

Stock Was . . .

8 - The Cab

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In our previous session we discussed how features of the instrument panel varied across model years. Let's now broaden our view, look around the cab, and consider modifications to equipment servicing the driver and front seat passenger. For clarity, I'll be referring to pickups and Corvans as the "R10' models.

Inside Rear View Mirrors.

FCs all years received the "plain-Jane" inside rear view mirror (#3770183) with a painted metal back and arm that was standard equipment for a variety of Chevy vehicles around that time. As we noted in a previous installment of this column, an inside mirror was standard equipment "except for Corvans", beginning in 1963. An outside rear view mirror was substituted that year when rear door windows became an option (RPO A12) for the panel vans.

Although that mirror also came with a chrome body (#3770185) this was not an option for FCs. Rather, Guide adjustable non-glare mirrors with a polished stainless steel body and a day/night lever were available as a dealer-installed option. Chevy apparently intended these mirrors principally for the pickups, with their larger rear window. Indeed, the 1963 *Custom Features* brochure describes 985152 for truck cabs, and the 1964 *Corvair Model Lineup* booklet lists 985657 as "except for Greenbrier".

The original 1961 release (#987701) was a 10" mirror with "DAY" and "NIGHT" embossed on a flip-type lever that operated a prismatic mirror to lessen headlight glare. The mirror available in 1962 (#985152) had a similar flip type lever but a smaller 8" face. The replacement for 1963 – 65 models (#985657) had an unlabeled adjustment knob that operated with a twist mechanism.



Stock Mirror



985152

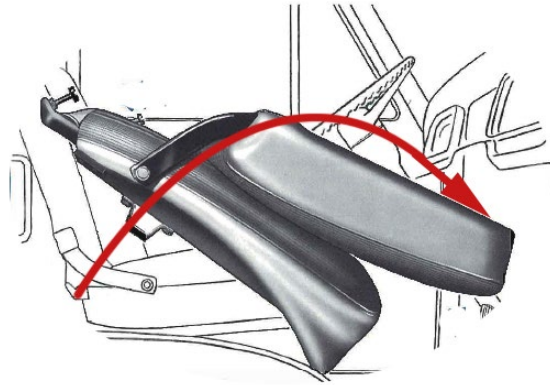


985657 twist knob

Front seats.

A full bench seat was the only seat available for Greenbriers and pickups, but here we have the only case where the more bare-bones Corvan actually had more options than the other models. In 1961, standard equipment for a Corvan was a single driver side half-bench seat with an optional full width seat (RPO 482/A54). Although sometimes mistakenly called a bucket seat, the Corvan half-bench seat lacked the contouring typical of bucket seat and was constructed as a bench seat, only shorter. The rationale for a single half-bench was so the driver could easily access the load area without exiting the vehicle, but this of course meant the vehicle could only seat one person (the driver). This limitation was overcome with the folding passenger-side half bench seat (RPO 264/A57) introduced in 1962. This half-bench could fold forward against the dash freeing a path (more or less) to the load area.

It appears that Chevrolet believed that half-bench seats were not particularly appealing and Corvans in marketing brochures always are shown with the optional full bench seat. Apparently not an issue for the communist East German toy market; the vintage MSW Corvans are the only Corvaire-95 toys I'm aware of that showed half-bench seats in the cab.



Visors.

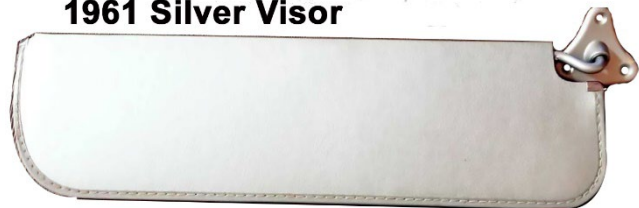
Chevrolet considered sun visors to be a luxury – this was a different time. Thus, a single driver side visor was standard equipment only for Greenbriers but not for R10 models with standard trim. The custom equipment (Deluxe trim) RPO 431/Z60 provided the additional right side visor for Greenbriers, and a left side visor for the other models. The R10 owner who wanted a right side visor had to order it through the dealership. The visors were pretty utilitarian in construction – cardboard over pressed board, with exposed stitching on a paperstock boarder.

Standard visors were silver in 1961 and fawn all other years. For deluxe models, visors were white from 1961 – '63 and cameo white the final two years.

1962- '65 Fawn visor

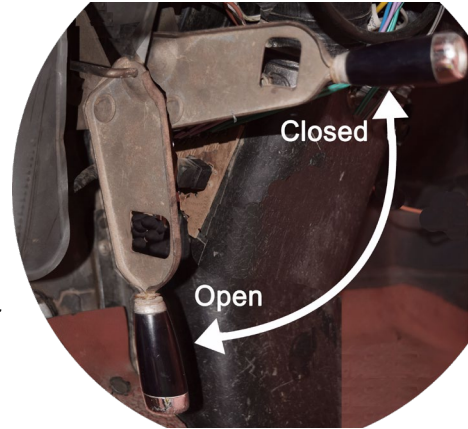


1961 Silver Visor



Air vent valve assembly

Unlike vehicles with a front-mounted engine, air passing through the Corvair 95 front grille immediately strikes the cowl wall with its numerous openings providing leakage into the cab. This is a particular problem in the winter when air leakage further diminishes the effectiveness of a forced air heater never known for high capacity. In 1964 a polypropylene plastic door located directly behind the grille was added to shut off air flow. The door is hinged on the bottom and opened or closed by a spring-loaded handle positioned below the dash. It was only installed on vehicles lacking or with the forced-air heater, but not if a gas-heater was present.



Composite Image showing air inlet door handle in open and closed positions.

