

The Luger Carbine I

A Luger Carbine Scabbard

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May, 2026



I recently obtained a 1902 Luger Carbine along with the scabbard employed for carrying it and it's accessories. This brief paper will describe that scabbard and some similar examples that I have come across. A note on terminology. I have come across a number of terms for this scabbard including "holster" and "sheath". I have chosen to refer to it as a scabbard in this document.

Background

The Luger carbines of 1902 and 1920 are, arguably, the most elegant, beautiful and desirable of all the many manifestations of the Luger firearm. They have been described, often with special reference to the forms they took as presentation arms, many times in the literature and on collector web sites. One was used by Theodore Roosevelt on his Amazon expedition. Another was, evidentially, favored by Wilhelm II of Germany.

Roosevelt's son, Kermit,
carrying it on an expedition
along the Amazon.





The carbine, according to some sources (see Dittus 2026), required a special, "hotter", ammunition to function correctly. The design was essentially that of the standard Luger pistol with a longer barrel. To cycle correctly, the entire "upper" needed to recoil a bit thus unlocking the toggle and allowing for ejection of the spent shell and chambering of a new one.



Transportation

In any event, to transport this weapon, given it's size and weight of almost four pounds (Pistol= 2lb 14oz, Stock = 1lb 1oz) and components, something other than the expedient of a simple holster was needed. To meet this need, various leather working concerns developed a number of solutions (see references for some sources). These entries in the marketplace took a number of forms, from those that fit the carbine in it's assembled form to fabrications with pockets to accommodate it in pieces (along with magazines and cleaning accouterments). The examples below are from Sturgess (2020, p. 1446). The curious thing is that most examples that have come to light are unmarked by their maker. Abercrombie and Fitch is a notable exception, reflecting their advanced appreciation of marketing.



Luger Carbine Sleeves/Holsters

The picture, below, shows four examples (the one in my possession is on the right) that



have either been placed for sale or been illustrated in a book.

As can be seen, they appear to be virtually identical in terms of detail and proportion. One might be forgiven for assuming that the same manufacturer was responsible for all of them. This holster is very well made with a professional eye toward the design. It does not appear to be a one (or four) off product. While we have not obtained an iron clad identification, I think that we have gone a long way to providing pretty solid evidence as to the maker and time frame of manufacturing, as we shall see.

Design, Dimensions and Construction

The sleeve in my possession is 18 inches long by 10 inches wide across the flap. It weighs 1 pound 6 ounces. The leather itself is about 0.10" thick and appears to have uniform thickness throughout. There are two external storage areas secured with brass studs: one for two magazines and the sling.



The other external storage compartment is located on the long side of the case and accommodates the oiler equipped cleaning rod.



It is constructed with a large flap that covers two chambers, one for the pistol, the



other for the stock. The flap is secured with a strap and buckle.

The case is equipped with two robust leather loops which serve as anchor points for a sling (separate from the one for the carbine). Sturgess suggests that this can serve for transportation via horseback though it would equally serve for human transport by putting ones arm through it and positioning it on ones back.



Note also the loop at the very end of the case. It's presumed function is to serve as a convenient means of hanging the case from a hook.

Added Accessories

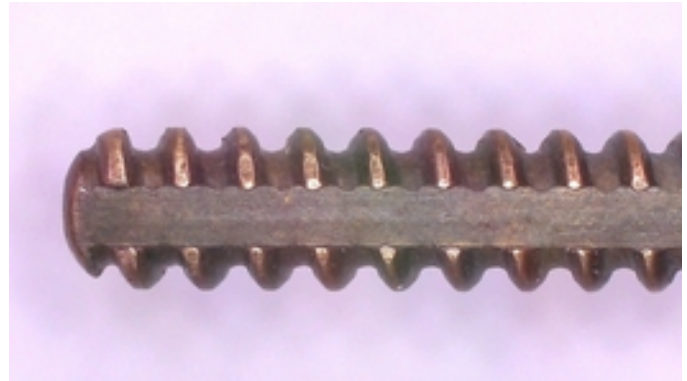
This holster was accompanied by three carbine accessories: two magazines, a cleaning rod with oiler and a sling.

