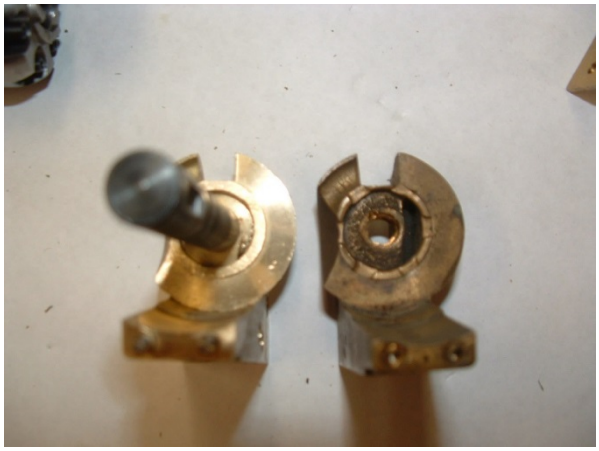
Brass Frame Open Top Colt Revolver Recoil Shield Repair

If you have a brass frame Colt reproduction revolver that has experienced heavy powder loads put through it, you may have experienced what some call a “stretched” frame. But, in actuality, the frame has not stretched at all. There may be slop in the cylinder that allows you to move it back and forth and the cylinder to frame gap may have opened up giving the illusion that the frame has stretched. But probably what has happened, which can occur in a brass frame revolver with “hot” loads put through it is the cylinder has bee forced back against the recoil shield ring and has put indentations into it, allowing for he extra slop the cylinder seems to have.



There is a fix for this issue that is not very difficult to do at all. You begin by filing down the recoil shield ring to the depth of the indentations, being sure to keep it flat at all times. You then add a thin steel recoil plate (washer) to the shield. Take a 7/8 by 1 3/8 14 gauge narrow rimmed bushing from the hardware store and file it to fit around the ring on the recoil shield. Cut it away where the hammer recess is if necessary, and where the loading port is and anywhere else it may need to be cut away. Solder it in place with regular 60/40 acid core solder so it protects the ring on the frame that can't take the cylinders recoil without peening into it. Stone the nipples/cones by the thickness of the new steel back plate so the caps don't recoil into it and set off all the caps.

This thin steel bushing can be made to closely fit around the recoil shields "ring of brass" that the cylinder recoils into on it's rearward travel when the gun is fired. That ring the Colts have is to insure the capped nipples don't contact the recoil shield (frame behind the cylinder) and cause chain fire. If that thin ring is bolstered or protected by the bushing then the gun doesn't acquire the peens in the ring that dent(six dents in the ring where the cylinder area between the nipples contact the ring when the gun fires and the cylinder recoils) and give the gun the overly large cylinder gap the brass framed revolvers are known to acquire easily. The thin steel bushing is installed around the frames recoil "ring" to protect it. The steel bushing doesn't deform and thus protects the frames ring from deforming. The bushing has a large hole in it like a large thin washer. It's installed on the recoil shield of

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the gun around the recoil ring by soldering it in place. The procedure for fitting and soldering the steel bushing "backplate" takes maybe an hour.

With that thin steel backplate installed (the size mentioned above is actually a couple of .001's thicker than the standard ring on the brass framers (Ubertis and Pietta) so until the gun breaks in (takes a long time) the brass recoil ring is never contacted by the cylinder recoiling into it since the cylinder recoils into the steel backplate made and soldered on the frame. The only thing to be sure to do if you install the thin steel backplate around the frames recoil ring of brass is to shorten the nipples some. The capped nipples can't contact the new thin steel backplate or they can cause chain fire. There is usually enough hammer nose to reach the shortened nipples. Shorten and reshape the nipples cones by putting them in a drill and filing them. Shortening the nipples can be easily facilitated by simply rebating the shoulder or "seat" more that the nipples seat down onto."

In this modification the brass frame can last almost indefinitely with normal loads like 22gr, FFFg in the 36cal. and like 25-27gr. FFFg in the 44cal. Don't let the gun get a loose wedge or let the arbor get loose without fixing that or a premature break down will happen from shooting a Colt type with loose parts. The most important setup for an open top revolver is the arbor fit. Correct fit with a tight barrel to cylinder clearance (.0025") and a wedge driven in so that it will put tension between the two assemblies will allow you to shoot a steady diet of heavy loads without problems, even with a brass frame. It's all about maintaining the forces created when shooting, which the open top does well as long as it's set up properly.