

Remington "Rolling Blocks" in the Horn of Africa

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*When it roars, it roars like a lion.
When it sits down, it is like a corpse.
What it is?
A Gun!*

While this nineteenth century Amharic poem could have referred to a number of firearms, the author was probably speaking of the Remington Rolling Block. Why? Because up to the 1890s, it was the most popular rifle in the Horn of Africa. A region which includes Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan, it witnessed the import of over 250,000 Rolling Blocks between 1869 and 1900.¹

This investigation traces the impact of these weapons on Northeast Africa. Their purchase and how they were employed reveals a fascinating story. Rolling Blocks were not only a good military investment, but also a tool of diplomacy, the symbol of kingly power, and even a unit of currency.

Our research begins in Africa of the 1820s. That decade witnessed the establishment of the continent's first modern military-industrial complex. Centered in Egypt, it was the brain-child of Muhammad Ali *Pasha*, an Ottoman governor whose dynastic ambitions required independence and a large army.

While Egyptian gunmakers already had a long history, their individual efforts were not sufficient for a rapid expansion of military power. Initially, Muhammad Ali filled this gap by purchasing surplus firearms from post-Napoleonic Europe. Next, students were sent to study western gunmaking techniques. Finally, armories were established in Cairo and Alexandria which produced copies of English Tower and French M1777 muskets. While not noted for producing quality weapons by 1837, the Cairo armory was able to finish 4,000 muskets every month.²

At the same time, private gunmakers continued their work, producing ornate pistols and rifles which often featured significant amounts of silver or brass inlay. Baron Henniker noted the addition of tongs to the end of pistol ramrods as another mark of Egyptian firearms. Their purpose was to hold tinder for lighting up tobacco - an ubiquitous habit among the Egyptian military.³

Pistols like these were purchased by officers,



and often times, the higher the rank, the more costly the firearm. In a nation with strict gun control laws, owning weapons was considered a badge of office by the Turks, Circassians and Albanians who comprised Egypt's ruling elite. Indeed, Yusef Hekekyan, a keen observer of the period, often referred to these men as the "pistol gentry."⁴

Thus it seems fitting that the first American weapons sold on the Egyptian market were revolvers. Abbas *Pasha*, who ruled from 1848-1855, equipped his 6,000 household troops with "American revolvers." In 1865, the government purchased an additional 2,000 Colt M1851 Navy percussion revolvers.⁵

Between these two orders, a remarkable turn-about nearly took place. On November 19, 1861, William Seward, Secretary of State of the United States, received eleven .58 caliber Minie rifles with sabre bayonets. These were samples of 40,000 muskets offered to Federal authorities at eleven dollars each. Who was behind this deal? It was none other than Said *Pasha*, the successor to Abbas, and a man whose taste for fine weapons often emptied the Egyptian Treasury. Fallen on hard times, he had already demobilized part of the army, and now saw the American Civil War as a means to get rid of his surplus arms. Seward informed U.S. Consul Thayer that while America did not have the cash to purchase this lot, no effort was to be spared in discouraging Said from selling them to the Confederacy. Thayer was successful, with the result that relations

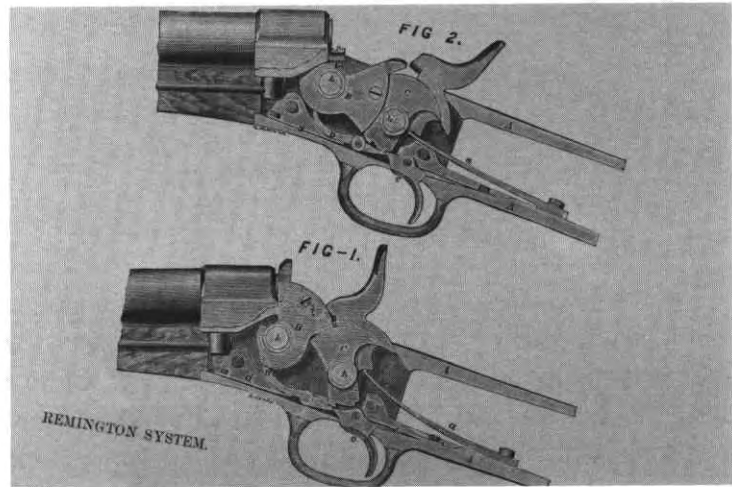


The Remington Rolling Block Action.

between Egypt and the U.S. Federal Government remained "very favorable".⁶

While Egyptian rifles never made it to the United States, American weapons would soon flood the Nile Valley. Several factors help to explain this. First, the Civil War marked a decisive transformation in the economic and industrial history of firearms. Heavy demands for both quality and quantity spurred the development of weapons factories in both the North and South. These needs ended in 1865, leaving armaments companies with superior products, the capability of mass production, significant capital investment - and vastly diminished sales. Survival called for the capture of new markets overseas, and one company superbly capable of such conquests was E. Remington & Sons of Ilion, New York. Samuel Remington, President and chief company salesman, clearly recognized the post - 1865 challenge facing U.S. weapons makers. His leadership, plus innovative products, allowed the company to dominate a significant percentage of the international arms market.⁷

What was he selling? The rolling breech block system designed by Joseph Rider and Leonard Geiger became the mainstay of Remington sales well into the 1880s; indeed, it is said that the design "saved the Remington Company from bankruptcy."⁸ Immensely strong, accurate, easy to operate and maintain, Remington's rolling block weapons were the most logical choice for the unsophisticated soldiery often found in conscript armies. No mere sales pitch, Remington's claims were backed up by prestigious authority. General George Armstrong Custer wrote the company to praise the rolling block's high degree of accuracy. General William T. Sherman thought highly of it, while U.S.



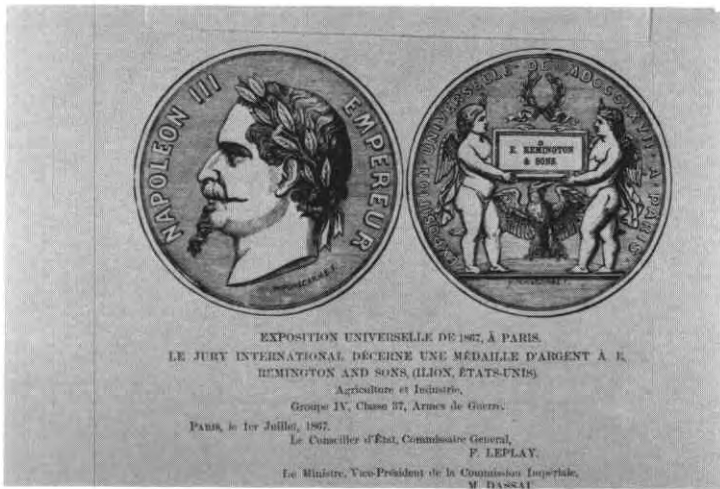
Details of the Remington Action.

