United States Patent

Carter

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[54] GUN SLING AND METHOD OF USE

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **224/1 A,** 224/2 A

[51] **Int. Cl.** **F41c 33/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 224/1, 1.1, 0.5, 2.1

[56] **References Cited**

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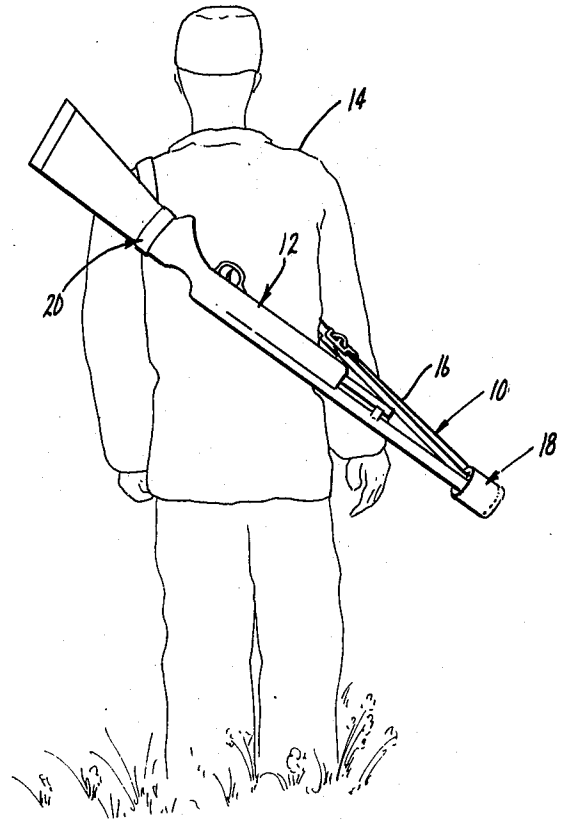
[57] **ABSTRACT**

A gun sling for firearms of the rifle or shotgun type. The firearm is supported in muzzle-down position by a sling passing around the body of the shooter and attached at its lower end to a cup supporting the muzzle and at its upper end to a portion of the stock. A gun worn in this position is easily and comfortably carried, protects the muzzle against damage and entry of foreign matter, and the supporting cup quickly drops away by gravity upon slackening of the sling to allow the gun to be rapidly brought into firing position.

9 Claims, 11 Drawing Figures



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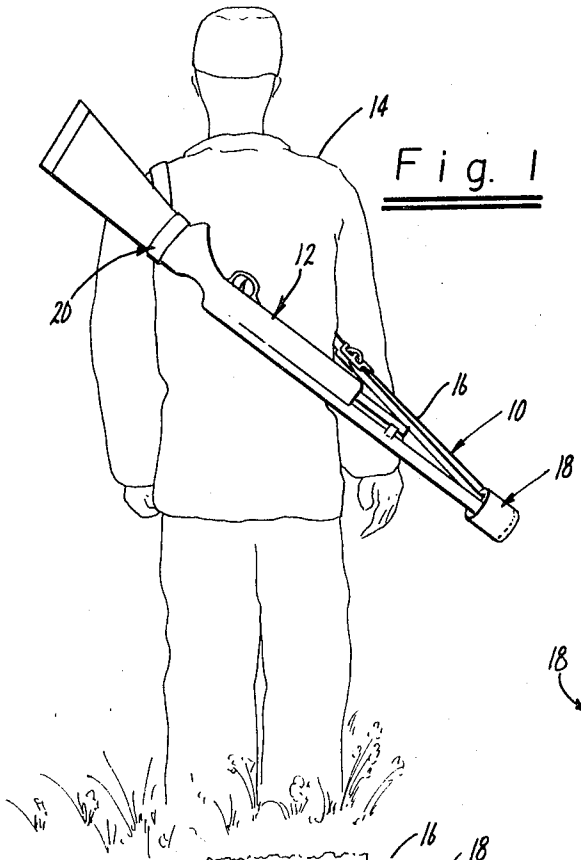

