
REPORT OF THE INFANTRY BOARD #1666, IMPROVED SLING FOR THE CARBINE

The carbine's sling went through some minor changes during WWII. Among the approximately 12 manufacturers, some variation exists in color, thickness and weave of material, contour of the C-shaped end tabs (tips), and the size and shape of the buckle.

However, some general statements can be made: The earliest slings varied in color: tan, very light green, or a dull mustard/bronze color, with thin C-shaped end tabs and a very narrow buckle that was extremely difficult to adjust. The color of the sling changed to a more consistent khaki/light green, and then a dark OD green beginning in late 1943 - early 1944. The C-shaped end tabs were made stronger and slightly thicker. Inexplicably, the opening in the sling well of the stock was never made larger to accommodate the thicker slings, making it very difficult to attach and remove the later slings from the carbine.

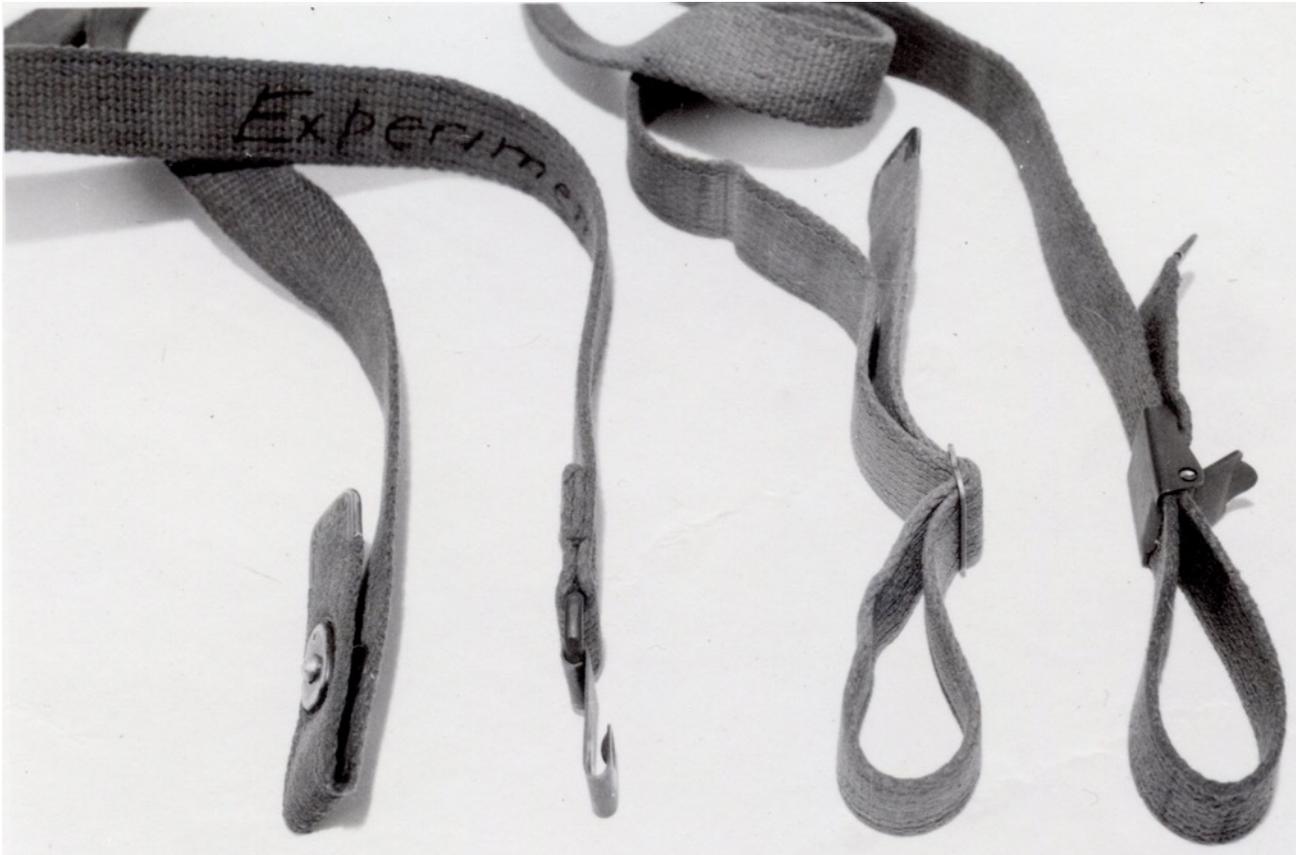
Sometime after the end of the war, probably during the Korean War of 1950-1953, the shape of the end tabs was changed to a solid D-shape, making the sling nearly identical in construction to that used by the Marines on their Reising submachine gun. This change made it even more difficult to push the sling through the sling slot and around the oiler of the carbine stock.

