

The Brass-Bottom FXO Magazine

By Christopher Hess April 2026



The story of this unusual magazine begins with fxo, the wartime code assigned to C.G. Haenel. One of the principal makers of P.08 magazines for Lugers, Haenel replaced its earlier numeric 122 code in 1941 as part of the German shift to letter coded manufacturer marks. As production was simplified for wartime efficiency, these magazines evolved from earlier aluminum bottom versions to later bakelite bottom types, a clear example of changes intended to streamline manufacture while dealing with material shortages.

Among the more familiar late war variations of the P.08 Luger magazine, fxo magazines are generally encountered with either aluminum or bakelite bottoms. Those two materials are what collectors expect to see, and for good reason. They represent the accepted and well documented forms most of us associate with these magazines. That is precisely why an fxo magazine that recently surfaced with a brass bottom immediately stood out as something worthy of closer examination.

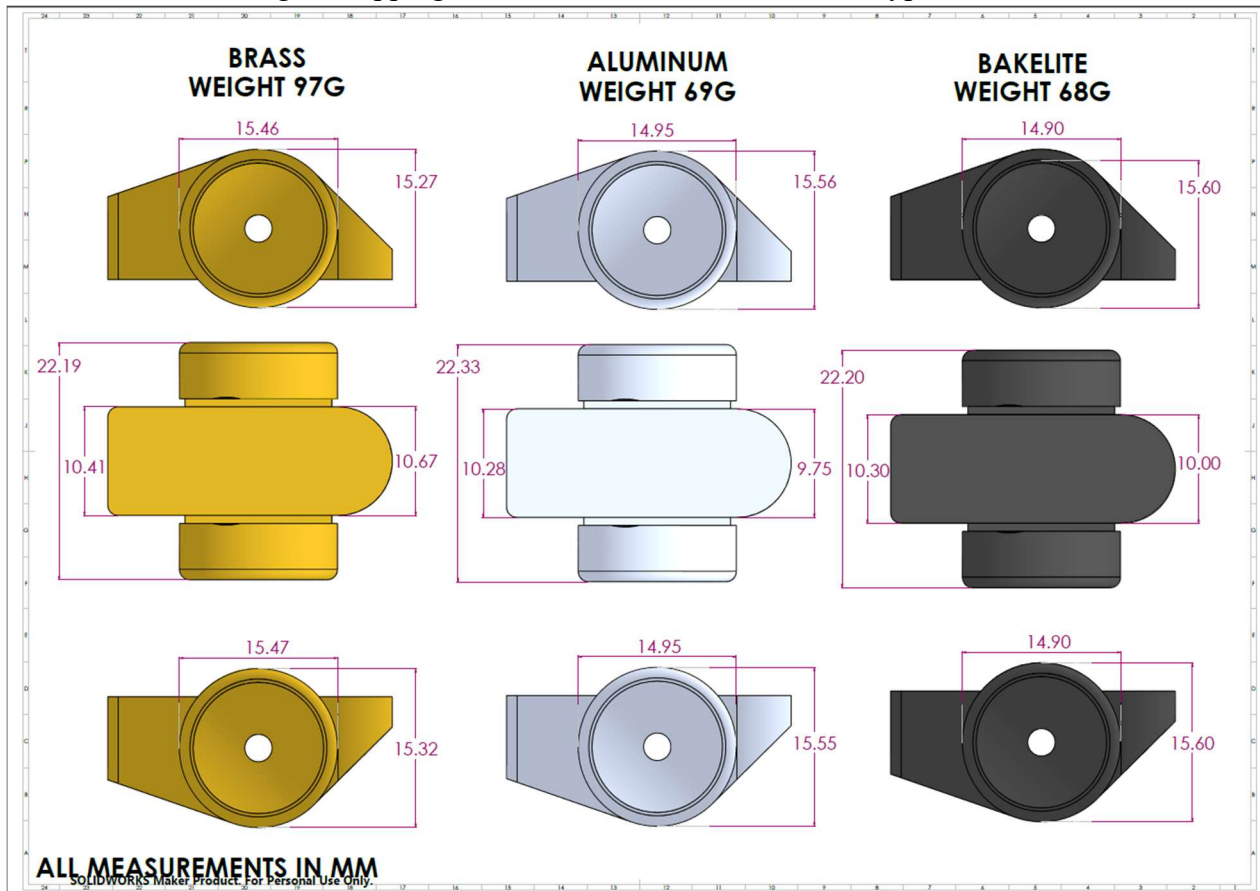
I purchased the magazine largely because the craftsmanship of the bottom was so intriguing. At first glance it was obvious that this was not a crude or hastily improvised alteration. Quite the opposite, in fact. The work showed care, competence, and an attention to detail that suggested the maker was not simply experimenting for the first time. Once I had the magazine in hand, my curiosity only deepened.



The first thing I noticed was the weight. Compared to standard fxo magazines with aluminum and bakelite bottoms, the brass-bottom example was measurably heavier. On my scale, it came in 28 grams heavier than the aluminum and bakelite examples. That increase is substantial enough to be immediately noticeable in the hand and, in my opinion, tells us something important about the intent behind the piece. I do not believe it was a WW2 era creation. As folks have pointed out brass would've been a precious commodity. In my opinion it was created post war and brass was chosen, more likely, because it was available, durable, and comparatively easy to machine.



From there I began taking dimensions to determine what pattern or reference the craftsman may have used when making this replacement bottom. Interestingly, the measurements seem to align closely with the bakelite and aluminum bottom magazines. My theory is that the brass bottom was most likely fabricated as a replacement for a broken bakelite base, rather than as a general purpose substitute. This seems especially plausible given that bakelite was more vulnerable to cracking or chipping than the more durable aluminum type.