Fig. 1

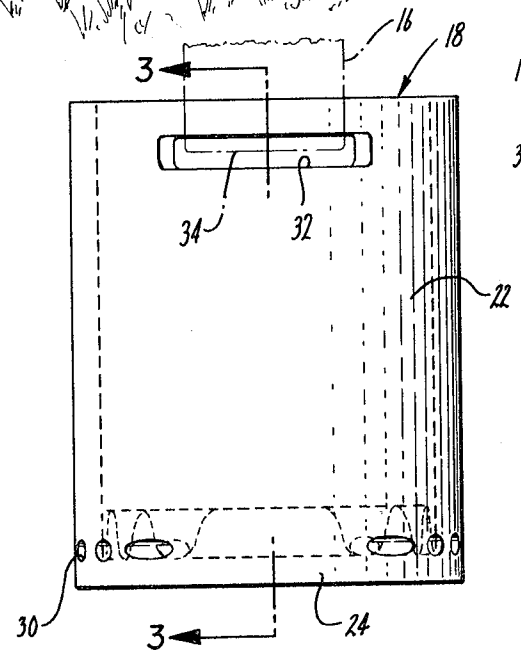

Fig. 2

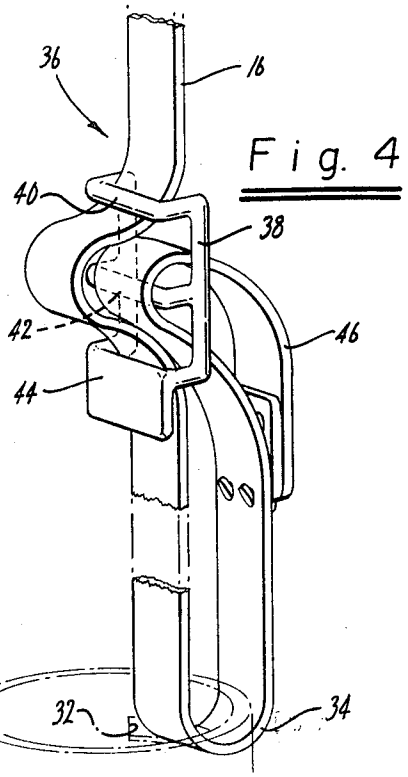

Fig. 4

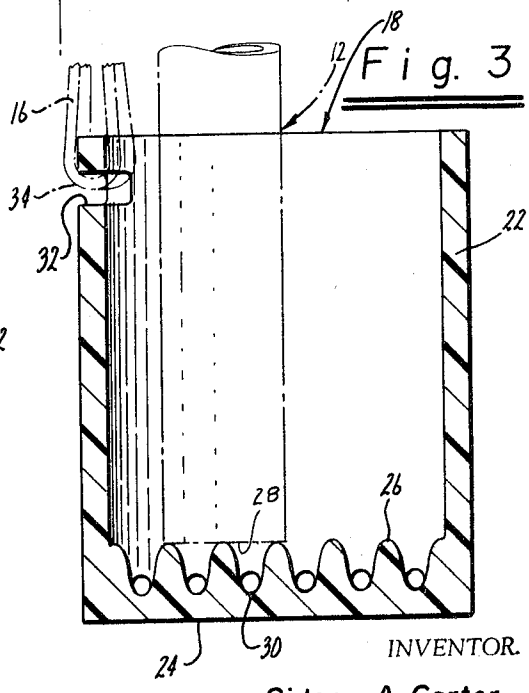