Government field testing graded this rifle as "an excellent infantry weapon".⁹

For a variety of reasons, foreign competition against Remington was nil. First, European gunmakers could match neither the output nor the efficiency of the Remington rolling block. Second, most available breech-loading systems were inferior in design. England produced the Snider-Enfield, a musket conversion whose hinged breech did not have the rolling block's strength. While the Martini-Henry was better, poorly devised ammunition and fouling problems reduced its appeal. Prussia's *Zundnadelgewehr* [needle-fire rifle] was worse: clumsy, difficult to cock, and ineffective beyond 500 yards. The French Chassepot was better, but used a silk-wrapped cartridge that caused much fouling and created a fragile gas seal. Finally, it should be noted that the best of these weapons were entering military service for the first time, and as such, only small numbers were available for the export market.¹⁰

Another big plus was the silver medal awarded Remington at the Paris International Exposition of 1867. As this was the highest award for firearms, rolling blocks now had an international reputation. It was here that Samuel Remington met *Khedive* Ismail, Muhammad Ali's grandson and current ruler of Egypt. It was here also that dreams of an African empire meshed with those of lucrative contracts.¹¹

The Egyptian military increased significantly during the reign of Ismail (1863-1879), and the *Khedive* wanted his troops to be modern in every way. To accomplish this, he hired numerous foreign advisors, the majority of whom were Americans, and purchased first-rate equipment. Indeed, the main purpose of his trip to Paris was to select a suitable rifle. Claude Minie *Bey*,

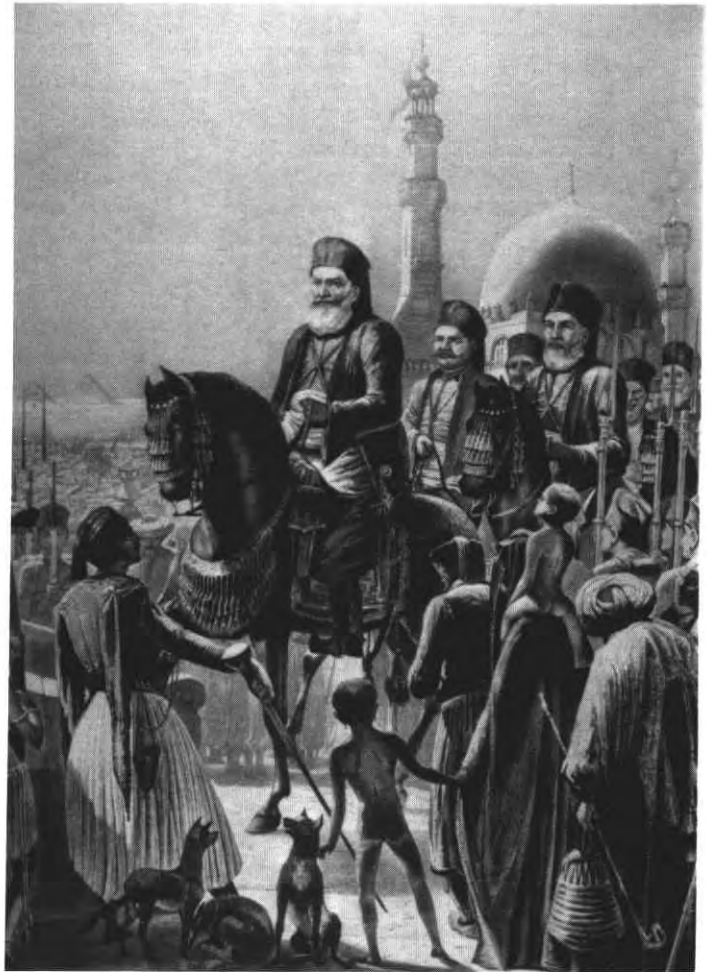


The Remington Medal from the Paris International Exposition, 1867. The three photos are from Norton, *American Breechloading Small Arms*, (New York, 1872) the inventor, Hassan Aflatun, an ordnance expert, Muhammad Ratib *Pasha*, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and Prince Hassan, the Khedive's third son, formed a committee to help in the selection. Their unanimous choice was the Remington rolling block, whereupon Ismail invited Samuel Remington to visit Cairo for tests.¹²

These took place in 1868 at the Taura Artillery School, where Remington displayed his flair both as a marksman and a salesman. Telling Ismail that U.S. Troops were equipped with rolling blocks helped clinch the deal, even if far from the truth. The end result was a June 30, 1869, contract signed in London. It called on Remington to produce 60,000 rifles in what soon came to be called ".43 Egyptian caliber" and for production in Ilion to be supervised by a team of U.S. Army inspectors led by Minie *Bey*.¹³

As a bonus to an already lucrative agreement, Samuel Remington obtained a choice plot of Cairo real estate as a personal gift from Ismail. Here he built a mansion which became his regional sales headquarters. As future deals loomed on a bright horizon, Remington's home became part of the winter social scene for Egypt's American colony. A former Confederate, Colonel Charles Graves, noted that everybody usually had a good time with Remington, "because there is no North or South here."¹⁴

This spirit of unity is one reason for Remington's success in Egypt, which Consul General George Butler described as "a fine field for American arms sales."¹⁵ Butler and other American diplomats pushed for increased trade between the two nations. When one considers that Egypt's imports for 1872 were \$29.5 million, and that the U.S. share was only \$358,000,



Muhammad Ali, Viceroy of Egypt (1805-1848), introduced many western institutions, including a number of modern weapons' factories. Durand-Viel, *Les Campagnes Navales de Mohammed Aly et d'Ibrahim*. (Paris, 1938). Remington's contract was not only considerable, but viewed as a wedge to open the door for additional sales. While unofficial, American diplomatic support for Remington ventures continued until the British occupation of 1882.¹⁶

Generals Thaddeus Mott and Charles P. Stone, Ismail's senior foreign mercenaries, also lobbied for the purchase of American weapons. Rodman artillery, Gatling machine guns, a cartridge factory and two more rifle contracts followed, all funneled through Ismail's American purchasing agent, E. Remington & Sons. As can be imagined, such rapid success caused suspicion and jealousy amongst Remington's competition. Austrian, French and British authorities were piqued at the influx of American advisors into the Egyptian armed forces, and the unprecedented weapons sales. The Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) temporarily ended such attention, and also impacted on the production in Ilion of Egyptian rolling block rifles.¹⁷

Ismail wanted to order an additional 100,000 rifles, but was told by Butler that "with France in pos-



Col. Claude Mine Bey, (1804-1879). Inventor of Minie system and rifle school advocate. Entered Egyptian service in 1858, and figured prominently in the 1867-1869 negotiations for Egyptian Rolling Blocks. Myatt, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of 19th Century Firearms*, (New York, 1994).



Thaddeus Mott Pasha, Chief of Staff to Ismail (1869-1871). A New Yorker whose fluent Turkish gave him considerable influence in the Egyptian court, he strongly supported the Remington contract. Crabtree, *Americans in Egyptian Army*, (London, 1938).

session of the market, such was now impossible.¹⁸ French Ordnance was desperate, absorbing Remington's entire manufacturing capability. Ismail, always the consummate politician, saw this as a chance to gain influence with Paris. To do so, he delayed his own order, and agreed to "default" on the remaining rolling blocks already owed him, allowing France to purchase the weapons. As a result, some of the 174,000 Remington rifles and carbines shipped to France in 1870-1871 were part of the original Egyptian contract.¹⁹

While deliveries to Egypt resumed after 1871, it was not until 1875 that the majority of Egyptian soldiers obtained Remington rolling blocks. Some retained their Minie rifles, while a select few on the frontier were issued Snider-Enfield rifles and carbines. Such weapons proved invaluable to Sir Samuel Baker's campaign to conquer the southern Sudan. Another of Ismail's many mercenaries, he credited his victory at Masindi June 8, 1872, to his men's use of breechloaders. Indeed, it seemed "nothing could withstand Baker's impetuous daring backed by his Snider rifles."²⁰

News of such triumphs only spurred the desire of most Egyptian commanders to obtain rolling block firearms. The years 1873 to 1875 were full of official requests for the new rifles. A Sudanese administrator,

Emin Pasha, noted that Remington firearms provided such a significant firepower advantage that in many cases small bodies of troops could travel through the Sudan's most dangerous regions without fear of resistance.²¹

