

'Ferret Finger'

For the most part we humans have been endowed with eight digits and two opposable thumbs. It is this dextrous capacity as well as our supposedly superior and large brains that sets us above other primates. Historically, vanquished enemies would have their thumbs/fingers removed to manage prisoners or to demonstrate and project power. Sadly, such barbaric behaviour is not new and is also conducted by extremists in the 21st century.

However much you love your Ferret, **it has the capacity to bite**, and crush or remove your fingers and/or those of your friends and passengers in the same way without warning. This is what is universally known as 'Ferret Finger'.

Ferrets are, by definition, **armoured** scout cars. This means that the hatches are extremely **heavy**. For driving, the front hatch is opened, laid forward upon the glacis and can be secured with two wing-nuts but, because of its weight, the front hatch does not necessarily need to be completely secured in this way. The side vision hatches are a different matter. They open upwards, and so *must* be secured open against gravity. This is done by clicking the knuckle-joint into place.

1. Always hold the hatch as you open it, to guard against it falling shut.
2. Test that the knuckle-joint is fully opened and secure with the other hand before letting go of the hatch handle. The knuckle-joint must be in line, with the supporting arm opened **straight**.
3. Never walk on the upper surface of the hatch.
4. **Keep children away from the hatches**. On some Ferrets the rim of the hatch opening is sometimes painted red as a warning to keep hands clear.
5. When closing, use two hands. Support the weight of the hatch by holding the handle with one hand whilst carefully breaking the knuckle-joint with the other. Failure to do this resulted in the injuries shown below.
6. Let the hatch down slowly, keeping fingers clear until just closed, then let it fall smartly shut under its own weight. Keep your fingers clear!

The rear-vision hatches are of the same design, and must be opened and closed in the same way, but these are generally left closed most of the time because there is no internal rear mirror and thus no real need to open these hatches whilst driving. If the hatch hinge is at all loose, it'll crash down in an instant, faster than you can react! Trust me: I know!



It is possible (left) to use a 1 cm wide cable tie that is a minimum of 45 cm long to hold the knuckle-joint straight. These can also be obtained as releaseable/resuseable designs. The centre picture shows a 'near miss' well on the way to healing. It occurred when my wife's worrying about the Ferret distracted me (there's a moral in that story somewhere). The right-hand picture shows the bloke featured in the [article](#) on *Doug's Heavy Metal Gallery*, above ("found the missing bit of finger stuck on the hatch"). Since I first wrote about Ferret Finger, it happened to me by not paying sufficient attention when closing the side vision hatch. It occurs in an instant: the next thing you are aware of being the pain, and the bleeding inconvenience. I now keep a first aid 'grab bag' in the fighting compartment, for it's a real pain climbing out of the vehicle with a badly bleeding digit. I broke the distal phalanx on my left middle finger. Notice the permanent dislocation on the X-ray.

