

Hand Stamp Instructions:

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Caution: Be safe! Wear safety glasses when striking this steel tool. Fingers may be broken or damaged by a mis-strike, error, or glancing blow. Tool may become a projectile if struck at an angle. Be careful, be safe!

Dead-Fall vs Steel Hammer. You may prefer to use a copper, lead, or a shot filled “dead fall” hammer, to reduce “bounce”. Practice striking your stamp with control, marking a scrap piece of metal, until you gain experience and control. Practice your stamping technique on soft metals, brass, aluminum, or low carbon mild steel to limit wear on the stamp. The bottom of the barrel is a ideal learning surface. Learn to work from one corner to the next, or to rotate the tool to emboss and mark a round barrel surface. Apply masking or electrical tape, or “heat shrink” tubing, for a secure grip.

Securing the Barrel. The barrel should be secured in a padded vise to prevent marking the barrel. The exposed length should be supported to prevent movement when striking. Support it with a block of wood to reduce bounce. Long heavy barrels are easier to mark. Use grooved vise jaws for round barrels. Never mark a steel part while mounted in a gunstock.

Barrel Hardness will vary with the brand of barrel, steel alloy, and temper:

Lowest Hardness muzzle loading rifle barrels are often made of 12L14, a free machining steel that allows a near perfect bore finish. Easily marked these barrels include Colerain, Rice, Goodoien, and Getz.

Medium hardness muzzle loading barrels are often made of 1137 steel, a medium hard alloy that will require more effort to mark successfully. These include the Green Mountain brand barrels.

Highest Hardness muzzle loading barrels, made of alloy steel, require more effort to mark successfully. These include imported barrels from Italy and Spain, by Pedersoli, Armi Sport, Uberti, CVA, Jukar, Ardesa, and Traditions. The GRICE - 1762 Brown Bess musket barrel is in this category. Multiple strikes are required. Barrels made in India are often made of DOM high pressure cylinder steel. Hardness may vary.

Thin Barrels should not be marked, for fear of indenting the bore. The breech is normally thick and safe to mark. It is unwise to attempt to mark a thin muzzle.

Multiple Strikes are required to make a proper mark on both round and flat surfaces. Care must be taken to return the stamp to the same alignment, to avoid a double strike image (sometimes found on original guns). After the first strike, grasp the stamp and “feel” until it fits into the impression. Hold the stamp in the impression with firm downward force and strike the stamp. On round barrels work from the center, to the sides. Smaller diameter barrels will be more difficult than larger diameter barrels due to the greater curve. On flat surfaces work from one corner or edge to the the opposite side.

Select a Correct Location. Proof marks, view marks, names, brand marks, and inspector’s marks should be placed as they were used on the original guns. Select a traditional location for your marks. Most early guns were marked in visible locations. Later original shotgun barrels were marked under the barrel. Marks were reasonably well aligned, not precisely aligned to later industrial age standards.

Marking a rounded surface:



First strike produces the center of the mark.
Second strike, to the right, adds right edge detail.
Third strike, to the left, completes the image.
This barrel was made of 12L14 low hardness steel.
Harder steel surfaces may require more strikes.

Marking a flat surface:



First strike produces the right edge of the mark.
Second strike increases the mark to the center.
Third strike completes the left side of the mark.
This barrel was made of 12L14 low hardness steel.
Harder steel surfaces may require more strikes.

Select a Correct Location. Proof marks, view marks, names, brand marks, and inspector's marks should be placed as they were used on the original guns. Select a traditional location for your marks. Most early guns were marked in visible locations. Many later original shotgun barrels were marked under the barrel. Stamps were reasonably well aligned, but not precisely aligned to today's industrial age standards.

Wood Surfaces are sometimes marked with an Inspector's approval stamp. Marked as a final step, after the finish was fully cured, sometimes called an "Inspector's cartouche" or a "storekeeper's mark", it should not be sanded or finished after marking. Marks in wood require a controlled single blow. Practice on wood of similar density to learn the technique.

Enforce Alignment with pencil marks or tape. Plan your marks, and the strikes needed to achieve good marks.

Small Diameter Round Barrels require more attention, more effort, and a greater number of multiple strikes.

Never mark tempered steel, hardened, plated, or case-hardened surfaces, or knife blades.

Non-Returnable, expendable, each stamp is subject to normal wear, or breakage if mis-struck! Use this tool at your own risk. It will eventually become worn from use.