That, at least for now, is my working theory.

It is not difficult to imagine a period owner, armorer, machinist, or technically inclined individual being faced with a serviceable magazine whose bottom had failed. If a replacement factory part was unavailable, or if expedience mattered more than originality, fabricating a new bottom from brass would have been a practical solution. Brass machines more readily than any steel, holds detail well, and allows a competent craftsman to produce a clean finished part without excessive difficulty. In that context, the choice of brass begins to make sense.

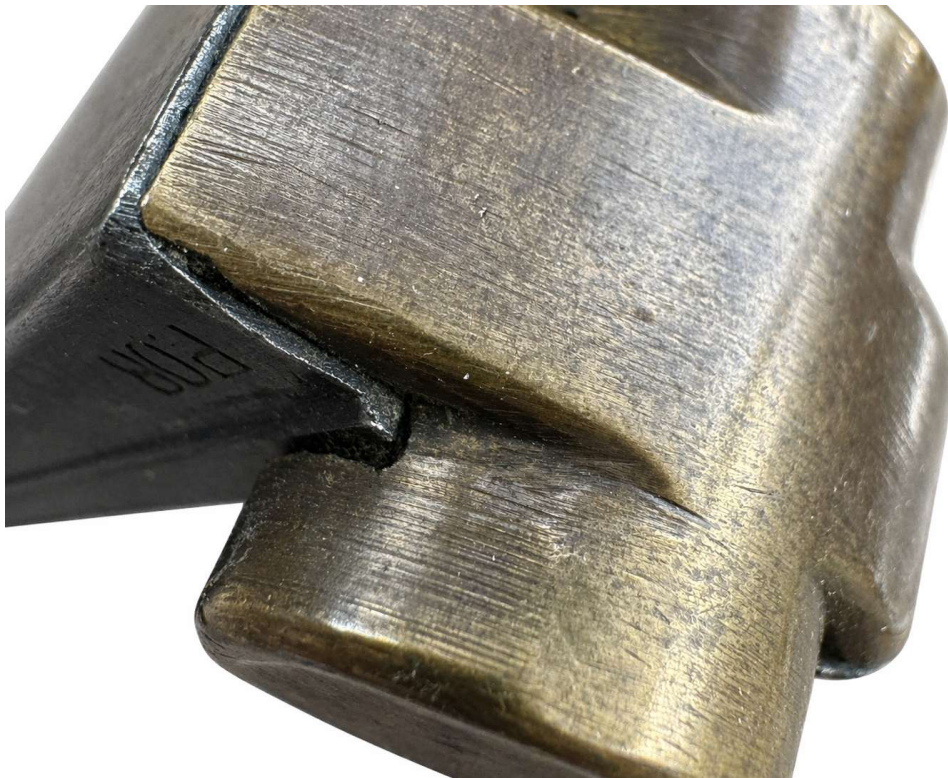
What makes this example especially compelling is the quality of the work itself. This was not some lopsided field expedient crudely hacked into shape. The fit, proportions, and overall execution suggest someone who knew what they were doing. In fact, the workmanship is good enough that I find myself doubting this was the maker's first attempt at such a project. There is a confidence in the finished result that hints at prior experience. Whether that experience involved magazine bottoms specifically, or simply a broader background in small scale machining and hand fitting, is difficult to say. Still, I would be very surprised if this were the only one they ever made.

That leads to what may be the most interesting question of all: are there others?



At present, I do not know whether this brass bottom fxo magazine is a one-off creation or part of a small, overlooked pattern of replacements made by one individual or workshop. The possibility that other examples exist is, to me, very real. If this craftsman produced one of this quality, it seems entirely plausible that he may have made others, either for his own use or for fellow owners needing repairs. Such pieces could easily pass through collections as mere curiosities, especially if they are dismissed at a glance as non factory oddities and not examined more carefully.

One feature I hope to explore further is the visible machining and finishing marks on the brass bottom. I intend to include detailed photographs of those areas in the hope that someone with more specialized knowledge of machine work may be able to offer an opinion as to how it was made. Was it shaped primarily on a mill? Did it involve a lathe for certain operations? Are the marks consistent with hand finishing after machine work, or do they point toward a particular method of production? Those are questions beyond my own expertise, but they may help tell the story of this unusual piece.



In the end, I believe this magazine deserves attention not because it represents a unique variation, but because it preserves evidence of a very human solution to a very practical problem. A cracked bakelite bottom may have rendered an otherwise useful magazine incomplete. Rather than discard it, someone with skill and initiative appears to have made a replacement in brass, choosing a material that was durable, workable, and available. The result was a bottom that added 28 grams to the magazine's weight, followed the dimensions of the bakelite or the aluminum one, and was executed with enough precision to provoke real admiration.

For that reason alone, I think it is worth documenting.

If nothing else, it stands as a reminder that not every interesting Luger related artifact comes from a factory floor. Some come from the bench of an unknown craftsman, working quietly to solve a problem, leaving behind an object that decades later raises more questions than it answers. That, perhaps, is part of what makes collecting so fascinating. Even a magazine bottom can open a small but compelling mystery.

I would be very interested to hear from others who may have encountered similar examples, particularly brass bottom replacements on fxo or other P.08 magazines. I would also welcome opinions from those familiar with machining techniques who may be able to identify the methods used based on the tool marks shown in the photographs. If other examples are out there, this may be the beginning of a very interesting trail.



Acknowledgements

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Finally, I would like to thank Anthony Vanderlinden of Wet Dog Publications for selling me the magazine that became the subject of this article. It was a genuine pleasure doing business with him.