Fig. 3

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Fig. 5

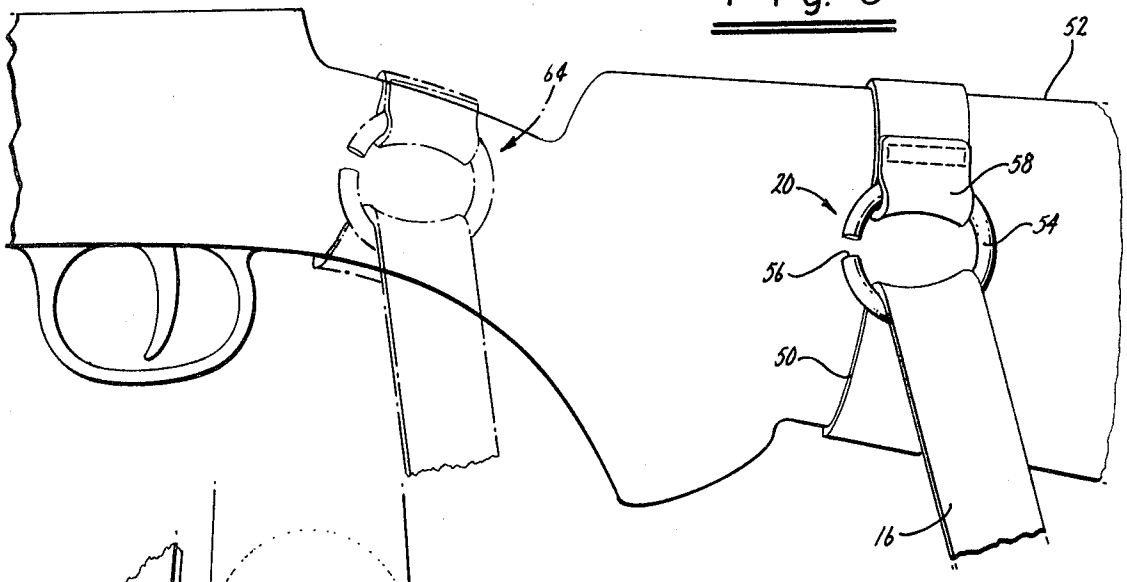
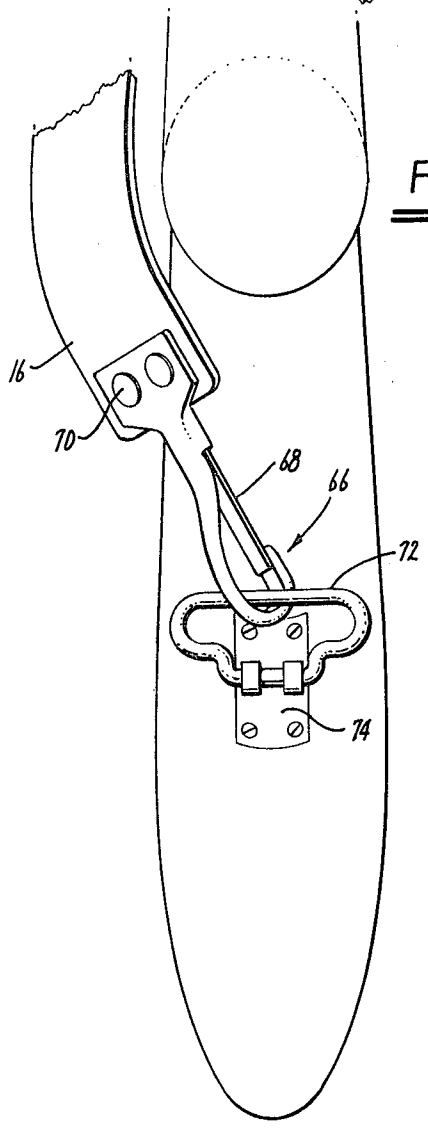


