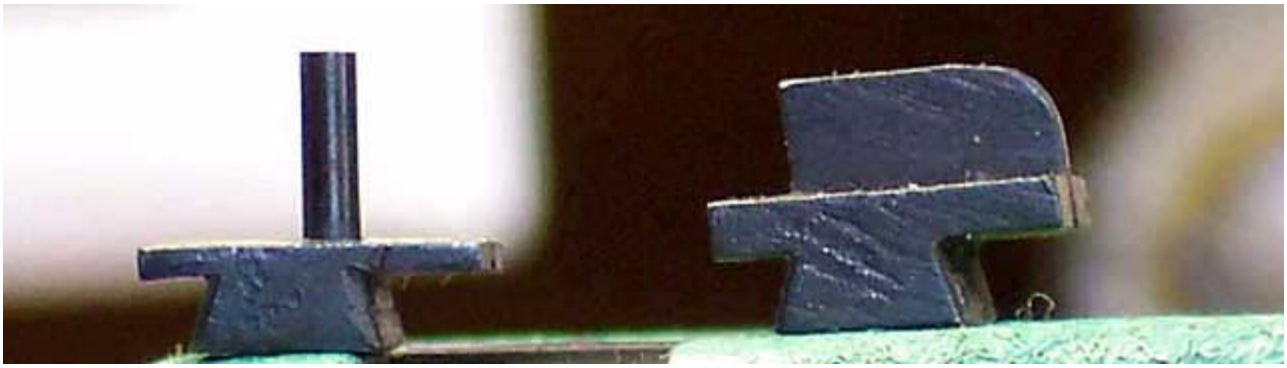

Article Contributed by: Mark Trope

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Often the front sight on a Mil-Surp rifle leaves a lot to be desired. Sometimes the tapered sight doesn't give a good sight picture for aging eyes. Many Mil-Surp sight blades are worn and battered. Or, as often happens, the front sight is to just low for 100 yard zero.

In a previous article, "A Non-Permanent Way To Adjust a Mil-Surp front Sight", we described how to use Agra-Glass Gel epoxy to build up a front sight for 100 yard zero. This is a non-permanent solution, and won't alter your rifle. A heat gun will soften the Gel and it can be removed.

Recently I began thinking about a more permanent way to alter the front blade on a Mauser, SMLE or any type rifle with a dovetailed front sight. What got me started was an older gentleman at the range saying the tapered post was hard to sight with. He commented that he could see square posts much better, and it needed to be taller for 100 yards. The parameters for this project would be; a simple, inexpensive way to put a taller, square post blade on a rifle.

I noticed many rifles used a round pin for a front blade. When sighting a rifle, this gives the same sight picture as a parallel sided, square topped blade. Decapping pins for reloading dies are hardened and blued. I felt one of these pins would work well. A 5 pack of RCBS decapping pins cost about $2.50

I had no desire to permanently alter the original front sight. I ordered another SMLE front sight from Numrich Gun Parts Corporation, www.e-gunparts.com . I ordered it on Sunday and it arrived by mail the next Thursday. That's good, fast service. The delivered price was $6.80. The sight I received is clean and correct, what more could one ask?

Two views of factory front sight on a SMLE (nose cap removed)

The original blade is cut off the sight base with either a Dremel tool or hacksaw. Then clean up the top with a file. Apply touchup blueing after dressing up the base with a file.

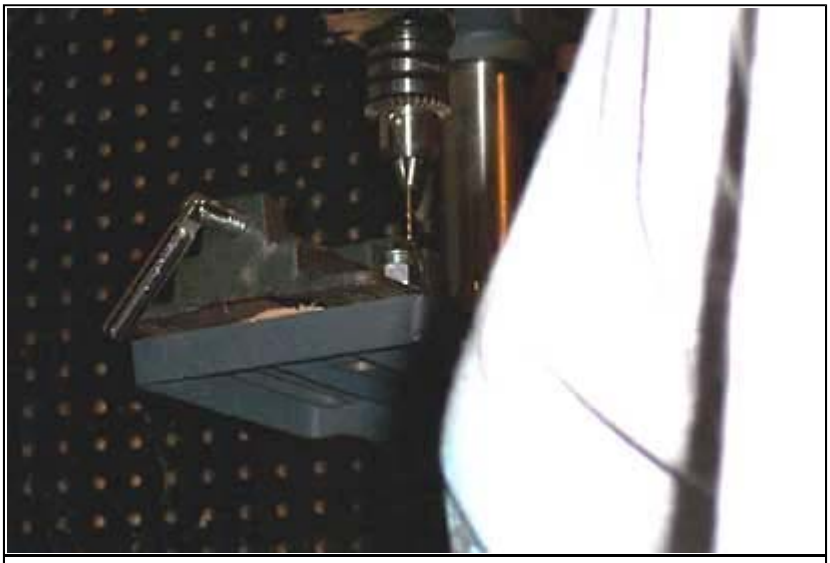
Use Dremel Tool to remove blade from front sight

Impregnated cut-off wheel and a flex shaft make it easy to remove blade while sight base is clamped in a vice

Next step is to determine the center of the base. Use a caliper to measure and find center. Scribe lines, then use a center punch where the lines intersect.

