

MODIFYING THE 788 TRIGGER

By PAUL DORSEY

SEVERAL MONTHS BACK a Rifle reader suggested using a 540X Remington trigger on the 788 Remington rifle to improve the trigger pull. This sounds great and if it would work, could provide an economical remedy to an obvious deficiency. However, the design of the 540X trigger eliminates it from consideration for it appears too weak for the 788, the sear won't clear without modification, and the safety and bolt release won't work.

However, a few simple modifications to the basic 788 trigger assembly will convert it into a reliable, safe, functional assembly that will adjust to approximately 10-12 ounces, provide safe sear engagement, and the safety will work — which makes it suitable for precision varminting or target work such as the NBRSA Hunter Class, where a safety is required.

First, remove the trigger from the rifle by relaxing the locking screw and driving out the retainer pin. Completely strip the trigger of all levers, pins, springs, etc. To function consistently there must be no binding of any of the parts, and friction should be reduced to a minimum. If necessary, lap the pins and levers with lapping compound (clean thoroughly after lapping) remove all mill marks from the levers, and completely de-burr the casting. With these chores out of the way we're now ready to make the necessary modifications for a lighter, more consistent pull and let-off.

As the drawing shows, in the standard 788 trigger a single spring serves for both sear engagement tension and trigger pull tension. Although inexpensive to manufacture, and suitable for hunting, the disadvantage is that fairly heavy tension must be applied to the sear to assure striker engagement while trigger tension must be light if a light pull is to be obtained. Except for the considerable differences stemming from leverage, the single spring exerts equal pressure; there is no safe means of adjustment, for shortening the spring to reduce trigger tension would also reduce necessary sear tension.

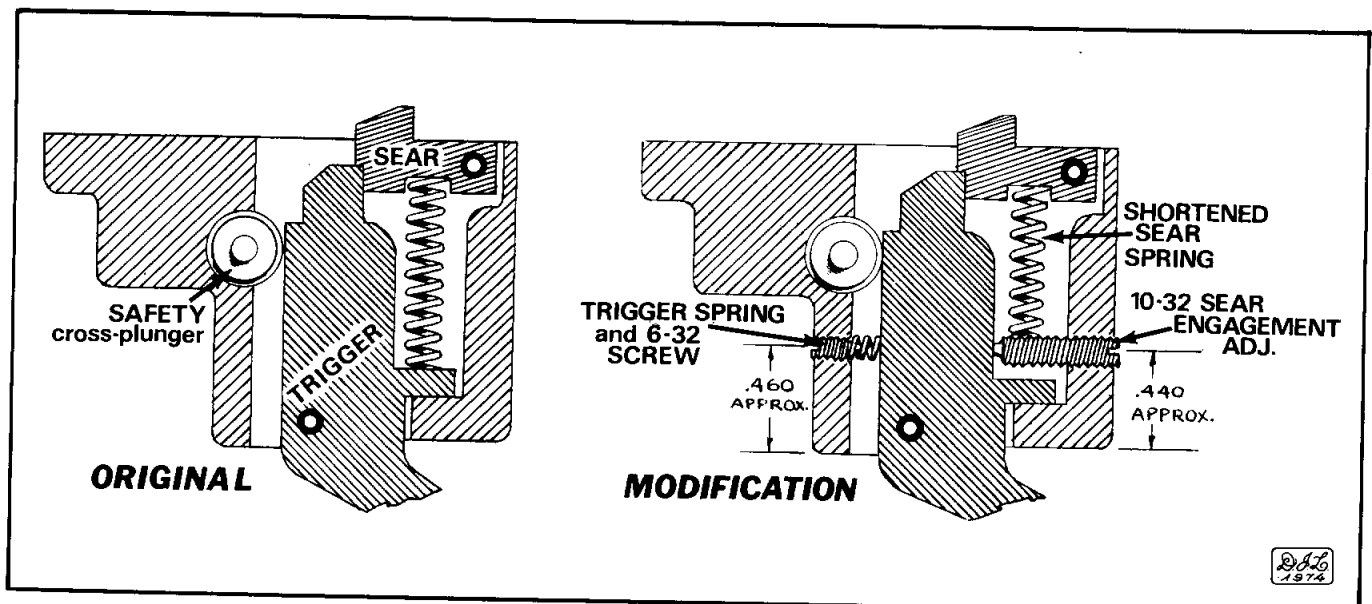
In essence, the modification consists of separating sear tension and trigger tension by the addition of a second spring, plus adding a sear engagement adjustment. In the modified version the sear spring drives only the sear; the shortened spring now seats on the shank of the sear engagement adjustment screw rather than on the trigger lever. Trigger lever tension is now applied by the new spring which bears against the front of the trigger lever. The strength of the