Fig. 7



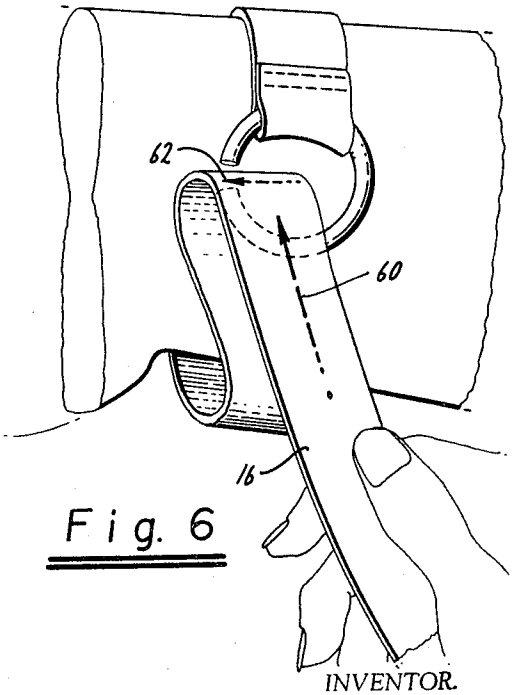


Fig. 6

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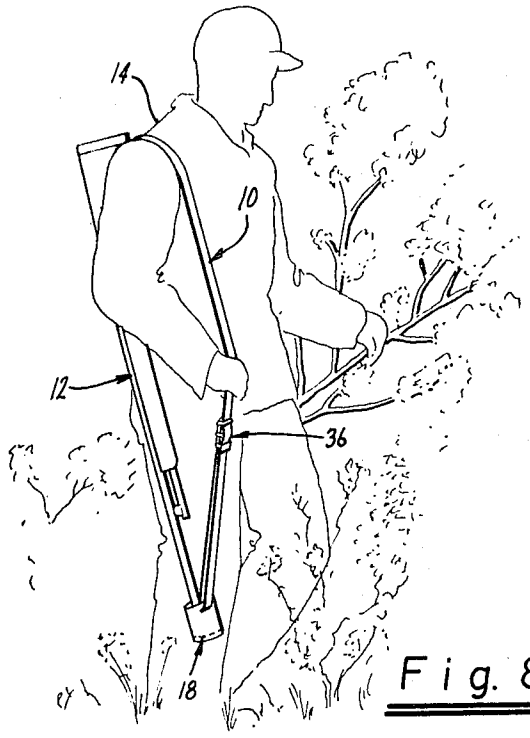
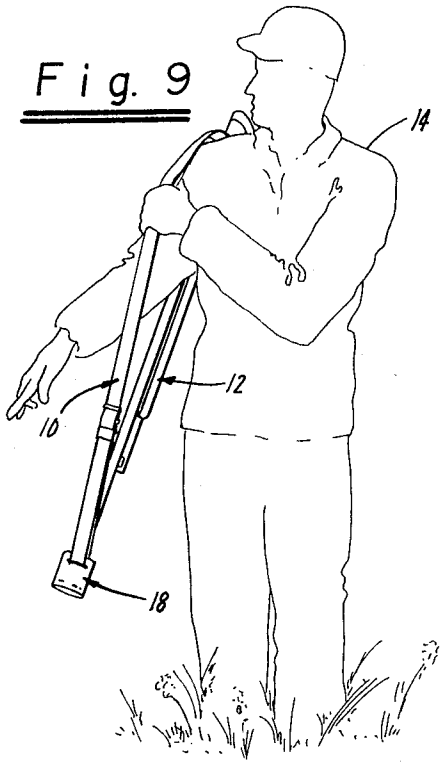