The Infantry (Test) Board at Fort Benning, Georgia released a report on 23 August 1944, detailing the testing of an "improved" sling for the carbine, which used the hardware from the canvas M1 Sling "to eliminate the difficulties encountered in adjusting the standard sling."

It appears that the test board was confused about encountering both types of carbine sling buckles, which were described as 'slip buckles' and 'slip lock buckles' throughout this report. "Standard carbine slings obtained at Fort Benning were equipped with one of two sizes of slip buckles...At one time in the past, a larger slip lock buckle was used on the standard sling. If this was before the introduction of the smaller slip buckle, it is apparent that the adoption of the smaller slip lock buckle was a mistake. However, if the larger slip buckle was introduced after the smaller slip buckle, then it is apparent that the deficiency of the smaller slip lock buckle was recognized, and the problem has been solved in a most efficacious manner."

It is not known if the slings with the "smaller slip buckles" were NOS (new, old stock), or whether one or more subcontractors were still producing slings with these buckles in 1944.

Marty Black



A.

B.

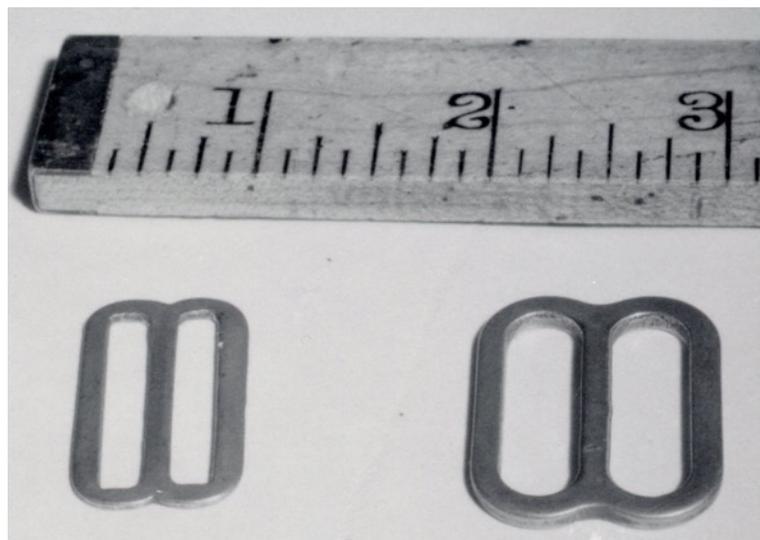
C.

D.

- A. End of Standard Sling, which is looped through upper sling swivel.
- B. End of Improved Sling, which is attached to upper sling swivel.
- C. End of Standard Sling, which is looped through lower sling swivel. Note the (small) three bar slip lock buckle.
- D. End of Improved Sling, which is looped through lower sling swivel. Note quick release type buckle.