Remington rolling block weapons issued to these troops came in three varieties: the No. 1 military rifle, a cut-down version often referred to as a "musketoon", and the No. 1 military carbine. All arrived from America with blued steel and walnut stocks. Rifle barrels were fitted with a lug to accept a sabre bayonet. Repairs by unit armorers or at government arsenals often substituted other woods, and regulations later removed the blueing. This was a necessity as Egypt's plentiful supply of dust and sand made oiling weapons almost impossible. Cleaning then was accomplished by polishing weapons until they shined "like glass."²² There are no strict rules on determining a standard barrel length.²³ Recorded are: 35.25-36.5 inches for the rifle, 24-26 inches for the musketoon, and 20.5-23.5 inches for the carbine. Markings on these weapons vary, with an "EP" cartouche surrounded by a crescent and a star over a crescent, being common features. One often finds a mass of Arabic numerals and characters stamped on the receiver and upper



Charles Stone Pasha, Ordnance expert and Chief of the Egyptian General Staff (1871-1882). Promoted army modernization and the use of Remington made weapons. Also from Crabitias.



Close up of Arabic characters often found on .43 Remington Rolling Blocks. It is possible that these are post-1882 control marks placed after the weapons were declared surplus. Courtesy of George Layman.

barrel near the chamber. As some of the numerals seem like date stamps, it is possible these are post-1882 markings from when the guns had been surplussed to Cairo's Citadel Arsenal. Rifles chambered for the .43 (11 x 50R) Egyptian cartridge are common. The Egyptian carbine and musketoon are rarely encountered by collectors today.²⁴

James McCoan, writing in 1877, estimated a total of 200,000 rolling block weapons were stored in Egyptian arsenals. Adding another 20,000 for first-line active duty troops, and considering attrition, one might guess that Remington sent slightly under a quarter of a million rifles and carbines to Egypt in the period 1869-1880.²⁵

Long arms were not the only Remington weapons sent to Egypt. Opinion holds that significant numbers of .44 caliber M1875 revolvers were sold. The story of the so-called "Egyptian Model", however, is very unclear. Certainly there were significant numbers of six-guns used by Ismail's military. Despite this, there are few definitive answers as to the exact models employed. Noted Remington collector Leon Wier has had extensive correspondence with Cairo museum authorities, but to this date has failed to turn up a single photo of an Egyptian revolver M1875. This does not

preclude the possibility of their existence, but forces one to take a somewhat neutral stance until primary sources reveal otherwise.²⁶

Far less ambiguous is the story behind Remington's sale of milling machines and ammunition factories. Always living in his grandfather's shadow, Ismail wanted to create a new military industrial complex that would rival that of the 1830s. The new workshops were part of the original Remington contract and could provide spare parts, repairs and most important, ammunition for the rolling blocks.²⁷

This was a significant improvement for the Egyptian military. Previously, locally made gunpowder had been, in the words of *Murray's Handbook*, "scarce, bad and dear". In addition the older paper cartridges could get wet and misfire, or easily explode if placed close to a fire. Remington's cartridge machinery solved these problems, as the powder was improved and the cases were now metallic.²⁸

Alexandria, Cairo, Suez and Khartoum all obtained cartridge factories. The capital had the largest and most efficient of these plants. During the 1882 British invasion it employed 2,000 people with 24 hour shifts, and produced up to 60,000 rounds per day. Ismail was very proud of these ventures, so much so



Rather dramatic recreation of the battle of Masindi (1872), where Baker *Pasha* sent his "Forty Thieves" against a much larger African force. Breechloading rifles assured an Egyptian victory, and also encouraged the purchase of yet more Rolling Blocks. From the author's collection.

that a locally designed Remington bullet mold was part of the Egyptian exhibit at 1873 Vienna International Exposition.²⁹

Several varieties of Egyptian-manufactured rolling block ammunition exist. Standard issue consisted of a center fire bottle-necked case with 76 grains of powder and a 400 grain lead bullet. These came out of the factory in twelve-round paper packets, which were shipped to the troops in large zinc-lined wooden boxes. Variations include the same cases with square shaped buckshot and Kynoch ammunition with small brown buckshot. These may have been produced after 1882 for use in crowd control. Even more exotic were the special rounds produced by superstitious members of the Equatoria garrison. Here, deep in the Southern Sudan, Egyptian soldiers feared their so-called "bullet-proof" enemies. The problem was solved by melting down a Maria Theresa thaler, the standard currency of this region, and recasting the silver into .43 caliber bullets. Less well-to-do troopers inserted pegs of ebony wood or copper into the soft lead.³⁰

Despite such unorthodox alterations, Remington rolling blocks could stand up to considerable abuse. Improper care, or the use of old ammunition, sometimes caused the base of a cartridge to blow off, as happened to General Charles Gordon during the Siege of Khartoum in 1885. Also, excessive wear and blackpowder corrosion could blow out the breech block. These, however, were rare occasions. Having satisfied the question of their quality, next one must ask, how were the rolling blocks employed? The rifles were issued to regular infantry, and *Bashi Bazouks*, a rather wild gendarmerie often employed as skirmishers. Dragoons obtained the carbines, while specialists



Item number "13" is one of the exotic rounds made for Rolling Blocks by members of Egypt's "Equatoria" Garrison. These were made by adding a plug of ebony wood, the result being deemed sufficient to overcome "bullet proof" native rebels. Parke, *My Personal Experiences in Equatorial Africa*, (London, 1891).

like artillery and engineer troops used musketoons. Infantryman also carried a heavy brass hilted sabre bayonet in a steel scabbard. Their ammunition came in two twenty-round black leather pouches attached to the waist belt, with an additional sixty rounds in their knapsack.³¹

Infantry tactics of this era still stressed mass volley fire. This called for soldiers fighting two ranks deep to direct a wall of lead at enemy forces. Against another western army, such efforts often produced heavy casualties for both sides. In Africa, however, Egyptian troops often faced native opponents armed only with spears. This allowed them the opportunity to mow down an enemy with the chance of minimal losses to themselves.

Gordon *Pasha* noted that Remingtons were ideal weapons for long range fire. During the Siege of Khartoum in 1884-85, he bragged of Egyptian troops hitting Sudanese rebels at 2,000 yards, where Remington rounds still "have plenty of life to kill."³²

As Valentine Baker *Pasha* once said, "in the use of long range weapons, rapidity of fire is all important."³³ This was the goal of all good colonial generals: strike the natives when they could not hit back, and strike them hard. In a perfect text-book scenario, soldiers began fire at 1500 yards, and reached a crescendo of firing between 200 and 300 yards. At that point, our theoretical company fired 15-20 rounds per minute. Individual accuracy was not an issue as entire units fired in one general area. Since most African armies fought in dense formations, fire at these ranges produced results. If done right, few enemy troops would ever get close enough to use their swords or spears.³⁴

Thus it was not necessary to train an army of

marksmen for victory in Africa. Still, some degree of shooting skills were needed, and this was an area where Egyptian troops were poorly prepared. The mid-1870s transition from muzzle loaders to breech loaders was only part of the problem. More dangerous was an almost complete lack of target practice. Several observers commented that Egyptian troops often fired without looking down their sights, others fired high, or into the air. Even when drill took place, the results were often abominable, like that of a section that fired 190 rounds at fifty yards, scoring only 5 hits. Gordon was so exasperated at his men's poor shooting skills that he estimated it took 3,000 rounds to produce one enemy casualty.³⁵