Arm rests

Like visors, arm rests were considered a luxury. Only for Greenbriers was an arm rest standard equipment, and only on the driver side. The Custom Equipment (deluxe) option provided an additional passenger-side arm rest for Greenbriers, and a single, driver side, arm rest for R10 models. The arm rests were of the same basic design from 1961 through '64 – a vinyl covered pad over a plastic base. The design was changed for the 1965 Greenbriers to a vinyl-clad integrated pad and base.



For deluxe Greenbriers the base was always white and the pad was color-keyed to the interior color: red, green, blue and metallic-silver in 1961, and red, green, turquoise, and fawn in later years. According to the '61 Truck Engineering Features' book, the color of deluxe R10 arm rests was silver with a black base. However, the documentation for arm rests in standard '61 Greenbriers is more difficult to decipher.

Armrest #988390 in the 1961 P&A catalogs is listed for FCs "Except Deluxe Equip", which in non-GM parlance translates to "for standard R1206 only" since standard R10 FCs did not have armrests. The color is described as "silver and charcoal", which, if the convention for other armrests were being followed, would be a silver base and charcoal pad. But in this case, as shown in the '61 Custom Features booklet, it most likely was a silver pad and charcoal base. The figure shows this armrest (thanks to Duane Wentlandt for providing the image), which has a relatively deeply embossed metallic-silver pad, similar to the illustration in the Custom Features booklet.

Beginning in Dec 1961 through 1964, the bases of all deluxe FCs and standard Greenbriers base armrests were always white. The standard Greenbrier armrest had a fawn pad, or, in 1965, the entire arm rest was fawn. Deluxe F10 models received either a red or fawn pad, depending on the exterior color.

Steering wheel, horn, and directional

All Corvair 95s except Deluxe Greenbriers in 1964 received the familiar 17" diameter steering wheel with two radial spokes. The standard steering wheel was a monochrome charcoal color in 1961 (#766466) and white (#768181) in later years. 1961 was also the only year that FCs with both standard and deluxe trim (RPO 431) also received the same (monochrome charcoal) steering wheel.

Beginning in 1962, RPO 431/Z60 included a fancier, two-tone steering wheel with chrome accents. For R10 models the deluxe steering wheel was always fawn and white. For Greenbrier steering wheels, the color two-toned with white corresponded with that of the interior vinyl pads. Only in 1964 did a Corvair 95 receive a different size steering wheel. As described by Kent Sullivan in his Corvan Antics (2000, Vol 28 #3), the steering wheel of deluxe 1964 Greenbriers had only a 16 inch diameter and a deeper (more concave) shape, similar to the 1963 Monza steering wheel. The 17" two-toned steering wheel was restored to 1965 Greenbriers.

Through '63, all models also received the same polished chrome horn button with a red Chevy emblem (#764122). Another similar horn button (#3818749) with a brushed nickel finish is not correct for the Corvair 95. This button was used for various Chevy C- and G-series trucks and was listed for the Corvair FC only in 1970 when the original button was discontinued. Whereas standard trim FCs in 1964 and '65 also received #764122 button, deluxe Greenbriers received horn rings and special horn caps. The half-circle horn ring used with '64 Greenbriers (#765911) was shared with early model Monzas, whereas the horn cap (#3818749) was found only in 63 Monzas. The final run '65 Greenbriers received a full circle horn ring (#9742299) and distinctive horn cap (#9742528).



Cap: 764122
All vehicles
except those
below

Deluxe Greenbriers in: 1964



Ring: 765911
Cap: 3818749



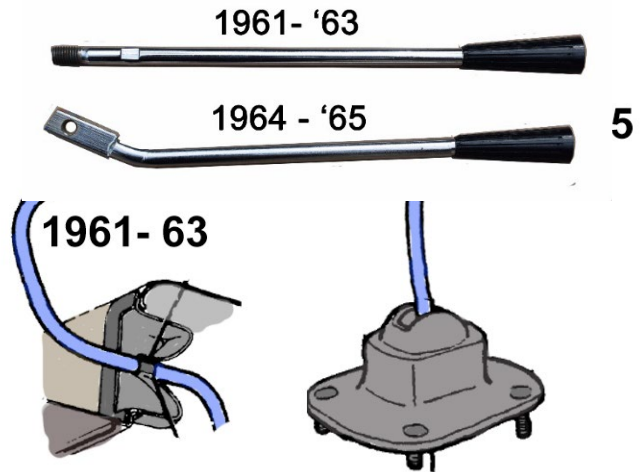
1965

Ring: 9742299
Cap: 9742528

The directional mechanism was upgraded in 1964 - gone were the Rube Goldberg'ian mechanics of the early FCs turn signals. No longer would deflection of the directional lever need to be transduced to movement of a cable to precisely slide the actuator of a switch mounted in the lower reaches of the steering column. The new mechanism was similar to that of the 1965 - '66 Corvair car and located entirely within a somewhat enlarged control housing below the steering wheel. To make the transformation complete, the directional control lever was also changed.

Shifter Control

I'm sure most everyone is familiar with the changed design of the standard transmission shifter control in 1963. Although there are no GM records, I've used data from the Corvanatics FC Registry to determine when during that model year the change occurred. implementation of the late-style, on-the-floor shifter. By tracking the VINs of 1963 vehicles known to have one or the other style shifter, my best estimate is that the new shifter would have rolled off the Assembly lines beginning in late April, 1963. Most likely both style shifters were being installed for a while as GM would have been reluctant to discard any remaining inventory of early style parts, including in this case, early style gas tanks.



The FC shift knobs were always black. The 3 Sp knob was #374993, a standard Chevy knob made of hard rubber with no shift position markings. It had been used in many earlier Chevys. The 4 Sp shift knob was #3680259 and made of plastic. It had the shift positions engraved in white.