Fig. 8

Fig. 9



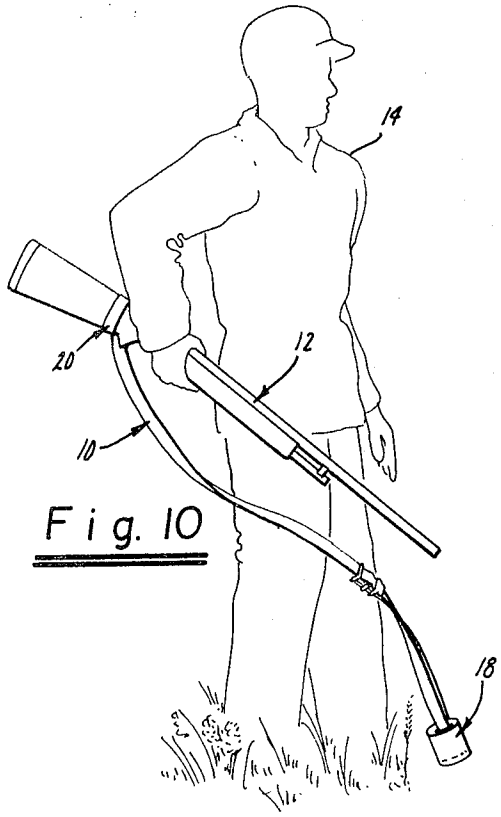


Fig. 10

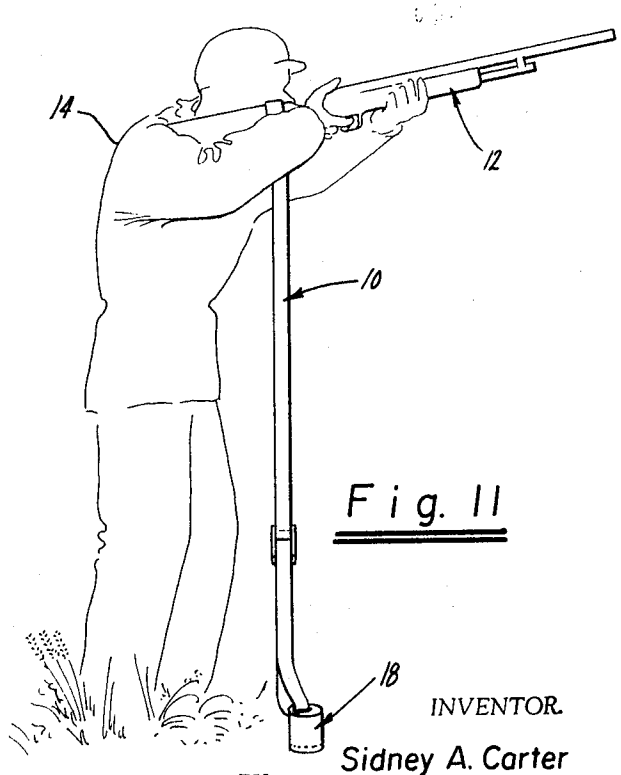


Fig. 11

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GUN SLING AND METHOD OF USE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to firearm slings and more particularly relates to a sling worn by a shooter to easily and comfortably carry firearms of the rifle and shotgun type.

Shotguns have ordinarily been carried and used without any strap or sling, which has heretofore been an impediment and nuisance to the shooter. Where gun slings have been used by far the largest number include straps which are attached at different portions of the stock or barrel to support the gun over the wearer's shoulder or diagonally across his back, for example. These straps are usually made adjustable in length, may be provided with snap fasteners for quick release, or may be provided with buckles or cinches to provide small loops for encircling the arm or hand to steadily support the firearm during use. Conventionally these slings support the rifle in muzzle-up position where entry of foreign matter such as rain or debris is possible. With shotguns, where the barrel diameter is large, this problem is of particular concern. The expedient of merely turning the gun end-for-end to eliminate this problem is not completely satisfactory with prior art slings since the muzzle of the gun is then closer to the ground where it more readily is exposed to damage such as denting or scratching, or else clogging with mud or brush and the like. Moreover, the prior art gun slings with their various straps and buckles are cumbersome and do not lend themselves to permit the wearer to rapidly and easily bring the gun into firing position without interference from the strap.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND OBJECTS

Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide an improved gun sling providing protection for the barrel muzzle while supported in a muzzle-down position.

Another object is to provide a gun sling for carrying a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type in a muzzle-down position so that it may be worn easily and comfortably in across-the-shoulder or across-the-back modes.

Another object is to provide a gun sling for carrying a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type in a muzzle-down position in a manner permitting the wearer to easily and rapidly bring the gun into firing position with a minimum of motion and in which the sling drops away by gravity without interfering with operation of the gun.

Another object is to provide a gun sling which supports a rifle or shotgun in a muzzle-down position with an open-ended cap supporting the barrel muzzle at the lower end of the strap, and with the upper end of the strap either fixedly or loosely connected to a portion of the stock in a manner so that independent support of the gun as it is raised to a firing position slackens the sling sufficiently to rapidly drop the cap solely by gravity from the muzzle, permitting free use of the gun.

Another object is to provide a method of using a sling for a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type in which the firearm is carried in muzzle-down position by a cap supporting the barrel muzzle. The sling includes a strap defining a loop around the wearer's body attached at its lower end to the cap and at its upper end to the stock. The loop has sufficient slack so that when tension in it is released by direct independent support of the firearm, the cap falls away by gravity permitting the firearm to be raised to firing position.