While poor shooting was not the only cause, it certainly contributed to a string of defeats suffered by Egyptian forces in the 1870s and 1880s. These impacted on the history of rolling blocks in several ways. First, an already tottering Egyptian economy took a nose dive, and as a result, the Remington Company had difficulty collecting its debts. The earliest indication of trouble came in 1876 when U.S. diplomats had to press Ismail to make good on overdue payments. This continued off and on until 1880, when the company obtained a final settlement of 65,000 pounds.³⁶

The end of Remington's connection with Egypt set the stage for the complete phase-out of rolling blocks from that nation. Their last hurrah was at al-Tel al-Kebir, 1882, where a British invasion was resisted with the largest number of rolling blocks ever used in Africa. Defeated again, the Egyptian army was disbanded, and a new force raised in its place. England, which would dominate Egypt until 1946, desired the new troops to use weapons compatible with her own forces. Thus the mid to late 1880s saw rolling blocks replaced with Martini-Henrys.³⁷

While this ends the Remington connection with Egypt, the story continues in other parts of Africa. The many defeats suffered by Egyptian troops resulted in a flood of rolling blocks falling into native hands. The Sudan is a good example. By 1880, possession of even a few such rifles provided symbolic, and sometimes very real local power. Emin *Pasha* noted this during his meeting with King Mtesa of Buganda. They had hardly gotten past "hello," when Mtesa specifically asked for some Remingtons of his own.³⁸

It was the Battle of Shaykan (1883) that introduced large numbers of rolling blocks into the Sudan.



Typical irregular troops of the Southern Sudan. Men like these served both for and against government authorities. Armed with cast-off smooth bore muskets and shot guns, they were no match for soldiers armed with Rolling Blocks. Felkin, Letters from Equatoria, (London, 1891).

A disastrous defeat for Egyptian forces under the command of William Hicks *Pasha*, it also coined a local name for the almost 10,000 rifles captured there. From that point onward, they were known as "Hicksi." Another 15,000 were captured with the fall of Khartoum in 1885, along with over a million rounds of ammunition.³⁹

Most of these weapons were used by Sudanese patriots to defend their land against further Egyptian, and, later, British invasions. Some passed into local markets and soon acted as a form of currency. Since the 1860s, most of northeast Africa's interior tribes used three major types of primitive money: ivory, slaves and guns. Emin *Pasha* records the late 1880s value of a rolling block as worth two girl slaves. Ammunition could be exchanged at the rate of three packets for a boy, and five for a girl. Circulation, however, was limited, and most rifles remained at the central arsenal in Khartoum.⁴⁰

Although Sudanese troops were now better armed than any other African state except Ethiopia, the end was near. An Anglo-Egyptian army rolled down the Nile in 1898, and at Omdurman, rolling blocks were pitted against magazine rifles and machine guns. Defeat was total, bringing an end to the Sudan's independence.

But even this could not finish off the Remingtons. Their last military use occurred during World War 1, when Ali Dinar, the Sultan of Darfur, declared a *jihad*, or holy war, against Great Britain. A thousand of his picked troops were equipped with rolling blocks, and some of these men had the unique experience of being the only shooters to ever take down an aircraft with .43 Egyptian. In 1916, during



Numerous Egyptian defeats, due more to poor generalship, rather than insufficient weaponry, caused large numbers of Remingtons to enter the Sudan and Ethiopia. Slatin, *Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, (London, 1899).

the final days of this campaign, the future Air Marshall, Sir John Slessor, flew his biplane a little too close to a Darfurian unit. The result was a forced landing and Slessor being wounded in the leg.⁴¹

While the Darfur Campaign represents the last time rolling blocks were used in a major military action, the rifles continued to find employment throughout the Sudan. Local police and militiamen were issued them as part of a deliberate Imperial policy that maintained first-rate weaponry in the hands of British regulars. Dr. Richard Hill, a colonial official of the 1930s, told the writer that Remingtons then played a diplomatic role. "In my days," he wrote, "Remingtons were carefully preserved by the Stores and Ordnance Department at Khartoum. They were issued to tribes in the Kordofan as ceremonial symbols of trust between them and the government."⁴² Other tribes, mainly in the Bahr al Ghazal, Nuba Hills, and Darfur, maintained large numbers of these weapons, and combination of terrain, plus cost, prevented the British from enforcing the strict gun-control laws found elsewhere. In other regions, confiscated Remingtons were often destroyed, creating significant attrition rate in the 1920s and 30s.⁴³

Another way to limit firearms is to control the flow of ammunition. Khartoum's cartridge factory was churning out 40,000-50,000 rounds per week during the celebrated siege of 1884-1885. While these rates could not be maintained into the 1890s, a vast quantity of ammunition and brass casings entered the local economy until the British reconquest of 1898. After that, strict regulation attempted to eliminate all new supplies of cases, lead, gunpowder and primers. The Sudanese were thus forced to become expert re-loaders, using old brass over and over

again. They went so far as to substitute match heads for primers, or to obtain a British issue .303 round, and wrap the case in leather to make up for its smaller size. Sir Angus Gillan, a District Commissioner, said such bullets were highly inaccurate, and that "you would be very unlucky if you got hit by it at over 150 yards, but at close range it would make a very nasty wound."⁴⁴

Alterations also took place with the basic rifle. Sights were often removed, as they were assumed to make the guns "shoot high." Barrels were cut down, and stocks altered, in order to make the rolling blocks easier to carry. Accuracy greatly suffered, and poor maintenance only added to the general wear and tear. As most "gun repair" was done by village blacksmiths, the fact that Sudanese Remingtons were still shooting into the 1930s is a tribute to the great strength of the original design.⁴⁵

Another African state where rolling blocks saw extensive use was Ethiopia. Once again, Egyptian military disasters caused the initial entry of these weapons. Emperor Yohannis IV (1871-1888), one of the Nineteenth Century's great military commanders, destroyed two Egyptian armies at Gundet (1875) and Gura (1876). A result of these victories was the influx of almost 20,000 captured Remingtons. This transformed his spear and musket soldiers into one of the most powerful forces in Africa.⁴⁶

Yohannis was not only a great tactician, he also appreciated the value of modern firearms. His first experience with them came during the British Campaign against Emperor Tewodros in 1867. As an ally of England's Lord Napier, he witnesses the tremendous advantage of Anglo-Indian troops, whose Snider rifles



Remingtons vs. Martini Henry's at the battle of Tamaai (13 March 1884). An oil by Douglas Giles, now in the National Army Museum, London. A postcard from National Army Museum.



