

## The Slant Grip Victor

Considered by many to be a real prize in collecting High Standards, the slant grip Victor in the 104 design series is scarce gun. Like the military grip angle 107 series Victors it had six major configurations but with only four catalog numbers. The vent ribs whether the steel or the aluminum used the same catalog number for the same barrel lengths. The slant grip Victor first appeared in the 1973 catalog and price lists. It was also listed in the 1974 catalog but not pictured in the 1974 catalog and was listed in the 1974 price lists. The February 1973 price lists indicated that these were "special order only" guns and lists only the 9218 and 9219 catalog numbers. The November 1973 price lists no longer mentions that the slant grip Victors were special order only and includes the 9226 and 9229 catalog numbers for the solid rib versions. The May 1974 price list also lists all four catalog numbers for the slant grip Victor. The slant grip Victor was listed at about a five percent premium over the military grip models.

The early Military grip Victors shipped in February 1971 with the second production lot not appearing until July 1971 and production rate picked up speed so that the end of 1971 there had been 13 production lots with production likely to be over 1400 Victors. On the other hand the first production lot of slant grip Victors did not appear until August 1973 which is about two and a half years after the military grip Victor was introduced and about 6 months after the slant grip Victor was first listed in the catalogs and price lists. The first production lot of 98 guns was all catalog number 9219. Of those 98 guns, one record is open and 17 others were returned to stock. I have not researched the disposition of the returned guns. If they were scrapped instead of being reshipped the number of guns sold will obviously be reduced.

There were 8 production lots of the slant grip Victor. While the slant grip Victor was being produced, the factory records include the "TO ASSEMBLY" and "PACKED" (assembly completed). The following are the "to assembly" dates for the slant grip Victor lots.

LOT 1. Thursday August 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1973	98 guns	Beginning S/N 2,401,860
LOT 2. Monday August 13 <sup>th</sup> , 1973	99 guns	Beginning S/N 2,402,243
LOT 3. Tuesday August 14 <sup>th</sup> , 1973	35 guns	Beginning S/N 2,402,433
LOT 4. Monday October 8 <sup>th</sup> , 1973	45 guns	Beginning S/N 2,413,891
LOT 5. Wednesday October 31 <sup>st</sup> , 1973	95 guns	Beginning S/N 2,417,070
LOT 6. Wednesday November 28 <sup>th</sup> , 1973	10 guns	Beginning S/N 2,421,346
LOT 7. Monday October 7 <sup>th</sup> , 1974	97 guns	Beginning S/N 2,460,142
LOT 8. Wednesday October 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1974	110 guns	Beginning S/N 2,460,505

Note you cannot necessarily calculate the ending serial number of a lot because of SCRAP and VOID entries and the occasional presence of a non Victor model.

The first four lots were all vent rib guns and the last three lots were solid rib guns. Lot 5 was a transition lot containing both vent rib and solid rib guns.

The ML series serial numbers contains what appear to be a group of 9219's and a few single records. The biggest part of this group was all shipped on a single invoice. The hand written catalog numbers in the serial number log appear to have a 9 over-printing a 7. When I tracked down the invoice it was clear that the Victors on the order were catalog number 9217's. The handwriting of the clerk entering the records is sometimes a real challenge. That leaves the few scattered serial numbers that appear to be slant grip Victors in the ML serial number series to track down in the invoice records. This is not a quick task since the invoices are not filed by invoice number, by account number or by date shipped. They are loosely grouped by month and year but one often finds an invoice misfiled in the system usually in an adjacent month.

The numbers in the production lots raises a question in my mind about this being a special order pistol. Perhaps when they were putting out the catalog and price list, they were unsure about the magnitude of future orders or perhaps they were trying a little marketing flim-flam and used the special order note to add some exclusivity to this model. The average size of these lots is significantly greater than the 10-X models which had about the same number produced over the four years it was in production, July 1979 through July 1983.

The remaining question is how the vent rib guns split between the steel and aluminum ribs. We have the date for the drawing of the aluminum ribs but we have no date that this was incorporated into production. This same question applies to the military grip guns as well. I am beginning to narrow the gap between known steel vent rib and known aluminum vent rib guns for the military grip guns through data from the field. But I need more guns reported in the area of transition. The number of reported slant grip Victors is still pretty small as is the military grip models around the transition time. My current data from the field has the highest steel rib Military Victor at 2,413,700 and the lowest aluminum Vent rib Victor at 2,417,683. There are 8 production lots of Victors including the lot containing these serial numbers between these two serial numbers. Two of these production lots are slant grip Victor production lots 4 and 5. Slant grip production lot 5 also included the first appearance of a solid rib gun catalog number. To narrow the span between the highest serial number for a steel rib Victor in either series and the lowest serial number for an aluminum vent rib Victor I need data from you the readers of this article.

The appreciation of the slant grip model from 1974 through 2010 is in the range of 4 to 5 times the 1974 MSRP for the military grip Victors and 10 to 15 times for the slant grip Victors. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics ( [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm) ) what \$200.00 would buy in 1974 would require \$882.88 in 2010 . This shows that the military grip Victor is appreciating at about the same rate as inflation is reducing the dollar's buying power. Obviously the slant grip Victor has done a lot better.

I know from the on-line forums, that there are a number of the slant grip Victors in Europe but I have no idea how many are over there or whether or not any were directly exported there. Export orders are pretty plainly marked in the records so that question can perhaps be answered with sufficient research. Although these guns in Europe are survivors, their impact on American collectors is that they reduce an already small number available for us. There are a couple of export only Flite King pistol models that I doubt I will ever see even though they were made in numbers larger than the slant grip Victor.

The following is an indication of the scarcity of these guns based on production numbers and not on known survivors. Note that these numbers are based on my current speculation as to when the transition occurred between the steel vent rib and the aluminum vent rib.

Steel Vent Rib 4.50"	9218	PR-8
Steel Vent Rib 5.50"	9219	PR-9
Aluminum Solid Rib 4.50"	9226	PR-6
Aluminum Solid Rib 5.50"	9229	PR-9
Aluminum Vent Rib 4.50"	9218	PR-6
Aluminum Vent Rib 5.50"	9219	PR-7

Currently the ever changing rarity ranking would place two of these models in the top 25 scarcest models. Four would fall in within the top 50. All would fall within the top 75 with the highest slant grip Victor currently ranking at 73.

And as Paul Harvey would have said," And now the rest of the story."

Did you notice that the last two lots were made about 10 months after the previous Lot? It seems odd to me. Lots 6, 7 and 8 were all catalog number 9229. I also noticed that the majority of the guns had one of only a few key serial numbers suggesting that these guns went to only a few customers. Actually most of the key serial numbers led to several shipments on two orders to only one customer Polak, Winters Export Company in San Francisco. I have previously recorded a survivor slant grip Victor from this group that at the time was located in Germany.

This adds a new dimension when considering rarity. Strictly speaking the 9229 has the highest production number of all slant grip Victors if my speculation about where the transition occurred for the steel to aluminum rib is correct but when you consider that a huge percentage was exported you have the case that for the American collector that it may be the hardest to find since the number that did not ship overseas is smaller than the lowest production number for any other slant grip Victor and would rank as an R-5.

Unfortunately this raises the question as to how to express this unusual situation in a simple manner when referring to this gun's rarity. Also this raises the question whether or not any other slant grip Victors were exported in significant numbers or for that matter any other models. I seem to recall that a number of the bull barrel Olympic ISU models were exported. But that is another story.