Another object is to provide a gun sling for carrying a firearm in a muzzle-down position which is relatively simple and inexpensive to manufacture; lightweight, so as not to appreciably add to the shooter's burden; small, so as not to interfere with gun operation; and uncomplicated, for fast and simple mounting and dismounting.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art when the following specification is read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view illustrating a gun sling embodying features of the invention showing a typical firearm carried diagonally across the back of a wearer in muzzle-down position;

FIG. 2 is an elevation view of the cap for supporting the barrel muzzle of the firearm of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the cap taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 3 illustrating the positioning of the muzzle as it is carried;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a portion of the gun sling of the present invention illustrating attachment thereof to the cap;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a portion of the gun sling of the present invention illustrating one form of attachment thereof to the stock of the gun, and showing an alternate attachment point;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view similar to FIG. 5 illustrating the method of rapid detachment of the sling from the gun stock;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a modified form of the invention illustrating an alternate method of attaching the sling to the gun stock;

FIG. 8 is a perspective view illustrating the gun sling of the present invention and the method of use thereof in an over-the-shoulder position;

FIG. 9 is a view similar to FIG. 8 illustrating an initial step in the method of removing the gun from the shoulder position for operation thereof;

FIG. 10 is a view illustrating another step in the method of using the gun sling of the present invention showing the cap as it drops from the barrel muzzle; and

FIG. 11 is a view illustrating the firing position of the gun with the strap out of the way for permitting free operation of the gun.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to the drawings and particularly FIG. 1, my novel sling indicated generally at **10** is illustrated as supporting a shotgun **12** diagonally across the back of the wearer or shooter **14** in a muzzle-down position. While a shotgun of the single-barrel type is illustrated, it is understood that the invention has equal application for carrying other large firearms or guns such as double-barrelled shotguns, over/under combination shotguns and rifles, or rifles.

The improved sling **10** includes a strap **16**, preferably adapted to be adjustable lengthwise, which is attached at its lower end to a cap **18** fitting over the end of the barrel muzzle, and with attaching means at **20** for securing the upper end of the strap to a portion of the stock or grip of the gun. Strap **16** may be of any flexible material, preferably leather, and is of sufficient length when applied to the firearm as illustrated to provide a loop encircling the body of the wearer in a snug but comfortable manner. The strap need not be permanently affixed to either the stock, barrel or muzzle, but can be releasably secured thereto in a manner described hereafter.

Referring to FIG. 2, the muzzle-supporting cap **18** is illustrated in greater detail. This cap preferably comprises a cup-shaped member having a cylindrical portion **22** of suitable material such as elastomer or plastic. The cylinder is closed at its lower end by end wall **24**, shown as formed integrally with the cylindrical portion. The inside surface of end wall **24** may be molded or formed with a plurality of ridges **26**, shown in parallel alignment, although the ridges could define any reticulated pattern. As illustrated in FIG. 3 the upper surfaces of the ridges function to contact and support muzzle end **28** of firearm **12**. A plurality of apertures or drain holes **30** extend through cylindrical portion **22** at the bottom of the end wall between the ridges. Any water or foreign material which may collect within the cap will drain through apertures **30** without contacting muzzle **28**. This serves to insure that the muzzle does not become clogged or fouled with foreign material. While the apertures **30** are shown as extending through cylin-

drical portion **22**, suitable drain holes may also be formed extending vertically through spaced positions of end wall **24**.

A slot or opening **32** is formed at one side on the upper end of cylindrical portion **22** to receive the looped end **34** of strap **16**. While one slot **32** is illustrated as preferred, it is understood that a pair of slots (not shown) at diametral positions at the cap upper edge or rim may be provided for attachment with bifurcated strap ends (not shown) of the sling, or with a suitable interconnecting bracket or the like. What is important is that the cap **18** be secured to the lower end of the sling in any suitable manner to non-lockably fit in supporting relationship with the muzzle end so that when the sling is loosened or slackened, the cap will rapidly and easily drop free from the muzzle end. The cap drops by gravity with no other action than the natural slackening of the sling as it comes off the shoulder and the stock is grasped by the hand for independent support.

FIG. **4** illustrates a preferred adjustable buckling means **36** for securing the looped end of the sling to the sling standing portion. Buckle means **36** includes a suitable metal or plastic buckle **38** having a plurality of cross bars or members **40**, **42** and **44** defining spaced openings for receiving portions of the strap. A closed loop **46** at the strap end is formed around center cross bar **42** with the standing strap portion extending downwardly toward loop **34** through cap opening **32**, then upwardly where it is guided through buckle **36**. This type of buckling arrangement securely holds the strap in position when taut, and yet is readily adjustable as to length when the strap is loosened as illustrated.

Although adjustable buckling means **36** is shown as preferred, it is understood that other suitable means for adjusting sling length may be employed.