Battle of Gura (1876) by Ethiopian traditional artist. White faced troops on Egyptian side are Ismail's American mercenaries. Mounted, at top, Emperor Yohannis IV. Large numbers of Remingtons entered Ethiopian service as a result of his victory here. From the author's collection.

demolished Ethiopian attacks with smooth-bore muskets. Indeed, the effect of this campaign had an impact on quite a few Ethiopians, for according to Dr. Richard Pankhurst, to this day, Remingtons, although far more common, are called *Sinader*, after the British-made rifle.⁴⁷

The rolling block was imported in large numbers well into the 1890s. This was done via legal trade, gun-running and diplomacy. The latter involved Italy, and began in the 1870s. Italian explorers used Remington rifles and carbines, both for protection, and as gifts to influence Ethiopian leaders. Such presents were not the product of Ilion, but rather Liege, and their journey to Ethiopia was complicated. The Belgian made rolling blocks were produced under contract by Emile and Leon Nagant, and originally intended for the Papal Army. The capture of Rome in 1870 saw these weapons fall into Italian hands, and although a few were issued to the *Bersagliere*, their 12.7mm round was incompatible with Italian needs.⁴⁸

But as a tool of diplomacy, the Remingtons were valuable. Ethiopian politics, always twisted and turbulent, presented possibilities for an aspiring colonial power like Italy. Just as Yohannis had sided with foreign powers to reduce the power of Tewodros, Menelik of Showa was now attempting the same. Italian officials were quite willing to aid Menelik against Yohannis, in the hopes that weakening the latter would make it possible to grab some Ethiopian real estate. As a result, Count Pietro Antonelli negotiated an understanding, in 1881, that sent 5,000 of the former Papal Remingtons to Menelik. Ammunition was included in the deal, along with hints that more rifles could follow.⁴⁹

Despite these efforts, when Italy and Ethiopia fought their first war in 1887, Yohannis' own Remingtons, plus vastly superior numbers, allowed him to defeat the European invaders at Dogali. Two years earlier, at Kufit, with both sides using rolling blocks, his troops crushed a Sudanese invasion. Gallabat (1888) almost featured a replay of the earlier struggle, until a single Remington changed the course of Ethiopian history. Yohannis, directing his troops to finish off yet another Sudanese army, was leading an assault against the last enemy position. At his moment of triumph, an enemy sniper killed the Emperor, and as a result, turned victory into defeat when demoralized Ethiopians fled the battlefield.⁵⁰

While rolling blocks remained popular long after the death of Yohannis, they were now being supplanted by LeGras and Vetterli rifles. And these were just a start: by the 1920s Ethiopia had become an arms collector's paradise and a quartermaster's nightmare. Matchlocks were still in use, along with Sniders, Berdans, Mausers, Martinis, Sharps Carbines and even Thompson sub-machineguns. As Colonel E. Alexander Powell writes, "every conceivable make and model and calibre were available." Despite such choices, Remingtons were still considered excellent weapons due to their rugged construction and ease of maintenance. Thousands remained in use, and military reports indicated that such was the case right up to 1935, when the Karamach Arsenal disgorged its holdings for the fight against Mussolini's Legions. This time, however, neither pluck nor Remingtons could save Ethiopia. Defeated for the first time, the nation was occupied for five years, with Italian authorities attempting to confiscate all native firearms. The result was the



The battle of Dogali (1887), saw Ethiopian troops armed with Remingtons destroy a column of Italian invaders. From the author's collection.

despatch of some rolling blocks to Italy as war souvenirs, and mass destruction for much of the rest.⁵¹

With Ethiopia's liberation in 1941, the Imperial Army obtained modern British and American equipment. Yet even this did not mark the end of Ethiopian rolling blocks, since they were still used by hunters. Dr. Richard Pankhurst, a noted authority on Ethiopia, writes that the former Marxist regime was confiscating Remingtons into the 1980s.⁵²

As in the Sudan, the long life of Ethiopian rolling blocks led to variations and improvisation. Augustus Wylde, who visited Adua in 1883, reports that local gun smiths produced repairs "of the roughest description."⁵³ Broken stocks often had wooden replacement parts pinned together, while bayonet lugs and swivel rings were usually removed. Ammunition was also a mixed bag: factory rounds were expensive, while reloads often featured poor grade local powder and bullets carved from slate.⁵⁴

Remington ammunition also served as a native currency. It represented the first large quantity of metallic cases to reach Ethiopia, and was widely used as change for the popular Maria Theresa thaler. When the nation's first subsidiary coins were issued in the 1890s, cartridges remained popular, and even empty cases exchanged at 16 to the thaler in 1903. Another monetary use for rolling block cartridges was seen in Harar. An independent city state in the 1880s, its mint used the base of Remington cases to serve as one *Mahallak* coins.⁵⁵

The Egyptians, however, discovered the best way of turning rolling blocks into currency. It was 1963, and 15,000 Remingtons sat in Cairo's historic Citadel. Having long lost any value even as police weapons, the rifles were seen as little better than scrap metal. Fate though would have otherwise, and it seems



Traditional Ethiopian weapons of the pre-Remington era. Matchlock muskets like these were first introduced by the Portuguese during the 1500s, and were used well into the 1920s. Courtesy of Dr. Richard Pankhurst.

rather fitting that as one American entrepreneur sold the rolling blocks to Egypt, yet another brought them home. Val J. Forgett, founder of the Navy Arms Company, perceived the exotic appeal of these weapons to collectors. Working through Golden State Arms of Pasadena, California, he was able to secure the best of the lot.⁵⁶

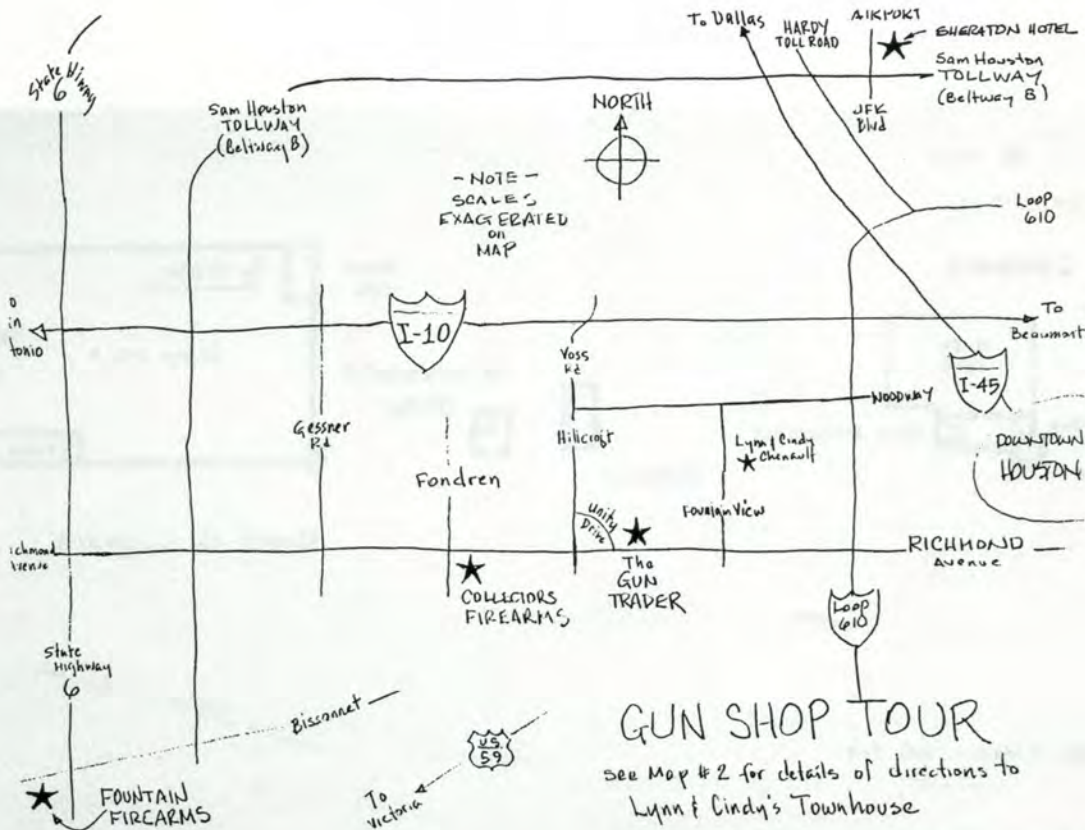
In his own words, "the deal was easy, straightforward, and the Egyptians were easy to get along with."⁵⁷ Assisted by members of the Citadel garrison, Forgett sorted out 7,000 rifles, musketoons and carbines. While these were basically complete and functional, most showed considerable wear, especially at the buttplate and muzzle. He noted only 250 carbines in this lot, and no rare varieties, accoutrements or spare parts. Still, Forgett's "Egyptian Contract" provided American collectors a chance to purchase .43 carbines for \$24.95, or a rifle for only \$19.95. Another flood of Egyptian and Sudanese rolling blocks took place in the 1980s, when Federal Ordnance and Sarco's Golden Enterprises marketed rather shoddy rifles for \$100. and \$125.00. A few bayonets and scabbards, also in poor condition, surfaced at the same time.⁵⁸

