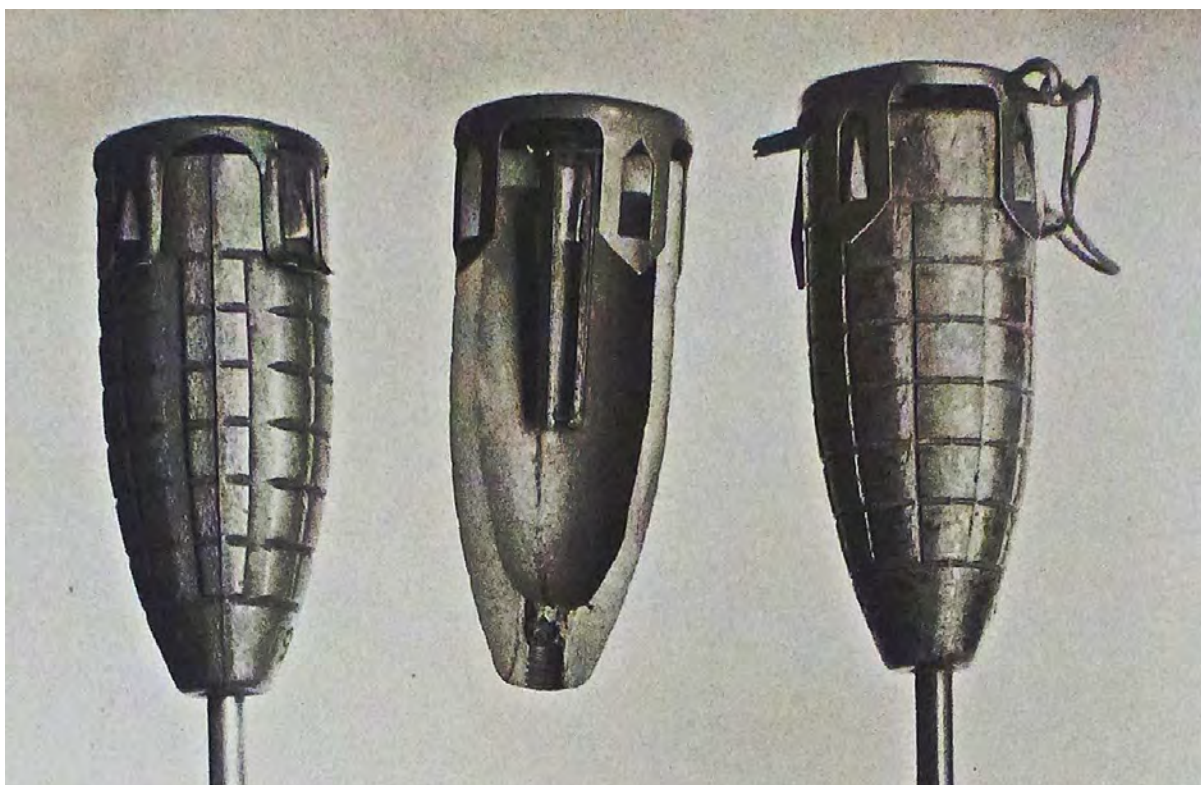
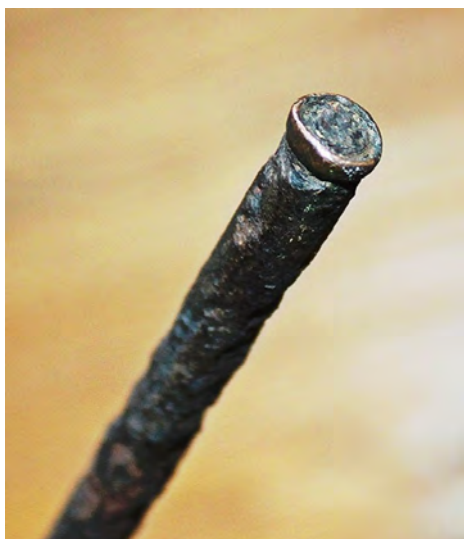






The cap attachments on the Mk. II (*left*) are flared at their bottom ends, whereas on the Mk. I they are straight. Thus, the cap of the cutaway in the centre tells us that this, too, is the Mk. I grenade. Note that the inside of the grenade is smooth, with fragmentation grooves only evident on the exterior.



Early experimental premature detonations tarnished the grenade's reputation, but once in service it would prove a success, with a superior range to other British rod grenades...and, most importantly, it was cheap to manufacture.

Brass gas check at the end of the rod (*left*). The following account is by Private Frank Longson, 1/6th Bn. Sherwood Foresters, whose first opportunity to try out the grenade came when, 'About New Year's Day 1917 an issue of a new rifle grenade arrived in the trenches. The grenade which had been given the name 'Newton Pippin' after the apple [*Nope*] was very vicious and had a range of 400 yards and because there was a danger when being fired from a rifle of a premature detonation it was considered safer to attach a

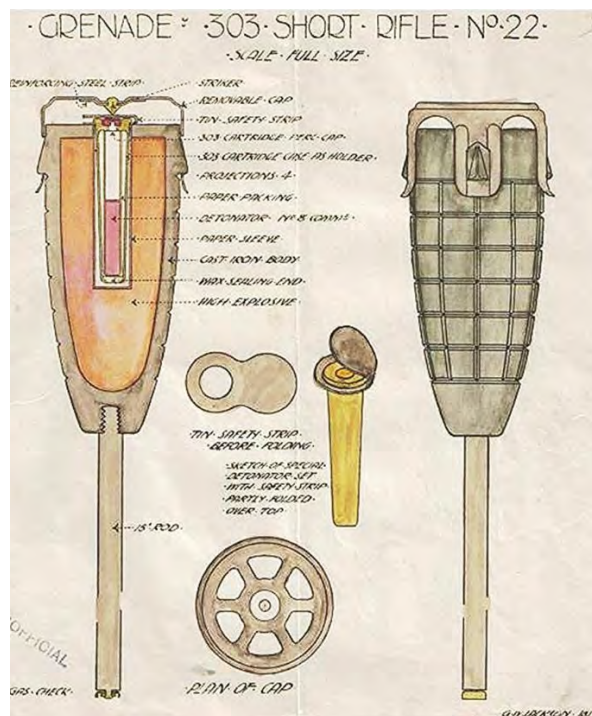
cord to the rifle trigger and pull it from behind a sandbag barricade.'

