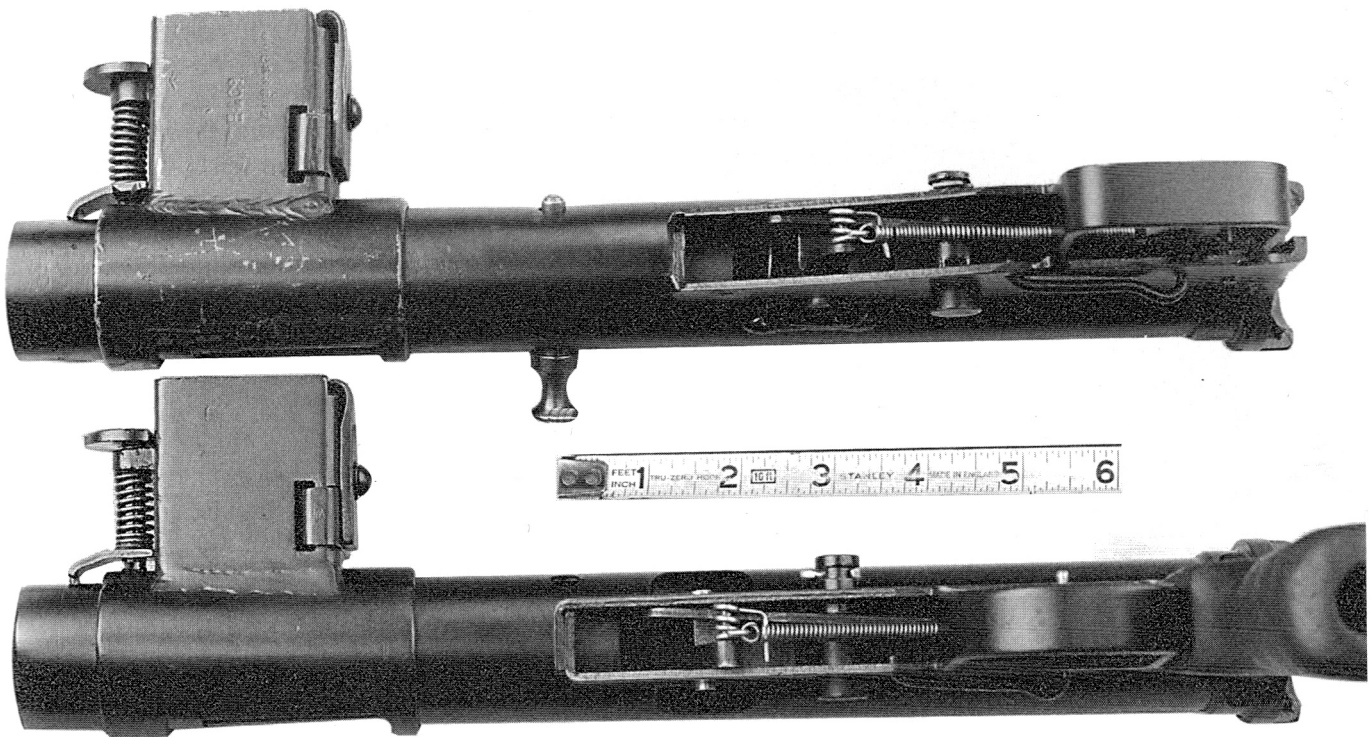


## The (Relocated) Trigger Mechanism



69. Underside closeups of two Sten receivers with trigger mechanism covers removed.

Above: MkII.  
Below: Mk5.

The addition of the rear pistol grip on the Mk5 Sten necessitated a relocation of the entire trigger mechanism forward by 1.3", with the trigger mechanism side plates (and cover) shortened slightly, as well.

courtesy MoD (Army) SASC collection

The trigger mechanism of the Mk5 Sten is identical to that of the MkII, except for having been moved forward 1.3" to allow for the addition of the rear pistol grip. The original Mk5 gun used a modified sear, the Mk3 pattern (B3/BL 0025) which incorporated a longer step at the front of the nose and rounded machined edges to the top surface. This sear was narrow across the top and prone to breaking as it snapped up during repetition fire. It was declared obsolescent shortly after its introduction, to be replaced by a Mk4 machined-from-solid type (part no B3/CR 236), which incorporated the longer step plus a more robust construction (in short, an amalgamation of the Mk1 and the Mk3 sear designs). The fabricated Mk2 sear was not authorised for use on the Mk5 Sten.