Certainly this brings an end to Remington's connection with the Horn of Africa. Or does it? Kings may no longer demand crates of these rifles, nor are they used by hordes of native warriors defending their land against foreign invasion. Still, would it be that surprising to find that a few are still employed for hunting? Even more so, the thousands that exist in American collections serve as a visible link to colorful personalities like Ismail, Yohannis IV, or Sam Remington. Though beat up and heavily marked with mysterious Arabic script, these rolling blocks are examples of both an important transition in the history of arms development, and as one of America's early overseas weapons contracts.⁵⁹

1. Poem from Richard Pankhurst, *Introduction to the History of the Ethiopian Army*, (Addis Ababa: Imperial Ethiopian Air Force, 1967), p. 128; Dr. Philipp Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas. Die Materielle Cutler der Danakil, Galla und Somal*, (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1895), pp. 112-113.
2. Muhammad Ali's factories also pumped out bayonets, sabres, M1816 French cavalry pistols, artillery and ammunition. Not all was of the best quality. General Charles Bouer inspected an 800 man battalion in 1824 and declared 200 muskets as "useless." Georges Douin (ed.), *Une Mission Militaire Francaise Aupres de Mobamed Aly*, (Le Caire: Societe Royale de Geographie d'Egypte, 1927), p. 21.
See also Robert E. Brooker Jr., *British Military Pistols, 1603-1888*, (Dallas: Taylor Publications, 1978), p. 128; Henry Dodwell, *The Founder of Modern Egypt*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1967) p. 226; Edgar Garston, *Greece Revisited and Sketches in Lower Egypt*, 2 Vol., (London: Saunders and Otley, 1842), II, p. 276n; Gabriel Guemard, *Les Reformes en Egypte (d'Ali Bey el Kebir a Mubammad Ali, 1760-1848)*, (Le Caire: Paul Barbey, 1936), p. 142; J. Heywood-Dunne, *A Introduction to the History of Modern Education in Egypt*, (London: Luzac & Co, 1938), pp. 172-174; John Kinnear, *Cairo, Petra and Damascus in 1839*, (London: John Murray, MDCCCXLI), p. 226; David Nicole, "Nizam - Egypt's Army in the 19th Century, Part 1," *The Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, Vol. 108/No. 1, p. 70.
For the best overall source of information on Muhammad Ali see Afaf Lufti al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Mubammad Ali*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1984).
3. William Arnold Bromfield, *Letters from Egypt and Syria*, (London: William Pamplin, MDCCCLVI), p. 74; John Gadsby, *My Wanderings*, (London: n.p., 1862), p. 206; Sir Frederick Henniker, *Notes During a Visit to Egypt*, (London: John Murray, 1824), p. 305.
4. A very nice example of Cairene pistol making is to be found at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, New York. Its catalogue number is 36.25.2245. Yusef Hekekyan, *Papers* (No. 37452), fol. 17-21, 2 March 1851, British Museum, London.
5. It is interesting to note some travel advice offered to Americans visiting Egypt. "I found the Volcanic pistol . . . much preferable to Colt's. The latter was constantly getting out of order, and from the falling of the cap between the cylinder and hammer, was useless twice out of three times after the first shot . . ." William Prime, *Boat Life in Egypt and Nubia*, (New York: Harer & Bros., 1857). See also Brooker, p. 128; Paul Merruar, *L'Egypte Contemporaine de Mehemet-Ali a Said Pasha*, (Paris: Didier et Cie., 1864), p. 24.
6. "Seward to Thayer, Washington, D.C., 8 April 1862," in United States, Department of State, *Instructions to Barbary Powers*; "Thayer to Seward, Alexandria, 19 November 1861, 26 November 1861 and 12 January 1862," in United States, Department of State, *Despatches from United States Consuls in Alexandria, 1835-1873*. All of the above are available from the National Archives, Washington, D.C.
7. For more details on post Civil War problems in the U.S. arms industry, see Felicia Johnson Deyrup, *Arms Making in the Connecticut Valley*, (New York: George Shumway Publisher, 1970), pp. 202-204.
8. George T. Layman, *The Military Remington Rolling Block - 50 Years of Faithful Service*, (Prescott, Az.: Wolfe Pub. Co., 1992), p. XV.
9. David F Butler, *United States Firearms. The First Century, 1776-1875*, (New York: Winchester Press, 1971), p. 153; Alden Hatch, *Remington Arms in American History*, (New York: Rinohart & Co., Inc., 1956), p. 135-136; Layman, p. 19; Charles B. Norton, *American Breech-Loading Small Arms*, (New York: F.W. Christern, 1872), pp. 25-26, 36; Harold L. Peterson, *The Remington Historical Treasury of American Guns*, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1966), p. 71; "E. Remington & Sons to General Sherman, Ilion, 29 November 1869," in Sherman Papers, Library of Congress, Vol. 27, Microfilm Roll 15; Konrad F. Schreir, *Remington Rolling Block Firearms*, (n.p., n.p., 1977), pp. 4, 17.
10. Military "experts" considered tubular feed weapons like the M. 1866 Winchester "too complicated" for the average soldier. For an interesting examination of martial firearms of the period, see Leon Mares, *Les Armes de Guerre a l'Exposition Universelle*, (Paris: Didot, 1867).
See also Donald Featherstone, *Weapons and Equipment of the Victorian Soldier*, (Poole, Dorset: Blanford Press, 1978), p. 25; Major F. C. Myatt, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of 19th Century Firearms*, (New York: Crescent Books, 1994), pp. 73-74, 88-89, 91, 95; Ronald Pearsall, "The Military Breechloaders of 1871," *The Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, Vol. 104, No. 1 (October 1973): pp. 90-93; "Reports to Commanding Officer by W. G. Chamberlain, 8 May 1871, 'Report of Observations at Remington's Armory, Ilion, N.Y.," in *Springfield Armory Records*, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
11. Layman, pp. 3-4; Norton, pp. 44-45.
12. Norton, pp. 42-42. Although they say almost nothing about the Remington contract, William B. Hesseltine and Hazel C. Wolf provide an interesting account of American mercenaries serving with Ismail's army in *Blue and Grey on the Nile*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).
13. One of Ismail's American mercenaries, Frank Reynolds, later replaced Minic as the Egyptian inspector at Ilion. His death in 1875 saw Cairo's request for the appointment of a U.S. Army inspector. "Beardsley to Fish, Cairo, 20 October 1875," in *Despatches . . . Cairo*.
No sources uncovered list the cash value of this sale. The Remington 1877 catalogue featured .43 Egyptian Rolling Blocks for sale at "\$17.00, or \$20.50 with bayonet, "while the carbine version sold for "\$16.00." Butler to Fish, Alexandria, 30 December 1870, *Despatches . . . Alexandria*; Samuel Norris, "Facts About Small Arms," *New York Times*, (31 July 1898), pp. 4-6; "E. Remington & Sons to Col. J. G. Benton, Ilion, N.Y., 19 July 1869," *Springfield Armory Records*; Layman, pp. 11, 98.
14. "Graves to Wife, Cairo, 6 November 1875 and 4 January 1877," in Charles I. Graves, *Papers*, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; K. D. Kirkland, *America's Premier Gunmaker: Remington*, (New York: Exeter Books, 1988), p. 36; *A New Chapter in an Old Story*, (New York: Remington Arms, MCMXII), p. 21.
15. "Butler to Fish, Alexandria, 30 December 1870," in *Despatches . . . Alexandria*.
16. Other than weapons, the only significant American export to Egypt was petroleum. "Beardsley to Fish, Cairo, 30 April 1873," in *Despatches . . . Cairo*. On consular activities in support of Remington, see "Beardsley to Fish, Cairo, 20 October 1875," and "Farman to Fish, Cairo, 25 November 1876," in *Despatches . . . Cairo*.
17. "Butler to Fish, 30 December 1870" and "29 April 1871, Alexandria," in *Despatches . . . Alexandria*; Hesseltine, p. 77; Photocopy of *New York Tribune* article of 5 May 1871, Ilion Free Public Library, Historical Room.
18. "Butler to Fish, 30 December 1870, Alexandria," in *Despatches . . . Alexandria*.
19. Warren E. Schulz, *Ilion - The Town Remington Made*, (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1977), p. 16, lists 154,120 rifles plus 19,777 carbines delivered by Remington to France.
See also Butler to Fish, *ibid.*; Alfred J. Butler, *Court Life in Egypt*, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1888), p. 168; Layman, p. 12, 35-36; "Nubar Pasha, [Memorandum]," in *Periode Ismail*, Puissances Etrangeres, Doss. No. 63/10, Dar al-Watha'iq, Cairo.
20. Col. Charles Chaille-Long, sometimes noted for his tall tales, claimed to defeat 400 native warriors with a Reilly No. 8 elephant gun and two privates armed with Sniders! Charles Chaille-Long, "Letter to the Editor," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society of New York*, Vol. XXXIX (1904): p. 349. "Beardsley to Fish, 3 September 1873, Cairo," in *Despatches . . . Cairo*; Jerry Janzen, *Bayonets from Janzen's Notebook* (Tulsa, n.p., 1987), p. 39.
21. F. L. James, *The Wild Tribes of the Sudan*, (London: John Murray, 1884), p. 56, notes that some Egyptian forces still used muskets in 1881. Georges Douin, *Histoire du Regne du Kbedive Ismail. Tome III. L'Empire Africain. 3e Partie* (1874-1876), (Le Caire: L'Institute Francaise, 1941), pp. 1154-1155, 1202; G. Schweinfurth, et. al. (eds.), *Emin Pasha in Central Africa*, (London: Murray, 1888), p. 253.

