

Hungarian Mod. P 37 7.65mm Pistol

By Austin Reville



Every town seems to have a small antique store. Inside is a museum of wonders that ties us to our past. In the firearm industry this is also true. Most gun stores have a selection of historical firearms on hand. To borrow from Rick Harrison, from History Channel's "Pawn Stars", "You just never know what will walk through that door". To that point recently at 2 If By Sea Tactical had a FEG Mod P37 Pistol from 1941 come through our shop.

This P37 is a second series pistol which is perhaps one of the coolest. The second series was built specifically in 1941 for the Luftwaffe and Nazi Germany. This makes it a War Time pistol. It does lack the required import marks on it which means this arrived in the United States most likely as a GI bring back post war.

The P37 pistol was designed by Rudolf Frommer and was produced by the FEG factory in Hungary. They were made from 1937-1944 and chambered in 7.65mm or as we call it in the U.S. .32 ACP. These were mainly police guns but did see service as stated in WW2 with Germany and the disastrous Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

In today's world when we think of WW2 and especially Germany's issued guns, we do not normally think of the P37. The Luger, P38, and K98k are the more common guns depicted in film and video games and give off the Nazi vibe that screenwriters and directors are seeking.

In reality, history is a lot more complicated than that. The Germans had some serious limitations leading up to WW2. The first major issue was the Treaty of Versailles signed on June 28th of 1919 ending WW1 and putting the entire blame and cost on the German government and Central Powers. This treaty plunged Germany into a deep depression, arguably worse than ours.

Another component to this Treaty was severe restrictions on the Wehrmacht

(German Military) of both size and arms production. This left Germany in a bind as Hitler and his Nazi party came into power in 1933. Left with the restrictions but the ambitions of expanding territorial gain of Germany they looked to other countries in which to secretly procure weaponry for. This is where countries like Hungary and their famous FEG factory comes in.

By 1941 the war in Europe was going strong and going Hitler's way. The German Air Force the Luftwaffe was searching for a pistol their pilots can carry in the event of being shot down. Due to the compact nature of cockpit, it needs to be lightweight and compact. FEG came up with P37 pistol was already in production and was initially designed in 1936, was submitted as a possible option.



Rudolph Frommer—
Wikipedia

By 1941 Hungary had joined the Axis powers in alignment with Germany and its War on the Soviet Union. This made the adoption of the P37 a natural choice for the Luftwaffe. The p37 Second Series was officially marked with a "JHV 41" marking on the upper slide designating it for official Luftwaffe use. This marking was removed or altered for later variations. While the order was placed only about 1,000 of these pistols were produced for the German Ari Force.



The Luftwaffe never really adapted a universal handgun for their crews. Unlike today's military, the Luftwaffe utilized a variety of different handguns. The only semi standardized option across the various platforms was the 7.65mm Cartridge. The FEG P37 would see most of its historical use not in WW2, but in the Hungarian Uprising of 1956.

When Hungarian citizens decided to attempt to throw off the shackles of the Soviet Empire, the P37 made an appearance on both sides of the conflict. They popped up on the side of the Soviets with the Hungarian loyalists to the Union and used against them by the Freedom Fighters. Unfortunately for Hungary, Stalin would proceed to win but this pistol played a role in the outcome.

Guns have and continue to serve throughout the world to help shape both history and our environment around us. They helped us here in America tame the frontier and build the largest superpower in the world. In Europe they have been used to expand Empires and borders, as well as cleanse the world of fascism. They continue to serve on the battlefields and home fronts here in the U.S. to provide freedom for those at home. Every now and then we get an opportunity to get a unique one such as this FEG P37 pistol. If you want an opportunity to own a piece of history come check us out in New Prague at 2 If By Sea Tactical and be sure to watch our Youtube Series "From the Vault".