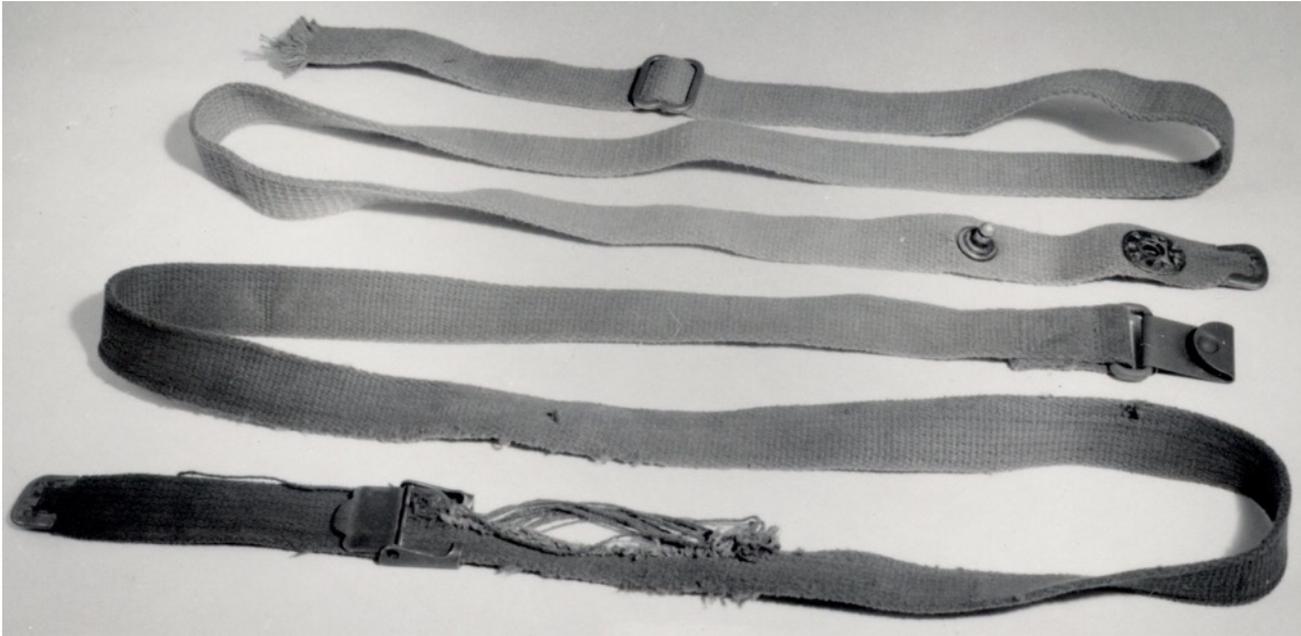
Note in figure B, that a “metal snap fastener” from an M1 Sling has been sewn on. The “quick release type buckle” in Figure D is also from the M1 Sling.

The description of the photo at right is: “Small three bar slip lock buckle and large three bar slip lock buckle.”



Several tests were conducted to determine if the Improved Sling was a large enough improvement over the Standard Sling to warrant adoption.

The last two tests comprised “24 hours of continuous adjustment, with even and jerky tension, wet and dry”... followed by “24 hours of repeatedly installing the slings, adjusting them, then removing the slings from the carbines.”



The results: “The female component of the lift-the-dot fastener on the standard sling became weak, but upon completion of the test was still effective. The metal tip of the lower end of the sling came off in the seventeenth hour (of the latter test). There was very little evidence of wear on the web...

The hardware of the subject sling (improved sling) showed no wear. The loose end portion of the web upon which the quick release buckle slides began to show extreme wear and fraying in the nineteenth hour (of the latter test). At the end of the twenty-four hour, it was shredded. The quick release buckle was, however, still fairly effective in locking the web.

The Infantry Board concludes:

1. That there is no military requirement for any change from the slip buckle type adjustment of the carbine sling to another type, nor for any change from the standard method of attachment of the sling to the carbine.
2. That the small slip buckle, although very effective in locking, is needlessly difficult to operate when making sling adjustment.
3. That the larger slip buckle is the most desirable size and is the most satisfactory buckle for the carbine sling.
4. That the subject Improved sling presents no essential advantage over the standard carbine sling sufficient to warrant a change to the former.
5. That the smaller slip buckles, although more difficult to operate, should be used until the supply is exhausted, and then replaced by the larger slip buckle.

The Infantry Board recommends:

1. That no further consideration be given to the Improved (subject) carbine sling.
 2. That the larger size slip buckle, if not already standard, be made standard for use on the standard carbine sling.
 3. That stocks of the small slip buckle be used until stocks are exhausted, and thereafter replaced with the larger size.”
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