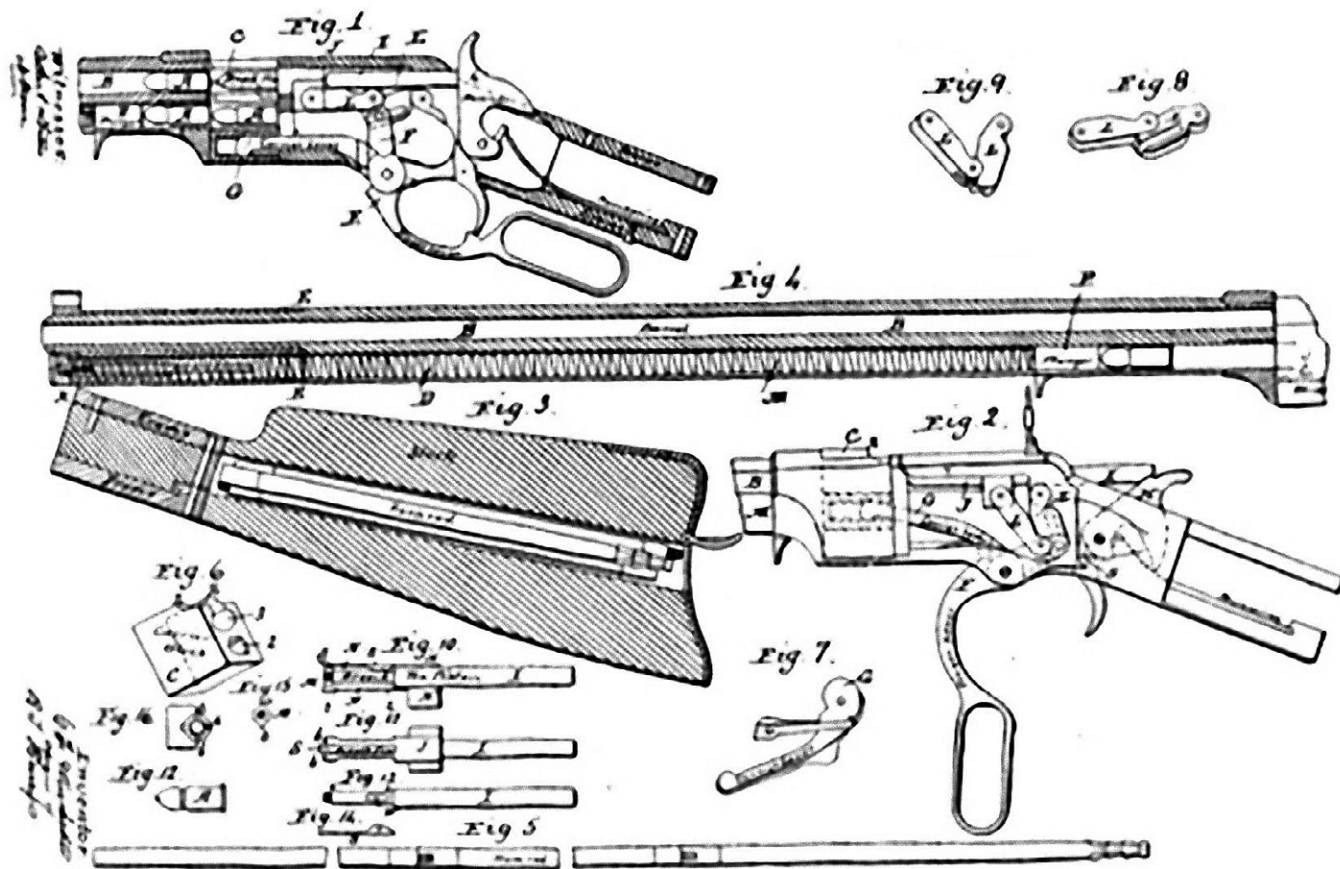
Capacity. The firearm contains multiple bullets that may be fired before the weapon needs to be reloaded. When reloading, the creature may choose how many shots to load the firearm with up to its maximum capacity.

Chain Fire. One problem with early multi-chambered firearms is that the spark of igniting the gunpowder could accidentally ignite all barrels. If a multi-chambered firearm such as a pepperbox or revolver is used in a ranged attack and a 1 is rolled, then the creature must make a chain misfire saving throw. On a roll of 10 to 20 the weapon misfires as normal. On a roll of 1 to 9 the weapon instead suffers a chain misfire, igniting an additional 1d2 chambers. All bullets fire at the same target, but the additional bullets have disadvantage on the roll and automatically miss if the target is beyond the normal range.

Loud. Firearms are noisy and expel a lot of powder when fired. If you are hiding, then you have disadvantage on ability checks to remain hidden or move silently while other creatures have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to see, hear, and smell you.

Misalignment. Barrel chain rifles and harmonica guns suffer a special kind of misfire. When the bullet is not properly aligned, whether due to forgetting to lock in a barrel or misaligning the slide, then the creature risks damaging the gun and itself. When it rolls a 1 on its attack roll, the barrel is considered cracked (as per the disadvantaged misfire rule) and the creature takes 1d4 damage from powder and shrapnel released by the explosion.

Shot. The weapon may fire multiple projectiles instead of a single round. If shot is used, then all creatures within range (the shot is cone-shaped) must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take damage. If the attacker has a spell save or maneuver save DC higher than 15, use the higher DC. Creatures in long range have advantage on their saving throw.



Turret Chain Fire. Turret guns are susceptible to chain fire, but their unique configuration gives them different rules. When a creature using a turret gun rolls a 1 on its attack roll, the spark ignites all shots. Given that one or more shots are pointed at the creature, the creature suffers damage as if it'd shot itself in addition to the normal fouling of the barrel due to a misfire (a GM may ignore this and impose only the misfire if the turret gun only had 1 or 2 chambered bullets left).

Unwieldy. The firearm's design makes it difficult to use one-handed. A creature that uses such a weapon one-handed has disadvantage on attack rolls made with that weapon.

Volley. The firearm is designed to fire multiple rounds at once. To keep things simple, treat the volley as a cone originating from the end of the barrel. Make a single attack roll against the target of the attack. After resolving that attack, all creatures within the cone (range equal to the weapons short range) must make a DC 12

Dexterity saving throw or take the listed damage. If the firearm has less than 5 barrels then the victims get advantage on their saves. This does mean that there's a chance for the primary target to be shot twice!

EQUIPMENT AND CUSTOMIZATION

All the equipment and options listed under "Gunpowder and Ammunition" and "Customizing Firearms" in the previous articles in this series are available for the firearms contained in this article. You can also use this new customization method:

Volley Fire. A pepperbox may be modified to fire volleys instead of single balls. It gains the volley property with damage equivalent to a single ball fired from the weapon. A creature can either convert the pepperbox on its own if it has a gunsmith kit or pay 50 gp to an expert to make the conversion for it. 