Dimensionally, there is no difference between the original Mk1 tripping lever and the Mk2 type, but the Mk2 type has an additional angular cut across the toe to assist its depression by the breech block. By

August, 1946, the Mk2 type became the norm throughout the Sten range.

Due to the fact that the Mk5 trigger mechanism is located 1.3" further forward than that of the MkII or MkIII Stens, the operating weight for the cocking handle against the return spring IN THE COCKED POSITION is between 10 - 12 lbs, as against that of the MkII gun, which is between 12 - 16 lbs.

Earlier trials with the Mk4A gun (and even earlier with the Austen!) had shown that a rear pistol grip could be fitted without a full-scale redesign of the trigger mechanism housing and its components. This entailed moving the trigger (hinged about a redesigned but similar axis pin) forward, and connecting it to a shorter tripping lever. However, the powers that be wanted standardisation AND interchangeability. That's what they got with the Mk5 over the MkII, while as discussed in Chapter Seven, the T/42-Mk4B idea was TOTALLY different.

## The Butt and Pistol Grip Assemblies



Sorting out the numerous butt assemblies for the Mk5 Sten is a complex task, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Fourteen. Due to slack manufacturing tolerances, butt sockets could be either too tight or too loose, and so these were selectively fitted and numbered to the individual gun.

As for the rear pistol grip, in order for the tang of the detachable butt socket to slide down and off, the upper rear end of the pistol grip had to be cut away internally. It was impossible to move the trigger mechanism forward any further, so the base of the pistol grip overhangs the rear edge of the casing.

70 (left). Right side closeup of a Mk5 Sten pistol grip showing butt stock tang ready for assembly by insertion in cutaway area of grip and pushing upward to lock it in position.

MoD (Army), SASC collection

## The Cover, Trigger Mechanism

This differed from the earlier pattern, due to the fact that the whole trigger frame assembly was relocated 1.3" forward. As a result, the cover, designated "Cover, Mk3" (part no B3/CR 700), was noticeably shorter at its radially tapered front end. On the Mk5 Sten the cover is retained by dimples punched into it, fitting into dimpled recesses in the trigger mechanism frame, an idea taken straight from the MkIII Sten.

There is a later pattern that incorporates the Mk5 shortened front nose, a set of MkIII dimpled retainers, AND a pair of holes whereby it might be screwed to a MkII gun casing. In theory this interchangeable cover could be used to replace both the earlier Mk1 cover, which had holes for screwing it to MkI and MkII guns, and the Mk2 cover (dimpled for MkIII gun), but this theory did not extend to practice.

## The Mk2 Breech Block

The breech block of the Mk5 was slightly redesigned, and designated the Mk2 version, part number B3/CR 677. This slight redesign was due to the fact that the toe of the tripping lever was positioned further forward in the bolt way of the Mk5 gun, and it was necessary to lengthen the tripping lever clearance slot on the underside of the breech block. Also, the flat surface on the underside extends to the face of

the block, the lengthened slot allowing the change lever (and therefore the tripping lever) to be moved from "A" to "R" and vice versa while the bolt is forward against an empty chamber. The Mk2 breech block could also be used in MkI, MkII and MkIII Stens, and this interchangeability was sanctioned in August, 1946.

## The Machine Carbine Comes Into its Own

**"Be warned, we're coming to get you . ." Winston Churchill, June 6, 1944**

Prior to the introduction of the Mk5 gun with its Thompson look-a-like pistol grips, the previous Lanchesters and Stens were fired rifle-fashion with

the trigger-hand holding the small of the butt. The MkI Sten did have a front pistol grip of sorts, and one was proposed for the Lanchester; but these guns were



266 (left). Four types of Sten trigger mechanism covers.

Top: wooden MkI hand guard (B3/BE 9951).

Second from top: cover, trigger mechanism, Mk1 (B3/BE 9951) the "screw hole" version, fitted to MkI\* and MkII guns.

Third from top: Mk2 version (B3/BE 8383) with screw holes and punched dimples, for MkI\* and MkIII guns.

Below: the shorter-nosed Mk3 version (B3/CR 700), for the Mk5 gun. Another version of this cover was available with screw holes *and* dimples, which was theoretically interchangeable throughout the entire Sten range.

courtesy MoD (Army), RMCS