

E. H. ASHCROFT.  
Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 38,645.

Patented May 26, 1863.

Fig 1

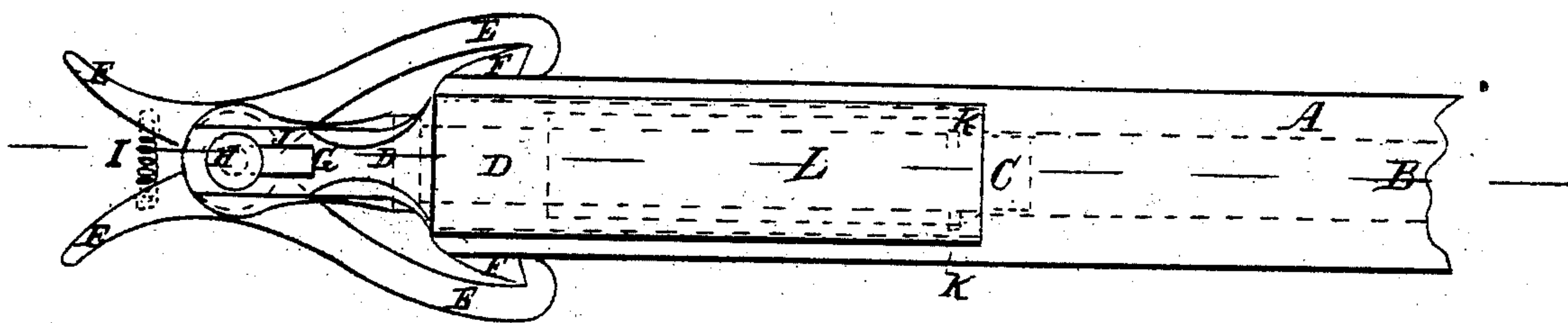
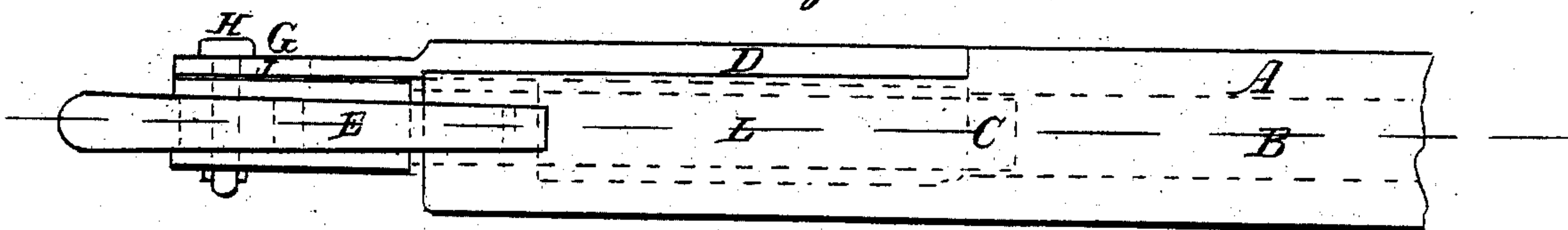


Fig 2



Witness  
John S. Holland

E. H. Ashcroft

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

E. H. ASHCROFT, OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

## IMPROVEMENT IN BREECH-LOADING FIRE-ARMS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 38,645, dated May 26, 1863.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, E. H. ASHCROFT, of Boston, in the county of Suffolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have invented an Improvement in Breech-Loading Fire-Arms; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being made to the accompanying drawings and letters thereon.

My invention relates, principally, to that class of breech-loading fire-arms which have a sliding piston at the rear, closing or forming the breech, and pertains particularly to a method of firmly and securely locking the same; and its chief merit consists in its special adaptation for mounted service, enabling the rider to easily load it while slung at the side. At the same time it can be readily used as an infantry-arm.

To enable others skilled in the art to make and use my invention, I will proceed to describe the same.

Figure 1 is a top view of a portion of a fire-arm barrel with my improvement attached. Fig. 2 is a side view of the same.

A represents the barrel; B, the bore; C, the sliding piston, which opens or closes the breech or bore of the barrel.

F F are lugs on the sides and extreme end of the barrel.

E E are two hooks or levers, one on each side of the barrel, and pivoted to the rear end of the piston C. Their front ends, when passed over the lugs F F, securely lock the piston C and close the breech or bore of the barrel. Between their rear ends a spiral or other spring, I, is intended to be applied to press the front jaws toward each other.

D is a sliding cover or lid working in a dovetail groove, and is attached to the piston C by the pin H, which also is the pivot for the hooks or levers E E. The slot G in the rear end of this sliding lid or cover contains a spiral spring, J, which gives the hooks play enough to pass over the lugs, and then throws them back in contact, making them firmly grasp the same. The pin H can be secured in place by a key through the lower end or by a lock-nut.

K K are pins on each side of the front end of the piston to limit its withdrawal.

The operation of this fire-arm is as follows: To prepare the piece for loading, the rear ends of the hooks E E are pressed together and a little forward, which releases the hooks or levers from the lugs. Upon pulling back the same, the piston and sliding lid are both drawn to the rear, leaving an open chamber, L, for the insertion of a cartridge. Upon simply reversing the operation or pressing the movable parts forward, the piston C pushes the cartridge into its place into the barrel and closes the bore of the same. The lid D closes the chamber, the hooks or levers E E pass over the lugs F F, thus locking the piston, and leaving the piece ready to be discharged by any of the well-known methods not necessary here to show. The piston C can be extended still further to the rear, and be so formed as to facilitate the pushing forward of the piston—for instance, by having a button on the end of it. It will therefore be seen how readily, while this arm is slung at the side of a mounted man, without taking it up, he can open and close the breech, and load it by simply operating the piston and levers E E with his right, not disturbing his bridle, hand. It is also free from long levers and projections, so objectionable in breech-loading arms, especially for mounted men. It will also be seen that this arm, when used for infantry, can easily be loaded while at a "support," or on the left shoulder, or in other positions. Instead of the projecting lugs F F, the hooked ends of the levers E E may pass through the barrel on each side and enter the piston into recesses cut in the same, thus locking it.

What I claim as my invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. The method of locking the piston C by means of the hooked levers E E and lugs F F, or their equivalents.
2. The combination of the barrel A, lugs F F, levers E E, piston C, slide D, and spring J.

E. H. ASHCROFT.

Witnesses:

A. MOORE,  
N. H. SCHRAM.