

= Henry Nock =

Henry Nock (1741 ? 1804) was a British inventor and engineer of the Napoleonic period , best known as a gunsmith . Nock produced many innovative weapons including the screwless lock and the seven @-@ barrelled volley gun , although he did not invent the latter despite it commonly being known as the Nock gun . He was a major supplier to the military during the Napoleonic wars . His high quality duelling pistols and double @-@ barrelled shotguns were much sought after and it is largely through Nock that the latter became the weapon of choice for hunters .

As well as supplying the military and civilian markets , Nock made expensive pieces for the aristocracy and royalty and was an appointed gunmaker to the king . Nock 's business eventually became Wilkinson Sword , a company which today makes razor blades and other shaving equipment , and , until very recently , made ceremonial officer 's swords for the British Army .

= = Guns = =

Nock produced many innovative weapons . In 1793 he made a double @-@ barrelled pistol with a removable stock for the Royal Horse Artillery . However , this weapon was impractical with the stock removed and was usually used as a carbine . In 1797 Nock put into production a 9 @-@ inch pistol (pattern 1796) for heavy dragoons with a calibre matching their carbines . Some of these pistols had a novel lock designed by Nock , originally intended for an abandoned musket design requested by the Duke of Richmond in 1786 while serving as Master @-@ General of the Ordnance . The new lock could be dismantled by removable pins rather than the previous more cumbersome and time @-@ consuming screws . The pattern 1796 had no butt @-@ plate and the ramrod was stored in the holster rather than attached to the barrel . This feature made it unpopular with users and many guns were modified to take a conventional swivel ramrod .

The name of Nock is perhaps best known today for the multi @-@ barrelled Nock gun due to it being featured in several films . These include uses of this volley gun by the characters Patrick Harper in Sharpe and Jim Bowie in The Alamo . Nock was the manufacturer , but not the inventor , of this weapon . Despite its portrayal in film , this weapon was not very practical as a hand weapon due its very severe recoil , often causing injuries , and the time needed to reload the seven barrels . It was necessary to abandon the rifling of the early prototypes and reduce the charge to keep this problem manageable . Intended as a naval weapon fired from the rigging to repel boarders on the deck , it was retired by the Royal Navy in 1804 . Nock also produced some experimental rotating multi @-@ barrelled guns to fire one barrel at a time .

In his own day , Nock was most well known for his double @-@ barrelled shotguns . He was not the first to make weapons in such a format , but their high quality and Nock 's many innovations led to shotguns becoming highly popular as a hunting gun , especially after Nock became gun maker to the king . Nock was also well known for his duelling pistols .

Nock made weapons covering the whole field from pistols to muskets . The great variety is perhaps illustrated by his coach blunderbuss which , like naval pistols , had a more corrosion resistant brass barrel . Such weapons were intended to be used at short range and did not take a large enough charge to require iron barrels . Nock continued to innovate until his death ? late in life he was making breech loading muskets .

= = Career = =

Nock started out as a locksmith , but he took out a patent for a gun lock in 1775 . Nock was not yet enrolled in the Worshipful Company of Gunmakers and could not trade under his own name . He formed Nock , Jover & Co. with William Jover , a Master of the Gunmakers Company and the patent bore Jover 's name as well as Nock 's along with one John Green . War with the American colonies provided a strong market for Nock 's products .

James Wilson came to Nock in 1779 to make the prototypes for his volley gun design . Nock won the subsequent competitive bid for the production of the gun . The weapon is consequently

commonly referred to as the Nock gun . Nock also produced some volley guns and volley pistols for the civilian market but in very small numbers . This included a set of these weapons for the Royal Household which is still in the Queen 's collection today . This set is not standard production . It has , for instance , silver mounts by Mark Bock , a London silversmith .

Following the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War , there was a fall in the demand for military small arms . In this period Nock turned to the civilian market , but also had profitable orders for locks for light to medium calibre (3 ? 12 pounder) naval guns .

In 1784 Nock finally became a Freeman of the Gunmakers Company . A few years later the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars ensured that Nock was not short of government business . The Duke of Richmond preferred Nock over his competitors for his innovations , particularly the screwless lock . Nock began delivering muskets in 1792 but orders for the regular army dried up because Nock 's non @@ standard design took too long to make and used a different calibre ammunition . Thereafter Nock concentrated on supplying muskets to local militia preparing for an expected invasion . In 1804 the government placed a contract with Nock to replace all the Nock locks on their stock of Duke of Richmond pattern muskets with standard ones . Although the Nock locks were recognised as being superior , the need for standardisation took precedence .

In 1789 Nock was appointed gunmaker @@ in @@ ordinary to King George III , largely as a result of his patented breech for hunting guns and other inventions . In 1802 Nock became Master of the Gunmakers Company .

= = Legacy = =

Nock 's will was generous to his employees , he specified that his business was to be continued for six months for their benefit . He also left as much as £ 100 (inflation adjusted £ 7 @, @ 900) to some employees .

A nephew of Henry , Samuel Nock , was an apprentice under him . Samuel also proved to be inventive , holding a patent himself . Samuel became Gunmaker @@ in @@ Ordinary in succession to George III , George IV , William IV and Victoria and in 1836 became a Master of the Gunmakers Company . However , Henry Nock 's own business was continued by his foreman and son @@ in @@ law James Wilkinson . Wilkinson became Gunmaker @@ in @@ Ordinary to the king in 1805 . Contracts with the East India Company ensured the success of the business . The name became James Wilkinson & Son around 1818 when James ' son Henry joined . Henry died in 1864 but the company continued making firearms and bladed weapons and became known as Wilkinson Sword . A series of new laws in the UK , starting with the Pistols Act 1903 , restricted the sale of firearms to the public . This pushed the company into changing direction and they henceforth concentrated on razor blades and other domestic products . They continued to produce swords for the British Army and for royal ceremonial purposes until 2005 when the sword manufacturing plant in Acton , West London , was closed. The company continues to make shaving and gardening products .