

# Repairing a 1898 Krag Constabulary Rifle Stock

By Roger Ragland (Major)

The Philippine Constabulary were the native police established in 1902 by \* **Taft's Philippine Commission** which oversaw civil affairs of the Philippine Islands. They were law enforcement officers paid by the Civil Philippine Commission. Similar to the US Marshals in America, Philippine Constabulary officers were not limited to a jurisdiction. They had the capabilities to cross county lines (in this case, provinces and regions). The Philippine Constabulary were originally issued old US military stock Springfield Trapdoor single-shot 45-70 rifles from the Indian Wars. During the pacification of the islands after the Phil-Am War, the Trapdoor rifle proved to be inferior when fighting in the dense terrains of the Visayas and Mindanao regions where combatants would rush out in hoards. After the first initial shot, reloading another round became near impossible. As many PC inspectors complained: The Trapdoor rifle became a one-shot club.

The Springfield Trapdoors were replaced by the Krag Constabulary Carbines in early 1906. Unique to only the Philippines, these were basically the same as an M1899 Carbine, but had a shorter rifle like stock and a bayonet lug, and the muzzle stepped down to accept a bayonet. It also had three sling swivels, for the standard Krag / Trapdoor rifle sling at the POD (Philippine Ordnance Depot) in Intramuros. The original purchase price for each Krag, \$6.00. The Krag Constabulary Carbine would also be short lived, they would later be replaced by Springfield M1903 rifles by 1910, but Krags would still be in service until 1917... (reprinted in part from [armasdefilipinas.blogspot.com](http://armasdefilipinas.blogspot.com) )

This tutorial will cover making a Krag Rifle wrist repair when the crack starts behind the trigger guard mortis and runs through the wrist to the comb.

I will show you how I made the repairs without metal pins or screws and with little to do beyond light sanding of the work area. The repairs will be made with Titebond® III Ultimate Wood Glue. This product is waterproof and very strong when cured and unlike epoxies allows working time, it also does not foam.

In this case, the gun is a Krag Philippine Constabulary carbine, the serial number indicates its born date as 1898. The Walnut stock had been taped with electrical friction tape and had been held together that way for many years.



These stocks are rarer than Unicorn horn and if you should find one it is on someone else's gun.

Here the stock's damage is shown after the tape was removed and cleaned. In this case, the crack was a complete split running from the rear of the trigger guard mortise at an angle to the about 4 inches behind the comb. With the tape removed, the stock separated in two pieces with light pressure. All that had been holding it together was the tape. The stock had never been glued. It simply came apart in my hands. As it turned out this made the repair somewhat simple.



First thing I did was make sure the two pieces were clean and free of splinters. I was lucky the break in this case was along the grain line and a clean break. Fitting the two halves was straight forward.

Using a ½ inch stiff artists brush or similar, paint the two halves to be joined evenly and completely. You are going to want a couple of clamps & some blue masking tape handy. Fit the two pieces together and use two or three strips of tape to bind the joint tightly then add the Clamps, whip away any glue that squeezed out. Allow the Joint to dry overnight. In many cases, and almost enviable you may need a bit of filler as some slivers along the crack are missing, I prefer to produce this filler by sanding a scrap piece of walnut and mixing the saved dust into a paste with glue, rather than the plastic commercial fillers.





Once the glue has cured the joint at this point is stronger than the original grain. However, I decided to go a step further and use Miller walnut step dowels. The Miller joinery system is an ingenious and simple way to securely join wood parts together. The system uses a stepped drill bit and stepped dowels that produce better, stronger joints with less effort and set up. Simply drill a pilot hole with the highspeed steel step drill bit, apply glue to surface and the ribs on the dowel and drive the dowel home to pull the joint together. The step dowel design reduces the amount of glue squeezed off as the dowel is driven home creating a stronger adhesive bond. Once the glue dries, the exposed dowel is trimmed and sanded creating a strong and attractive joint. Stepped dowels have shear strength similar to that of screws or nails and will blend in to the finished stock far better than screws.

You will need to drill down into the wrist so that you will be able to insert the dowel to secure it. To get the right depth, lay the bit on the side of the grip and mark it with tape. This will be your stop point when drilling. Be sure to keep you angle right as you drill and grip the wrist as you drill. Should the bit start to cut too close to the sides, you will feel a hot spot and you will need to stop and check your angle.

As an aside...

These repair steps may be use with other types of cracks or breaks, restoring the original stocks to service. I like to clean with Acetone or Denatured Alcohol because, it removes dirt and oil and will dry very quickly. If there is a fine crack these fluids will get into it and not dry as fast and allow you to see the crack.

In some cases, in less extensive cracks you will find that you will be unable to get Glue down into the crack or not all the way into the crack. You may need to drill holes to allow you to get glue into that crack. In this case you will want some dowels that are a little smaller than the holes you drilled. Do your best to flex the stock to work glue into the cracks. Coat and insert your Dowels and clamp everything up and wipe away any excess glue.

After several hours you can remove the clamps. Then let it set overnight.





I use a Dremel tool with a sanding drum bit to clean up the dowel tops. Be careful and don't go wild, just take your time, in fact a little blue tape here can save you a marred stock around the repair. I like to allow 24 hours before final sanding and finish. I like Homer Formby's Furniture Refinisher; it will cut and restore the original finish without stripping it and blend the repair and remaining finish together. The color is retained and matches into the sanded area. I use Skidmore's Restoration Cream as my final finish. By the way, by their own admission their Leather Cream and Restoration Cream are the same thing. Lastly, you can use Johnson's Floor wax if you prefer. Johnson's dries faster than Skidmore's and you can buff the final finish sooner. Here is the Rifle with two applications of Skidmore's and a final coat of Johnson's.







- **The Taft Commission, also known as Second Philippine Commission under the sovereign control of the United States was established by President William McKinley appointing future President William Howard Taft as its head.**