'They were new to this part of the front and therefore treated with suspicion and care. The Commanding Officer gave me instructions to operate the grenade against the German dugouts and emplacements behind the German front line so for 3 or 4 days we prepared a number of emplacements in the front line or just behind. It was a reasonable understanding on the part of the inhabitants of the front-line trenches that if the Sector was reasonably quiet it should be left that way.'



(Above), my example showing the .303 cartridge in place, and removed. D.G.

‘They did not welcome any introduction of new weapons because as soon as something new was tried out the Germans retaliated with all sorts of flak, trench mortars, minewerfers, shrapnel and high explosive shells which of course soon made life very unhealthy indeed.’



'On the 3rd January we sallied forth from the support line about 30 strong carrying our stock of Newton Pippins *left*, in cases. We arrived at our prepared emplacements and soon the word went round that we intended to use them against the enemy so extra steps were taken to get some shelter from the resultant retaliation. The first grenade was pushed down the muzzle of the rifle, the range checked by means of lowering or raising the muzzle. I attached the cord to the trigger took the end round the protective barricade and making sure that my men were all well out of the way pulled the cord. Crack went the cartridge and away soared the grenade. We followed the course and the explosion in the German rear. It was marvellous and very effective. This was just what we wanted. I loaded – again the same result. The Germans who I suppose were considering the new

weapon were up to now fairly quiet but I knew from experience that they were considering the range factor. How far and from which direction had the grenade come? I know also that one of the enemy had been detailed to watch and listen for the crack of the cartridge or the twang of a catapult.'

'I loaded again, pulled the cord and away went the grenade – the subsequent explosion amongst the German dugouts, then about a couple of minutes afterwards I heard the unmistakable thump in the German line of trench mortar. Down it came just behind us, then another thump and another crack, one on our front line. They were feeling for our position but they had not got the range. I fired two more mortars. It was time to pack up and get back to safety of our dugout. It was very unfair of us to create this unhealthy disturbance in the front line but the job had to be done however unpleasant. Next day we repeated the dose and a few senior officers came to observe the result of this remarkable

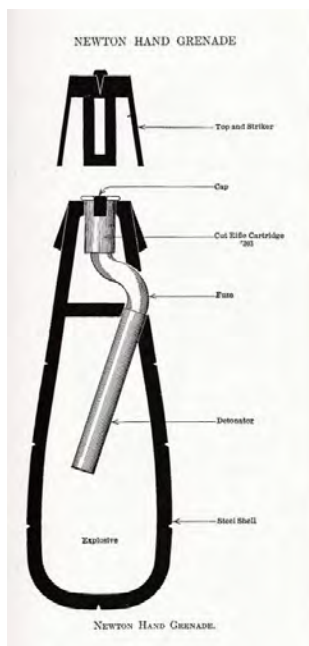
weapon. The retaliation this time was very severe and of course the plea from our front line was to get out and leave them in peace.'

Apparently, the brigade suffered no casualties from the German artillery's retaliatory bombardment. As far as a quick search reveals, Frank Longson survived the war, and had been promoted to sergeant when he received a D.C.M. later in the year.



Captain Henry Newton, 5th Bn. Notts & Derby Regiment (Sherwood Foresters), designer of the 'Newton Pippin' rifle grenade. There seems to be little information to be gleaned about him beyond what you might expect; he was born in 1880, he designed various explosive devices, not restricted to grenades, and his medal index card clearly shows he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel before his discharge in March 1919. The rest we must work out from what we know. He was a second lieutenant in the 1st Volunteer Bn. The Sherwood Foresters from 1906, and a captain in the 5th Bn. Notts & Derby Regiment from November 1912, presumably later serving with the battalion during their tenure of the trenches between Kemmel & Messines in the spring and early summer of 1915. The story goes that he and his men worked on his first grenades in an abandoned blacksmith shop in Kemmel

whilst out of the front line. He would soon be appointed Officer Commanding II Army R.E. Workshops, a position he would hold until II Army left Ypres and headed off for Italy in 1917. The 'M Of M' reference on his card means Ministry of Munitions, a British government position created after the Shell Crisis of 1915.



Newton created other useful designs such as hand grenades. There was a Newton hand grenade introduced in 1915, I think, seen here in diagram on the left, with a nice relic on the right that was originally shown on the Great War Forum and I hope that whoever owns it doesn't mind me using it here. And don't think that these grenades were all manufactured back in Blighty and shipped over for the troops in Flanders & France. As early as May 1915 grenades were being manufactured by the British Army at Hazebrouck, thirteen miles south west of Kemmel, across the French border, which would become an important Allied logistics centre and rail hub, and thus a major German target, during their 1918 offensive.

He also designed the Newton 6-inch trench mortar *below*, which would become the standard British medium mortar from early 1917 onwards.

