

## Matter raised on slings, from French arbitration committee

### 1 – Historical evidences

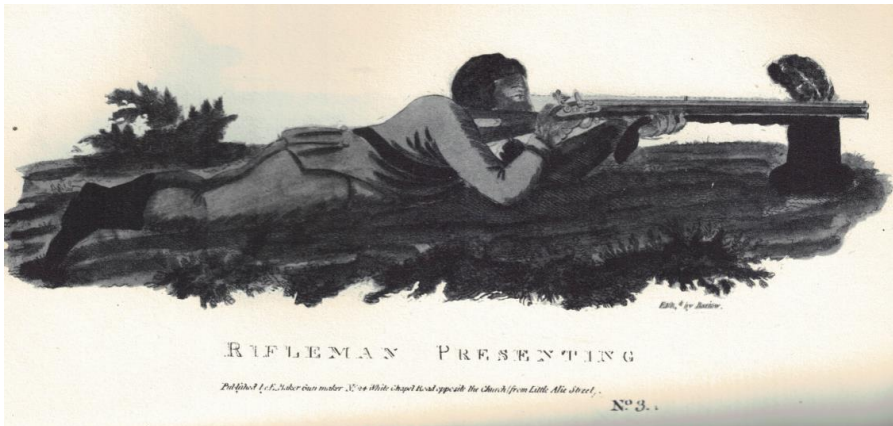
Here is a picture, no sling is shown on this picture in this 1875 competition.

This explains very well the advantage of back position, compared with prone shooting with no support.



*The International Rifle Match Between American and Irish Teams, at Dollymount, near Dublin  
(Illustrated London News, 10 July 1875)*

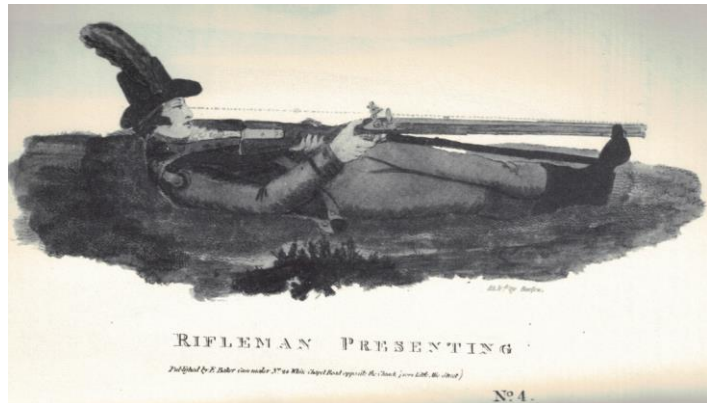
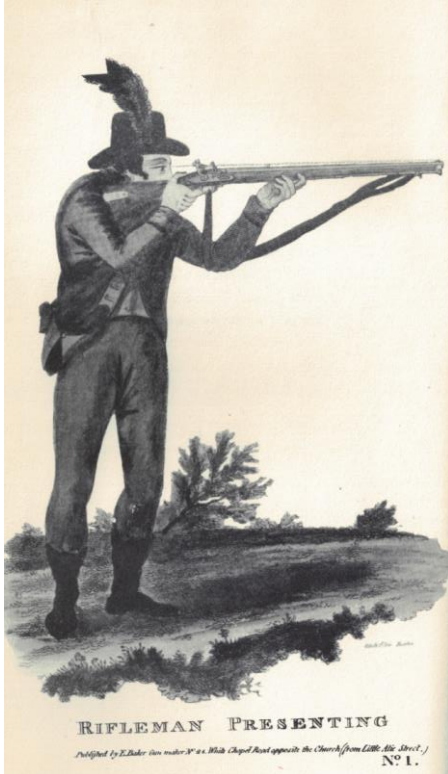
Another source, book by Ezechiele Baker in 1823, displays the following picture, bringing evidence of prone position being with a sling of the period.



Same source, when kneeling



Same source, standing position and supine position.



Watching these pictures, it is difficult to establish why we do not find any picture of people shooting in competitions (i.e. match rifles like n°4 event) in 1860's is using this technical advantage whereas it seems to be identified in a 1823 book.

Forgotten skill, or admitted to be too easy?