Referring to FIG. **5** is preferred form of attaching means **20** is illustrated as including a buckle arrangement for securing upper portion **50** of sling **16** to stock portion **52** of the firearm. In this preferred embodiment there is no requirement for permanently attaching a bracket or hinge to the stock, which therefore is not marred, drilled, or altered in any way. Attaching means **20** comprises a buckle or C-shaped ring member **54** having an opening or gap **56** at one side. A loop **58** of the strap is sewn or otherwise secured to one side of the ring. The strap is then encircled around the stock where it is trained or slipped through ring opening **56** and drawn tight as illustrated. Tension in the strap while the gun is being carried will draw the buckle connection tight for a secure grip on the gun stock.

The strap may be easily and rapidly removed from the stock in the manner illustrated in FIG. **6**. The wearer merely has to grip the standing portion of the strap and move it towards the buckle in the direction indicated at **60**. The strap is then moved sideways as at **62** through the gap in the ring which is then easily removed from the stock.

Depending upon the length of gun barrel or stock, or upon wearer preference, the upper end of the strap may alternatively be attached to the stock grip as illustrated at **64**.

Although a C-shaped fastening ring is illustrated as preferred for the attaching means **20**, it is understood that other suitable fastening devices could be utilized, such as with a closed ring with the standing portion of the sling looped through the ring for receiving the end of the stock, positioned where desired on the stock, and then secured by tension on the sling.

Referring to FIG. **7** a modified form of the invention is illustrated in which the upper end of strap **16** is secured to the stock by a releasable snap-type buckle indicated generally at **66**. A conventional spring-closed snap ring **68** is riveted or otherwise mounted to the end of the strap at **70**. A D-ring **72** is pivotally secured to the lower edge of the stock by a suitable bracket **74**. The strap may thus be rapidly and easily secured to the stock by snapping or unsnapping ring **68** to the D-ring. Other suitable strap connecting means may be utilized to attach the upper sling end to the stock in a manner which will provide sufficient strap length for the wearer to comfortably carry the firearm, and which will allow cap **18** to freely drop from the muzzle when the firearm is independently supported and the strap slackens.

Referring to FIG. **8** firearm **12** is illustrated as being carried in an over-the-shoulder position on the wearer by the use of the sling **10**. The firearm is in the muzzle-down position supported at its lower end by cap **18**. Buckle **36** has been adjusted to provide a sufficient strap loop which is comfortable for the wearer. As illustrated, the firearm is easily carried while walking through heavy brush or the like, and the muzzle end is protected by the cap from damage. During adverse weather any water or other foreign matter which may collect in the cap will easily escape through the drain holes without fouling the muzzle.

FIG. **9** illustrates an initial step in the method of removing the firearm to bring it rapidly to a shooting position. The firearm is first removed by either grasping the strap of sling **10** by either hand and then lifting it off the shoulder, or by grasping the firearm with one hand and slipping the strap off the shoulder with the other. If the strap is used to lift the firearm off the shoulder, a portion of its weight will be supported by cap **18** as the strap is held. The firearm is then turned over in the hand as illustrated in FIG. **10** while bringing it forward and upwardly to an eye-level shooting position. Prior to or concurrent with this action the sling strap is released so that cap **18** will fall by gravity from the end of the muzzle. Next, as the firearm is raised to the shooting position of FIG. **11**, the sling and cap will drop downwardly out of the way supported only at the connection to the stock. The shooter is then free to operate the firearm without hindrance from the strap. At the same time, it can readily be again brought to the shoulder or cross back carrying positions by simply reinserting the muzzle into the open end of cap **18** and looping the strap over the wearer's chest as in FIG. **1**, or the shoulder as in FIG. **8**.

It is apparent that there has been provided a new and novel firearm sling providing improved features and advantages. With the sling of the present invention it is possible to carry a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type in its muzzle-down position so that rain or other foreign material does not enter the muzzle. When walking through heavy brush or the like the cap will protect the muzzle from damage. The sling is light and compact and provides a comfortable means of carrying a firearm in either the shoulder or across-the-back positions. The sling can be readily manufactured and is attachable to existing firearms without the necessity of modification thereof. Moreover, an identical sling is adaptable for use with firearms of various sizes, gauges, and lengths. When carrying the firearm with the sling, the cap can be readily removed by slackening the sling so that it falls free and the firearm can be speedily brought to the firing position. In this position the sling does not present an obstruction to firearm operation.

