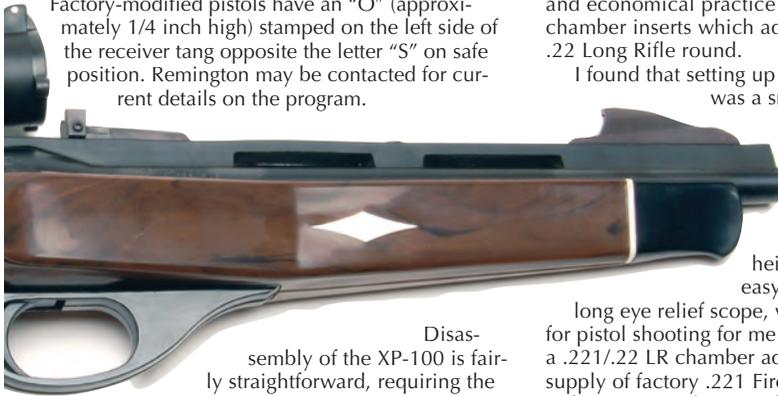


Remington XP-100 .221 Fire Ball Single-Shot Pistol

(1993-1994), and the XP-100 Custom (1986-1994). All versions of the pistol were removed from the Remington line by 1995. The .221 Remington Fire Ball cartridge lives on with many enthusiasts, and Remington even produced a limited-run Model 700 Classic rifle chambered for it in 2004. In rifles, the cartridge fills the low-noise, low-recoil, varminting niche perhaps even better than the time-honored .22 Hornet.

In 1979, original XP-100 pistols were the subject of a factory recall, as were many of the bolt-action rifles of the Model 700 flavor. Early pistols could not be unloaded when the safety was engaged; the bolt was locked by design in the down position when the safety was pushed forward ("safe"). The recall modification allowed the bolt to be retracted and the pistol unloaded while the safety was engaged. The program also, under certain circumstances, substituted a new trigger assembly. Factory-modified pistols have an "O" (approximately 1/4 inch high) stamped on the left side of the receiver tang opposite the letter "S" on safe position. Remington may be contacted for current details on the program.



Disassembly of the XP-100 is fairly straightforward, requiring the removal of the two stock screws.

The procedure for the removal of the bolt, however, is not obvious. It requires, after the bolt is retracted, pushing down the bolt stop in the receiver to the left of the bolt just behind the left bolt lug. This can be accomplished with a small screwdriver or other tool. Be aware that there is a small part called the trigger balance that is held loosely in the stock by a torsion spring equipped with upright arms. It is absolutely essential that this part be re-installed correctly before fitting the barreled receiver back into the stock. The trigger balance then fits into the slot for it in the long trigger link bar. Bolt disassembly is the same as for the Remington Model 700 rifle.

Although this gun is in fact somewhat of a short-barreled rifle, it is still legally a handgun, since it was made from the ground up as handgun with no buttstock, rather than by shortening a rifle's barreled action and fitting a handgun stock. Such a custom short-barreled modification of a rifle would be subject to federal laws and would be illegal without registration and payment of a tax.

Scoping the pistol is quite easy, since it is drilled and tapped for a scope base. There are two

tapped holes in the receiver over the chamber, and one on the receiver bridge. One-piece bases made for the Remington 700 rifle will work. If the base extends back beyond the rear of the receiver bridge (interfering with bolt travel), it can be easily modified to proper length with a hacksaw or the cut-off wheel on a Dremel tool.

Although factory rounds for the .221 Fire Ball are getting harder to find now, they are available. The cartridge is easily handloaded, and brass can be formed from either .222 Remington or .223 Remington cases. If cases are made from these longer ones, the necks should be reamed so as to provide proper neck thickness. Reloading dies are readily obtainable. Because of the 1 in 14" rifling used, it is best to use bullets in the 40- to 52-grain range. Heavier bullets would require a faster twist. A benefit of the slower twist used in this handgun is that excellent short-range accuracy and economical practice can be obtained with chamber inserts which adapt the pistol to fire the .22 Long Rifle round.

I found that setting up the XP-100 for shooting was a snap. I located an aluminum one-piece base for the Remington 700 rifle, and trimmed it to proper length with a Dremel tool cut-off wheel. Using medium-height Weaver rings, it was easy to mount a Leupold 2X

long eye relief scope, which had proved ideal for pistol shooting for me in the past. I sent off for a .221/.22 LR chamber adapter, and ordered a supply of factory .221 Fire Ball ammo. In short order, I was ready to go shooting.

Using the .22 LR chamber adapter, I got the pistol printing on the target at seven yards, and then moved the target back to 25 yards for some serious shooting. I laid the pistol on top of my Dillon range bag for steadiness, and used a firm two-handed grip. The grip of the pistol does not lend itself to getting the firing hand directly behind the pistol, but I found that the classic isosceles hold worked well.

The crosshairs were centered, and I lightly touched the excellent crisp trigger. I didn't know what to expect with respect to recoil, but I was pleased to find out that the pistol felt about like a hot .38 Special when it went off. There was a fireball of flame from the muzzle (appropriate to the cartridge's name) and a sharp report. My next two shots made a neat cloverleaf in the target. A few twists of the Leupold scope's adjustment knobs brought the center of the group into the center of the target. There is no doubt that this is one heck of an accurate pistol. If you have a chance to pick one up on the used-gun market, this classic handgun will serve you well as a precision varmint out to about 200 yards.