Determining center of sight base with a caliper

A RCBS decapping pin is .072 thick. I used a # 50 drill bit that is .070 in the drill press. Lacking a drill press, a hand drill will work, provided the sight base is held firmly in a vice.

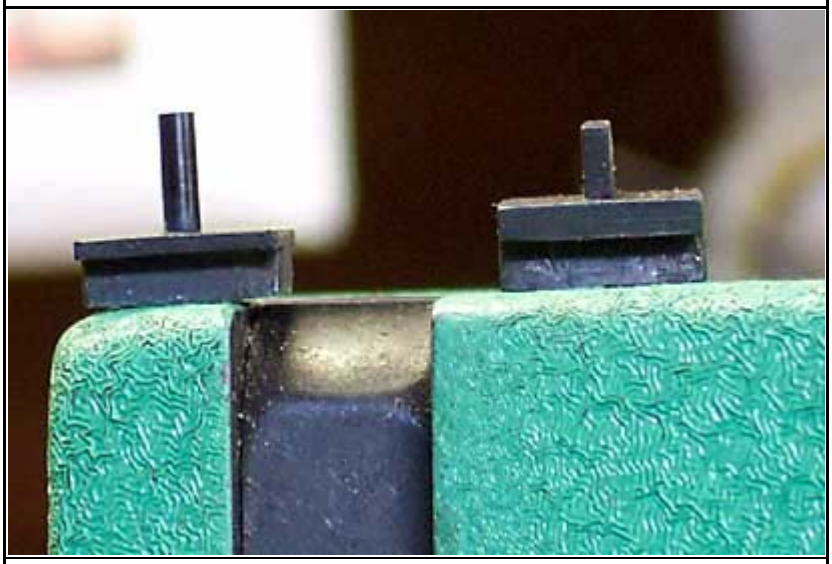


Drilling sight base in drill press

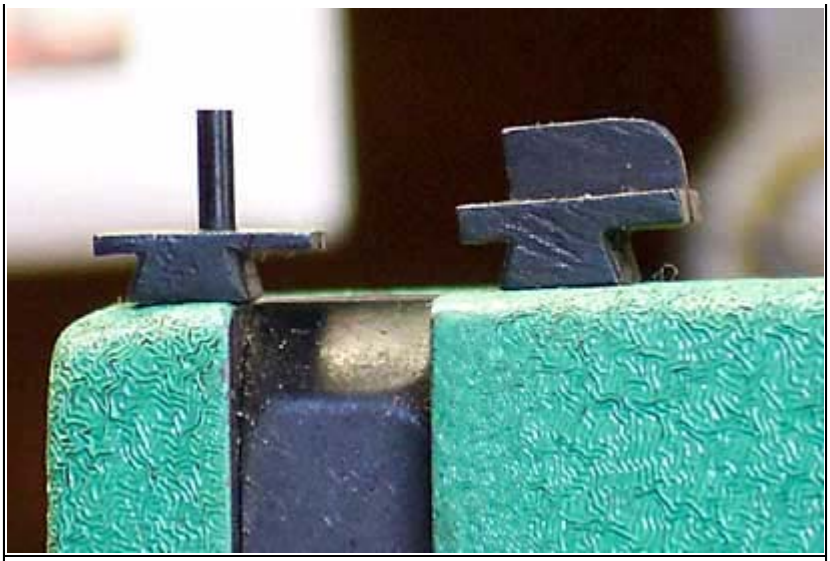
Then the decapping pin is driven into the base with a small ball peen hammer. It's a good, tight fit.

The decapping pin will be very long once installed. It needs to be shortened. The Dremel tool makes quick work of it. Dress the top of cut off pin with a file and use touch-up bluing.

Excess pin is clamped in the vice, Dremel tool cuts it off



Front view of reworked sight base on left, original sight base on right. New sight is taller for 100 yard zero



Side view of reworked sight base on left, original sight base on right

Of course for the SMLE, the sight picture remains the same, however, I now have plenty of material to adjust for 100 yard zero. However, there are those who need or want a different sight picture, in addition to requiring additional height for zero. This is a quick simple, low cost fix to a vexing situation.

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