spring and amount of tension applied by the screw control trigger pull once the sear engagement has been set.

Using the suggested dimensions from the drawing, locate, drill and tap the casting for the sear engagement and trigger pressure screws. The use of expensive equipment to modify the screws isn't necessary. Simply chuck the screws in a 1/4-inch drill and file the ends to the proper size. Selecting the trigger pressure spring will be the toughest chore. Choose a very light spring at a spring supplier or gunsmith and file the 6-32 screw to fit the spring. Then carefully epoxy the spring to the screw; if it's necessary to substitute the spring, application of heat (about 300 degrees) will break the epoxy bond.

The sear spring must be shortened to compensate for the new spring seat. If you have a vernier or depth mike, measure the distance to the original seat and shorten the spring accordingly for the new one. It's very important to stone and polish the sear surfaces without rounding the corners. All polish and stone marks

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It's been said that the .30-30 has killed more deer than any other American sporting round. It's also charged that it's wounded more. Both statements are probably true but if so, that last is an indictment of poor marksmanship, not the cartridge's potential. Much of its reputation for so-so accuracy is due to the fact that so few men ever take the trouble to learn how to shoot it well.

The 94 and its favorite round have served several generations of hunters and outdoorsmen faithfully and well. The stubby carbine has been a familiar sight in backwater areas throughout our hemisphere since this century began. To the best of my knowledge, no sporting arm in the world has ever come close to its sales record and from all indications, its popularity shows no sign of diminishing.

It's been praised — and damned — in several languages but the most memorable tribute I ever heard came from an old friend, now dead these several years. A 30-year infantry veteran, the Colonel — we never called him anything else — was a gun buff from 'way back. He'd been a member of several Army rifle teams in the thirties and over the years had acquired one of the most impressive collections of fine rifles and shotguns I've ever seen. Despite his years, he managed a deer hunt every season and whenever he drew a license, tried for elk as well. Despite the availability of several first-class hunting rifles, he invariably chose a well-worn .30-30 when he headed for the mountains. He carried it on his last hunt and dropped an Imperial elk with it.

Several of us were admiring the monstrous rack at a taxidermist's one Saturday while the Colonel regaled us with anecdotes of the hunt. After he finished one of his tales and the laughter died down, one of the audience asked, "Colonel, didn't you feel a mite undergunned going after that elk with nothing but a .30-30?"

The old man straightened slightly. The faded blue eyes sparked behind the steel-rimmed spectacles as frosted brows lowered. There was an echo of steel in the dry voice as he replied, "No man armed with a .30-30 — if he knows how to use it — is ever undergunned!"

Al Miller

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788 Trigger Modification

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must run from breech to muzzle. Any cross marks will affect the action of the trigger.

Reassemble the trigger and lightly lube the pin fulcrums. Then install it on your rifle. Insert the bolt in the action and cock the rifle; push the safety to the "on" position and we're ready to adjust our work of art. Screw in the sear engagement adjustment screw until the trigger lever touches the safety button. Stop. This is the minimum sear


engagement attainable to assure operation of the safety. Next you'll want to move the safety to the "off" position and adjust the trigger spring for the lightest possible let-off that will assure safe operation. Depending upon the spring you selected, the trigger should let-off in the 10 to 12-ounce range.

This simple trigger modification gave me a lot of satisfaction and a large sense of accomplishment. While the trigger probably won't compare with a \$40 Canjar, it's safe, reliable, and it works.


Paul Torrey



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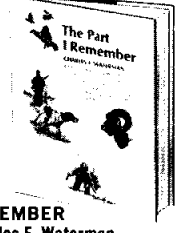


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