First Model Brown Bess marks:



- #Stamp-GR-A: King's proof mark, at top of barrel, ahead of breech.
- #Stamp-GR-CS: View mark, at top of barrel, and on breech plug tang.
- #Stamp-GR-Crown: Inspectors mark, in the stock below triggerguard, inside trigger bow, inside ramrod channel forward of entry pipe.
- #Stamp-GR-SKM: Storekeeper's mark for right side of buttstock.

Northwest Trade Gun & French Trade Fusil marks:



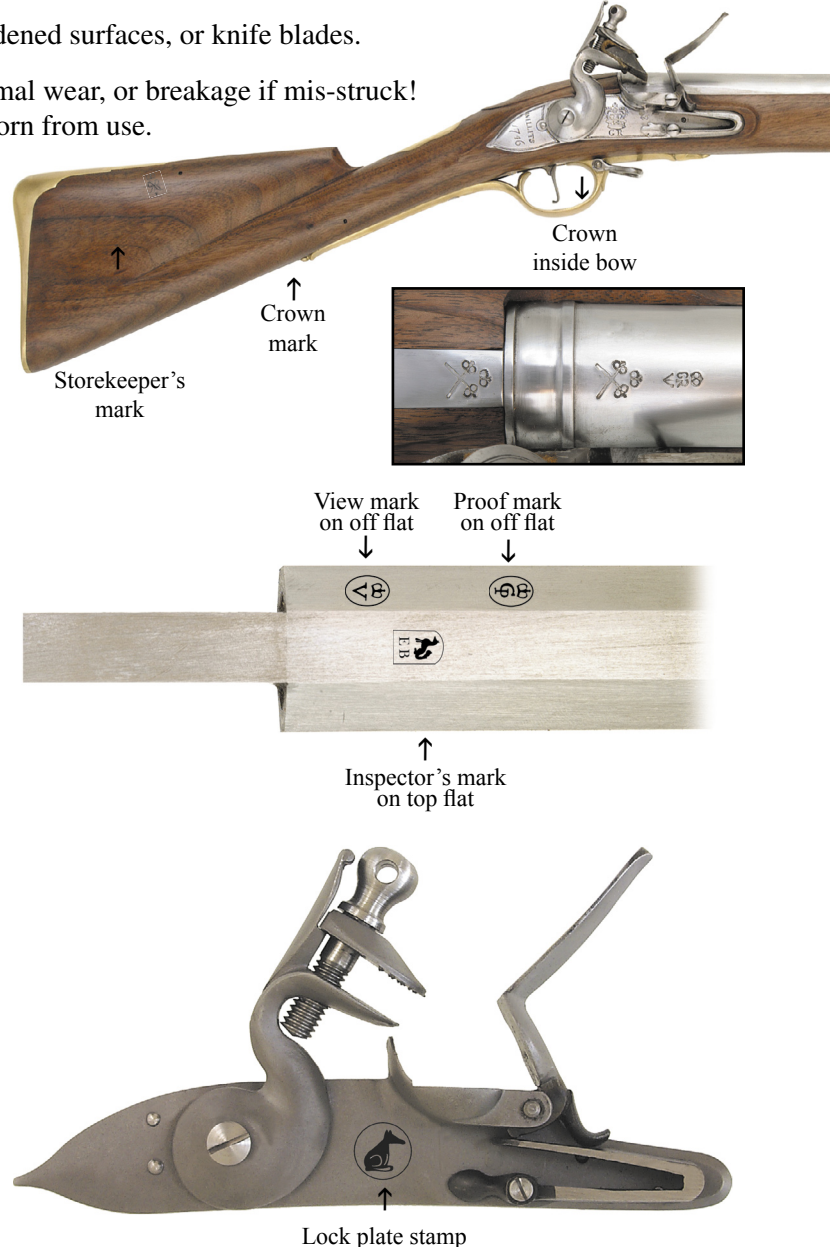
- #Stamp-BPC-1813: Proof mark, found on off flat at breech end of barrel.
- #Stamp-EB: Edward Bond, Inspector's mark, for HB Co., on lock plate ahead of cock, and top of barrel approximately 1" from breech.
- #Stamp-FC: Inspector's mark, lock plate ahead of cock, and top flat of barrel approx 1" from breech.
- #Stamp-KPM: Ketland maker's mark, found on off flat of breech end of barrel, between the view and proof marks.

LONDON



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- #Stamp-LONDON: Top of barrel, on guns from London, Birmingham, Liege, Belgium.
- #Stamp-TRYON-PL: Palm frond, on top and both off flats of TRYON, PHIL'A guns.
- #Stamp-TULLE: Lock plate ahead of cock.



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