22. Great Britain. Foreign Office. *British Documents on Foreign Affairs. Series B, The Near and Middle East, 1856-1914*, Fredericksburg, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984, Vol. 9, "Document B on Egyptian Defenses," pp. 240-241.
23. Layman, p. 45
24. Layman, pp. 11, 38, 44-45, 99; Roy Marcot, Remington Collector, Notes provided to the author; Schreier, p. 19, 23.
25. J.C. McCoan, *Egypt*, (New York: Peters Fenelon Collier, MDCCCXCVIII), p. 97. See also Remington articles from *Herkimer Democrat*, (7 July 1869) and *Utica Press*, (21 July 1882), held by Iliion Free Public Library, Historical Room.
26. Revolvers were issued to officers and lancers. Douin, Vol. III, p. 873, n.4, and p. 1155; McCoan, p. 88.
Those collectors who support the experience of Egyptian M1875s estimate 10,000 to 25,000 were made. Elliot L. Burka, Remington Collector, to Dunn, Arlington, 16 August 1993; F.J. Huber Jr., Remington Collector, to Dunn, Fort Lauderdale, 17 August 1993; Dr. Harry J. Parker, Remington Collector, to Dunn, Dallas, 18 August 1994; Leon W. Wier Jr., Remington Collector, To Dunn, Las Vegas, 25 February, 1994.
27. Most of the "musketoons" in .43 Egyptian were cut down at the Cairo arsenal; an Iliion-made example would be a scarce variety. Charles Fitch, "Report on the Manufacture of Interchangeable Mechanisms," in United States Congress, *Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives*, (Washington, D.C.: 4th Congress, 2nd Session, 1882), Vol. 13, pt. 2, pp. 613-614; McCoan, p. 292
28. Dr. Moritz Busch, *Hand-Book for Travellers in Egypt*, tran. W. C. Wrangmore, (Trieste: Austrian Lloyd, 1864), p. 19; Paul Traub, "Voyage au pays des Bogos," *Bulletin de la Societe Neuchateloise de Geographie*, Vol. 4 (1888): p. 129; Wilkinson, Sir Gardner, *A Handbook for Travellers in Egypt*, (London: John Murray, 1867), p. 29.
29. Egypte. Commission a l'Exposition Universelle de Vienne, 1872, *Catalogue Raisonne de l'Exposition Egyptienne*, (Vienne: Imprimerie Imperiale et Royale, 1873), p. 173; Douglas Johnson, "The Myth of Ansar Firepower," *Savage and Soldier: Sudan Issue*, p. 22; Anouar Louca (ed.), *Lettres d'Egypte, 1879-1882*, (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1979), p. 195; Norton, p. 285; *Assuntos Militares en Egipto*, (Habana: Tipografica de'El EcoMilitaire, 1884), p. 31.
30. Val J. Forgett, President and CEO, Navy Arms Company, Inc., to Dunn, Ridgefield, N.J., 18 August 1994; Lt. Col. Andrew Haggard, *Under Crescent and Star*, (London: William Blackwood & Sons, MDCCCXCVI), p. 201; *Jepbson Diary*, 24 October 1888, Sudan Archives, University of Durham, England; Frank Power, *Letters from Khartoum*, (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Ltd. 1885), p. 21; E. Remington & Sons, *Sales Catalogue*, (1877).
31. Douin, Vol. III, p. 755n, 758.; William McEntryre Dye, *Moslem Egypt and Christian Abyssinia*, 1880 rpt., (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 237; Haggard, p. 44; Stone, p. 31; A. B. Wylde, '83 to '87 in the Soudan, 1888 rpt., (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 14.
32. Gordon, pp. 232, 256. Dye, p. 375, also notes the ability of Remingtons to reach far into the battlefield.
33. Lt. Gen. Valentine Baker Pasha, *The War in Bulgaria*, 2 Vol., (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1879), Vol. II, p. 370.
34. Schreier, p. 17; Captain W. B. Wallace, *Textbook of Small Arms*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1904), p. 116, 147; Wylde, Vol. I, p. 153; Howard Whitehouse, *Battle in Africa, 1879-1914*, Fieldhead, U.K., Field Books, 1979), p. 32.
35. In 1883, William Hicks Pasha tried to remedy these problems with specially made targets. He argued that if properly used, "no enemy would have the slightest chance" against his Rolling Blocks. M. W. Daly (ed.), *The Road to Shaykan*, (Durham: University of Durham Press, 1983), pp. 28, 31. George Layman, letter, *ibid.*, wrote to say that he was able to place .43 groups of 3-4 inches at 100 yards, so the Rolling Block certainly had such potential.
- See also Gordon, p. 49; Henri Labrousse, "Rivalitie entre l'Egypte et l'Ethiopie dans la Mer Rouge a la fin du XIXe Siecle," *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, (Arlov, Sweden: Berlings, p. 293; Wylde, Vol. I, p. 7, 300-301.
Dye, p. 60, points out that many Egyptian recruits suffered from ophthalmia, and could not "see through the rifle sights for greater distance than a few rods."
36. "Farman to Fish, Cairo, 25 November 1876," in *Despatches . . . Cairo*; "Hay to E. Remington & Sons, Washington, D.C., 5 August 1880," in Iliion Public Library, Historical Room.
37. Evelyn Wood, *From Midshipman to Field Marshal*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1912), p. 347, notes that he was given £. 200,000 to help reorganize the Egyptian Army in 1882. This money was earmarked for uniforms, and to replace rolling blocks. Haggard, p. 291, notes Egyptian cavalry had Martini Henry carbines by 1884.
38. The Rolling Block was so popular that even explorers like Henry Stanley issued .43 Remingtons to his followers. R. W. Felkin and George Schweiter (eds.), *Emin Pasha. His Life and Work*, 2 Vol., 1898 rpt., (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), Vol. I, pp. 61, 48, 61.
39. Johnson, p. 22; Adrian Preston (ed.), *In relief of Gordon*, Rutherford, U. K.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967), p. 138; R. Salmon, "The Story of Sheikh Abdullahi Ahmed Abu Gelaha: A Sudanese Vicar of Bray," in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXI, pt. 1 (1938): p. 89.
40. Lucy Duff-Gordon, *Letters from Egypt (1862-1869)*, Gordon Waterfield (ed.), (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Pub., 1969), p. 314; Emin Pasha [Eduard Schnitzer], *Emin Pasha in Central Africa. Being a Collection of his Letters and Journals*, R. W. Felkin, tran., (London: George Phillip & Son, 1888), p. 458.
41. Sir Angus Gillan, Sudanese Colonial Official, Interview by Dr. Douglas Johnson, Rhodes House, Oxford, U.K., 9 May 1979; Major J. R. Oldfield, Assistant Curator, Weapons Museum, Warminster Training Center, to Dunn, Warminster, 4 August 1994; A. B. Theobald, *Ali Dinar, Last Sultan of Darfur, 1898-1916*, (London: Longmans, 1965); Wylde, Vol. I, p. 145.
42. Dr. Richard Hill, Sudanese Historian, to Dunn, Oxford, U.K., 25 August 1994.
43. Dr. Douglas Johnson, Sudanese Historian, to Dunn, Oxford, U.K., 29 June 1994, writes that the confiscation of rolling blocks was significant. He notes that of the hundreds of rifles maintained by the Khalifa's House Museum at Omdurman, only a few are Remingtons. This despite the fact that they were by far the most common rifle employed by the Khalifas's army.
See also Gillan Interview.
44. Gillan Interview. See also D. C. E. Comyn, *Service and Sport in the Sudan*, (London: John Lane, 1911), p. 10; Lt. Col. Count Gleichen (ed.), *the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, 2 Vol., (London: H.M.S.O., 1905), pp. 180-181; Gordon, pp. 30, 145, 218; Douglas Johnson, "Myth . . .," p. 22; Col. Sir R. Slatin Pasha, *Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, Lt. Col. Sir F. R. Wingate tran., (London: Edward Arnold, 1899), p. 319; Trench, p. 273.
45. Comyn, p. 237; Gillan interview; Gleichen, p. 179; Slatin Pasha, pp. 330-331.
46. See Douin and Dye for extensive coverage of the Egyptian Ethiopian War of 1875-1883.
47. Dr. Richard Pankurst, Ethiopian Historian, to Dunn, London, 30 July 1994. For more information on Yohannis IV and the 19th Century Ethiopian Army, see my upcoming article in Vol. III of *War and History*.
48. Sergio Masini and Gian Rotasso, *The Complete Book of Firearms*. Valerie Palmer tran., (New York: Portland House, 1988), p. 141, lists three main varieties of Papal Rolling Blocks: infantry (51.18 inches), artillery (40.03 inches), and gendarmerie (44.88 inches).
See also Alfredo Bartocci, "The Pope's Remingtons," in Robert