Meanwhile, from other sources,

1. In 1876 the NRA(UK) changed their Regulations and permitted the use of slings in limited capacity. "Slings may be used as an assistance in shooting for all prizes restricted to military breech-loaders, provided they are of Government length and pattern, and are attached to the rifle as in Government arms." (Proceedings of the National Rifle Association, 1876)
2. This rule was updated the following year to expand the use of slings to all prizes. "Slings may be used as an assistance in shooting for all prizes, but where the competition is restricted to military breech-loaders the slings must be of the Government length and pattern, and attached to the rifle as in Government arms." (Proceedings of the National Rifle Association, 1877)
3. Insofar as the NRA(UK) rule with regards to slings, that introduced in 1877 was still in place in 1896. That year can be taken as the cut-off for black powder match rifle in the UK. In 1897 NRA(UK) restricted bore size to not exceed .315 in.
4. In NRA regulations in 1897, 'Any Rifle' became 'Match Rifle'. Such rifles had a list of conditions with which they must comply, which included that the stock be "fitted with swivels for a sling." Slings were also permitted as "an assistance in shooting for all prizes". (NRA(UK) Bisley Common, 1897. Program.)

No other evidence of sling use was found.

**From this, we can conclude the legitimate use of slings when shooting free rifle events, such as 02, 04, 08 or 15.**

**Decision according to delegates **vote** :**

## 2 - Shape of slings

From a personal collection (not mine), here are a few pictures:



Slings encountered in competitions in 2023 :



Third one from the top looks like a 19<sup>th</sup> century, others seem off period.

Off course, our cut-off date excludes 20<sup>th</sup> century, these pictures are only here to show examples.

Decisions:

- 1- Slings were made to be fitted on swivels or loops if the rifle has no swivels  
vote :
- 2- When adjustable it was realized with buckles and ardillons or artillery buttons  
vote :
- 3- General shape is likely parallel  
vote :

### 3 – MLAIC Rules

Our rules state :

**a.) Slings**

- i) Slings shall be original or a reproduction of a contemporary type. Modern adjustable target type slings, including single-point slings, are forbidden.
- ii) The sling shall not be fixed to the rifle in such a way so as to give support to the shooter similar to that given by a single point sling.
- iii) The following shall be permitted provided that the separation between the two ends are not less than 8 inches (203mm) apart:
  - aa) barrel to trigger guard;
  - bb) fore end of stock to trigger guard;
  - cc) Barrel to rear of stock,
  - dd) fore end of stock to rear of stock.Clarification is available on the official MLAIC website)
- vi) The ends of the sling must not be joined at the fixing point
- v) In the case of underhammer rifles where there is no wooden fore end, both ends of the sling may be attached to the barrel but may not be closer to each other than 8 inches (203mm) .
- vi) Slings shall be manufactured from leather, canvas or other suitable material available in the 19th century. No modern material such as nylon may be used. No part of the sling may exceed 2.5 inches (63mm) in width or 0.25 inches (6mm) thickness. Slings may not have double layers or straps attached thereto.
- vii) Only military style slings are permitted in competitions Nos. 1, 3, 9, 10, 11, 31, 32, 37 and 40. Slings shall only be attached to proper original sling swivels.
- viii) Slings are permitted on original target rifles, including English target rifles without sling attachments, provided that the attachment is by straps, string or other suitable means, causing no damage to the rifle. Sling swivels and modern screw type ring clamps are forbidden.
- ix) The use of string, leather, cord or any mechanical means to fix the sling to the trigger guard, which might contact the trigger, is not permitted.
- x) It is not permitted to wrap the sling in such a way that it prevents equal tension being applied to the sling attachments on the rifle, i.e. inserting the arm into the sling and twisting so that all the tension is placed on the front fixing.

#### 4 - Rule addition proposal :

1 - Addition at the end of art. viii

“for free rifles events, such as 02, 04, 08 or 15 slings shall be constituted of parallel shaped elements.”

**Vote :**

2 – Addition at the end of art. x :

“its is forbidden to put the forward arm between two layers of the sling.”

**Vote**

#### 5 – agreement for web site publishing

**vote**

Bernard COLLOT et alter,  
MLAIC delegate of France  
Small Arms Committee chairman.