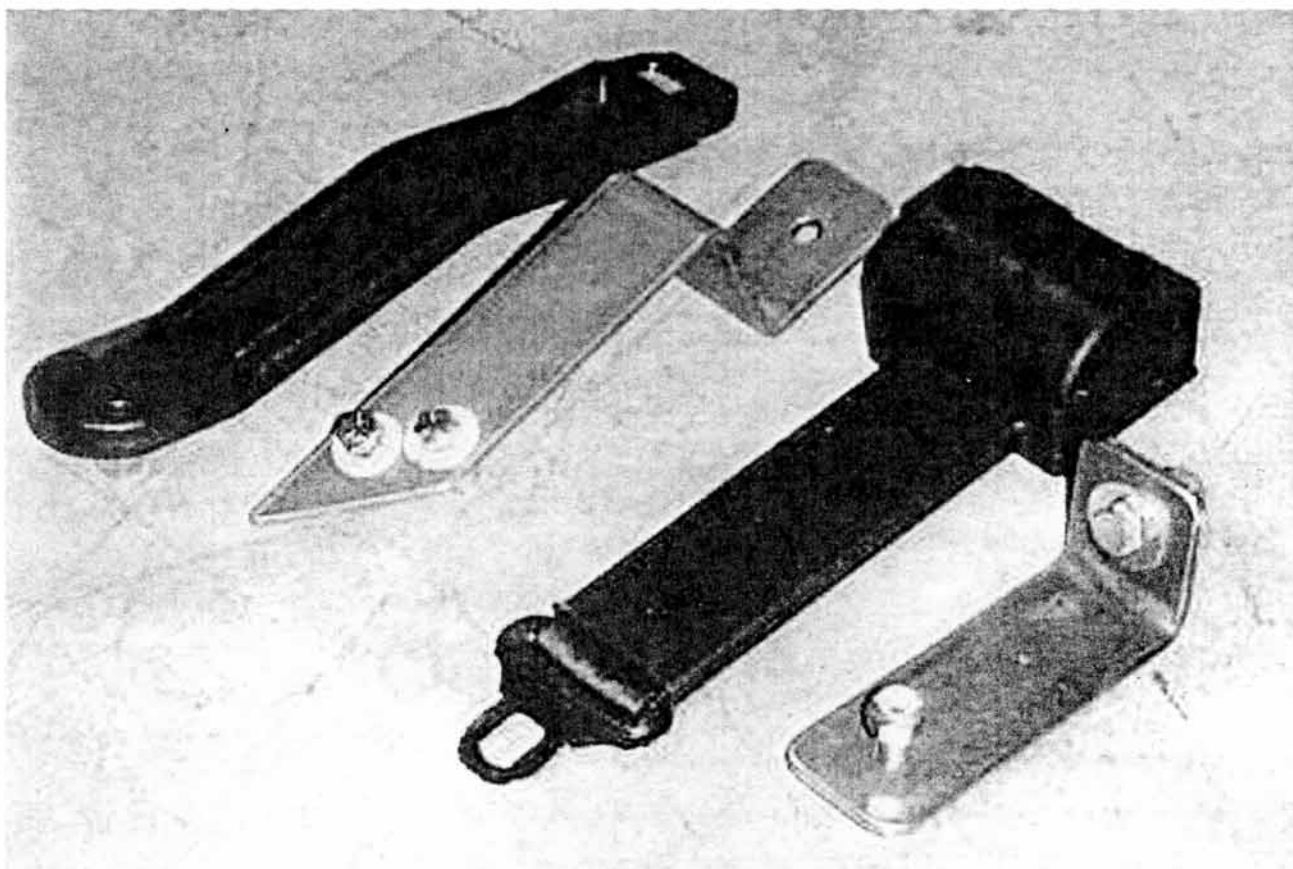


Adding Seat Belts to an Open M19

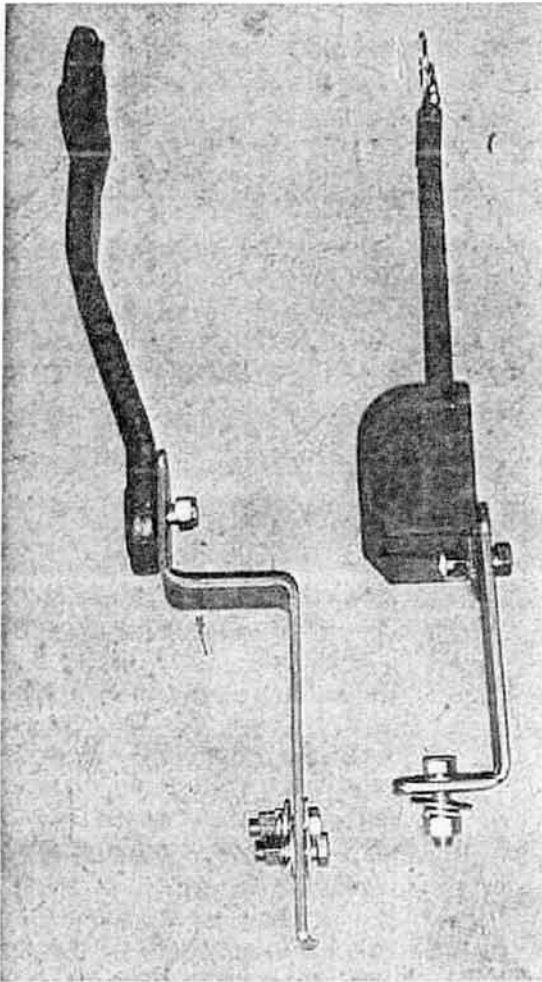
by Jeremy Winkworth

As the person who summarizes incident reports for publication in **THE SETOFF**, I have read about enough accidents where seat belts saved the occupants of a motor car from flying out and meeting the ballast, or worse. I was thus interested in adding seat belts to my open M19 but didn't want them to look like the proverbial "dogs dinner." How then to add function seat belts that don't flop around?

Greg Latz tipped me off that JC Whitney sells a good retractable lap belt, made in Elkhart, Indiana that might do the job. It's catalog number 81ZX4778R, currently \$24.99 per belt plus shipping. I invested in a couple of these belts and then started figuring out how best to mount them. You want them attached to the frame for maximum safety.



I found a way to make some appropriate brackets to attach the belts to the frame by bending some 3/16" x 2" steel stock. You can see the belts and the brackets below. On the left is the belt and bracket for the outside of the seat, the right for the inside. The belt on the right has the retractor in it.



Here's a shot of how the belts attached to those brackets. The two 3/8" bolts at bottom left go through the outside frame member below the seat. The 7/16" bolt at bottom right goes through the floor pan and the rear frame member under the floor. If you don't quite hit the rear frame member, reinforce the floor at that location and use as large a fender washer as you can find. I painted the brackets black before final assembly.

And finally, here's how they look when attached to the car. I tested them out on the rails in May 2002. They seem to work well and be positioned just right. Looks like I'll be a little safer this season!