- Held (ed.), *Art, Arms & Armour: An Illustrated Anthology*, Vol. I (1979-1980). On Remington in Ethiopia, see Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zella alle Frontiere del Caffa*, 3 Vol., (Roma: Ermanno Loescher 7 Co., 1886), Vol. I, p. 539; C. Giglio, *L'Italia in Africa*, 2 Vol., (Milano: Mission to Abyssinia, 1892 rpt., (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 254; Luigi Sambon, "Ethiopia Militare," *Africa*, Vol. 9: p. 108; Gaberiel Simon, *Voyage en Abyssinie*, (Paris: Challamee Aine, 1885), p. 42.
49. Italian *Bashi Bazouks* used old Egyptian Rolling Blocks well into the 1890s. Marco Fantozzi, "Italian Bashi Bazouk and Askari Uniforms," *Savage and Soldier*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (Jan-Mar 1984), p. 4; Bartocci: p. 43; Frano Brandini, *Gli Italiani in Africa*, (Milano: Longanesi, 1971), p. 483; Giglio, Vol. I, pp. 149, 155; Pankhurst, *Army . . .*, p. 87; Sven Rubenson, *Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, (London: Heinemann, 1976), pp. 382, 386; Gianfranco Simone, "I Remington di Menelik," *Tacarmi*, No. 2 (1977), p. 44.
50. Portal, p. 18; Gianfranco Simone, "I Remington. . .," p. 44.
51. Bartocci, pp. 524-525; Pankhurst, *Army . . .*, pp. 108, 135, and "Linguistics and Cultural Data on the Penetration of Firearms in Ethiopia," in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (January 1971): pp. 47-82; "Abyssinian Military Matters," in United States. Department of State, *Dispatches from United States Consuls in Aden, Arabia*, No. 365, 31 March 1920, p. 6.
52. Richard Pankhurst to Dunn, Addis Ababa, 10 July 1994.
53. Wylde, Vol. I, pp. 294, 298.
54. De Cosson, Vol. I, p. 218, Vol. II, pp. 57-58; Denis de Rivoyre, *Mer Rouge et Abyssinie*, (Paris: E. Plon et Cie., 1880), p. 159.
55. William Ashley Anderson, "The Prince of Abyssinia Makes History," in *Travel*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 5 (March 1920): p. 7; Dennis Gill, *The Coinage of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia*, pp. 13-14, 28; Labrousse, p. 292; Pankhurst, "Primitive Money in Ethiopia," in *Journal de la Societe des Africanistes*, Vol. 32 (1962), 243.
56. Forgett to Dunn.
57. Forgett to Dunn.
58. Forgett to Dunn; Layman, pp. 74, 78; *Shotgun News*, (20 September 1993), p. 99, shows Sarco is still selling .43 Remingtons for \$125., bayonets for \$20., and scabbards for \$20. Rolling Block expert Roy Marcot notes that some of these are parts guns, either made in Egypt, or put together by the distributors.
59. Many people helped make this paper possible. The writer was greatly assisted by Dr. Dimitra Doukos, Historical Room, Ilion Free Public Library, Ilion, N.Y.; Mr. Fritz Baehr, Mr. Elliot L. Burka, Mr. John Chalapis, Mr. Val J. Forgett, Mr. F. Jay Huber, Jr., and Mr. Roy Marcot of the American Society of Arms Collectors; Mr. Leon Weir of the Remington Society of America; Dr. Richard Pankhurst, Director, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Dr. Douglas Johnson and Dr. Richard Hill, Oxford, United Kingdom; and author George Layman. I hope they will accept a blanket "thank you" for their generosity.



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