

U. S. Training Aid Type 97 Hand Grenade Comparison To Original Japanese Type 97 Hand Grenade

By Dan Larkin

The U. S. “Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese” shown below was produced near the end of World War II as a training aid for instructing troops in the handling and disposal of common Japanese mines. In addition to several types of Japanese mines, the set contains a training aid Type 97 hand grenade (the original Type 97 hand grenade could also be used as a mine). This article shows the differences in construction between the training aid Type 97 hand grenade and an original Type 97 hand grenade which has been made inert.



The mine set training aid Type 97 hand grenade shown below on the right is very interesting when its differing features are compared to the original inert example to its left. The training aid’s case body is crudely cast, and the top plug has less detail and is press-fit to the body instead of machined with screw-in threads. The training aid’s upper external percussion components including the cap, safety pin, striker, spring, and brass body are very good copies of the original components. The brass body screws into the cap/plug like an authentic example. The outer brass cap, pin, and twine could easily be mistaken for original. The fuze delay train/detonator itself is simulated as a solid brass extension of the upper body. The paint on the training aid example is more subdued – Its case color is a flat dark gray instead of black like the original, and the top plug is a maroon color rather than the dark red of the original. All of these differences are shown in detail in the images on the next page.



The differences are very obvious when the two examples are set side-by-side. The image to the below left shows the casting features of the training aid hand grenade body are less defined, and the top and bottom ridges are not machined. The below right image shows the bottom of the training aid hand grenade which has a glued paper with fuze train delay notations reading right to left: "Delay Actions" "4 – 5 Seconds" "Seconds [of] Time"



The below right image shows the bottom of the training aid hand grenade which has a glued paper with fuze train delay notations reading right to left: "Delay Actions" "4 – 5 Seconds" "Seconds [of] Time"



The training aid's upper external percussion components are very good copies which could all easily be mistaken for original components (right image). The training aid's solid brass extension below the plug simulates the original's fuze delay train/detonator (below image).



While the side-by-side comparisons show obvious differences, the training aid Type 97 hand grenade included in the "Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese" is a good copy which could be mistaken for a Japanese original if found loose. Hopefully, this article will assist Japanese militaria collectors to recognize the training aid Type 97 hand grenade's different characteristics.

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