While the various embodiments and modifications have been illustrated in order to explain the nature and extent of the invention, it is understood that various modifications in the detail, sizes, arrangement of parts and steps may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as expressed in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A device for carrying a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type having at least one barrel extending from a stock including the combination of: a cap for supporting the muzzle of the barrel, the cap having a closed end and an open end together with a cylindrical portion and an end wall at said closed end, said end wall having a plurality of internal ridges defining a series of muzzle-supporting edges spaced from said end wall to define a plurality of grooves therebetween for retaining foreign material out-of-contact with said muzzle; a sling having a flexible standing portion extending from the cap to the stock, the sling having a length providing a carrying loop with respect to the firearm; means attaching one end of the sling to the stock; and second means attaching the other end of the sling to the cap; the firearm being positioned in barrel-down position with the cap drawn into supporting relationship with

said muzzle when the sling is supported by the wearer whereby release and slackening of the sling standing portion drops the cap from the muzzle for firearm use.

2. The invention of claim 1 and further characterized in that the cap is formed with a plurality of drain holes communicating from the grooves of said end wall to the outside of the cap for directing said foreign material from inside of the cap.

3. The invention of claim 1 and further characterized in that the ridges are formed integral with said end wall in a reticulated pattern having a plurality of said ridges in parallel lengthwise alignment.

4. The invention of claim 3 wherein said cylindrical portion is formed with a plurality of apertures extending in lengthwise alignment with said grooves and positioned adjacent said end wall between said ridges for directing the foreign material outwardly from the cap.

5. In combination with a firearm having at least one barrel extending from a stock with the muzzle end of said barrel disposed downwardly with respect to the wearer thereof; an open-ended cap loosely fitted over said muzzle of the barrel in supporting relationship therewith; a strap secured at its lower end to the cap and extending in a loop around the body of the wearer, the upper end of the strap being secured to the stock of the firearm, said cap and upper strap connected together providing support for said firearm during carrying thereof by the wearer, said strap being of a length to permit the cap to fall by gravity away from the muzzle when the firearm is independently supported and the sling is slackened to permit unhindered operation of the firearm, and means in the cap to drain foreign material from the inside thereof and prevent fouling of the muzzle.

6. The invention of claim 5 wherein the cap comprises a cup-shaped member having a plurality of ridges inside the cap closed end, said edges of the ridges adapted to support the muzzle and defining grooves therebetween to collect the foreign material.

7. A device for carrying a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type having at least one barrel extending from a stock, including the combination of: a cap for supporting the muzzle of the barrel, the cap comprising a cup-shaped member having a lower closed end and an upwardly open opposite end with a rim at said opposite end together with an opening at a side adjacent to said rim; a sling having a flexible standing portion extending from the cap to the stock, the sling having a length providing a carrying loop with respect to the firearm; means attaching one end of the sling to the stock; and second means attaching the other end of the sling to the cap including fastener means with the other end of the sling trained through said opening and the fastener means attaching said other end to the sling standing portion; the firearm being positioned in barrel-down position with the cap drawn into supporting relationship with said muzzle when the sling is supported by the wearer whereby release and slackening of the sling standing portion drops the cap from the muzzle for firearm use.

8. The invention of claim 7 and further including means to selectively adjust the position at which the fastener means attaches said sling other end to the standing portion.

9. The method of using a firearm of the rifle or shotgun type with a sling having an upwardly open cap at one end thereof, including the steps of; disposing the firearm in a muzzle-down position relative to the wearer thereof; placing the cap in non-gripping, muzzle-supporting relationship with the muzzle of the firearm; securing the upper end of the sling to the stock of the firearm with sufficient sling length defining a loop; placing the loop over the body of the wearer with the cap supporting the muzzle from the lower end of the strap, and with the stock supported by the strap upper end; removing the firearm from the body of the wearer; independently supporting the firearm; causing the sling loop to slacken to effect gravital dropping of the cap from the muzzle; and raising the firearm to a firing position free from the cap and sling.

* * * * *