Except under the most unusual of circumstances can one assume that objects associated with the holster began life together and remained together over 120+ years. That said, I think that both the sling and the cleaning rod are contemporary with the holster

The magazines certainly could be but given the use they are put to, I think that this is unlikely.



The Cleaning rod is like that described by Sturgess. It is 17.25" overall and is equipped with an oiler made of blued steel.



A similar, if not identical, rod can be seen associated with the holster depicted in Simpsons as well as in the cased Diaz carbine (55c). These were included with the carbine by DWM but in what sort of "package" we do not know.

Finally we have the sling for the carbine which, in terms of leather surface, buckle shape and locking studs is of a piece with the holster. It is reasonable to assume that it was part of the package as purchased.



Origins

Who made this object, in what country and when? The fact that there are at least four of these sleeves in existence suggests that they were produced as a product line as opposed to them being unique custom creations. In searching, something of a giveaway as to their identity was the leather covered "D" shaped buckles on the sleeve itself as

well as on the two slings. The picture below shows the buckle for closure of the flap.



Sturgess (p. 1193) shows virtually identical buckles on two Luger holsters.



This shape of leather covered buckle is a strong element for the identification of an early Albrecht Kind (AKAH) holster. The real giveaway is the fine, fine stitching that



binds the margins of the leather around the steel buckle. These are all characteristic of a high end holster made by the Kind Company. This specific buckle style is associated with AKAH's item No. 2099 (a Luger holster) and was produced prior to WW 1.

The other examples we have are missing the leather covering on the buckle though the shape supports the notion that they share a maker. Note particularly the texture of the leather on the Simpson scabbard compared to the example on the left. The similarity is clear.



The leather covering on the buckle is thin and somewhat delicate. The photo shows how it separates from the steel of the buckle. One might be forgiving when one considers that it took 120 years for this damage to occur.



Markings

The presence of markings on holsters of this era are not always visible. Makers evidentially sometimes used vegetable inks that degrade over time and not all pieces were stamped with a logo. The present example has no identifying marks that are apparent under white or black light. While AKAH did use an ink stamp or a stamped "crossed rifles" logo on standard commercial holsters, many of their custom, premium-order catalog cases were left completely unmarked on the exterior. This was intentionally done so that high-end international outfitters (like Abercrombie & Fitch in New York or individual master gunsmiths) could sell the rig as part of their own luxury custom packaging without a competing manufacturer's stamp.

So, it is fairly safe to identify the sleeve in question as being manufactured by Albrecht Kind roughly contemporaneous with the manufacture of the 1902 Luger Carbine.

The firm, Albrecht Kind, acknowledged as the leading wholesaler in the German firearms industry for a century and a half and distinguished by their brand "AKAH", was founded in Hunstig near Köln (Cologne) in 1853. It later became the premier German manufacturer of commercial holsters for Parabellum pistols.

I have been unable to find this holster illustrated in the few contemporary product

catalogs that I have at my disposal. Particularly the Kind catalog of 1908. There are a few possible reasons for this:

1. These objects were special order and therefore were not illustrated.
2. Given the rather lackluster performance of the carbine itself in the marketplace, perhaps these holsters simply had a brief public life.
3. My sample was too small and I just missed them.

Given the cost of the carbine and the quality of this product, I suspect that we are dealing with a special order item and such items were often not included in the catalogs.

Sources for a fuller treatment of Kind holsters, and Luger carbine holsters in general, can be found in the reference section.

A Note on Cases

This takes this paper a bit far afield inasmuch as the number and origin of cases for the carbine have not been explored in any rigorous way. We have a few examples that have associations with high end presentation carbines but how they came to be associated with their contents, whether coordinated by DWM or contracted by a dealer or the end user is largely unknown.

Serial 9106c was a presentation piece given to Hugo Borchardt. Note that it's case is quite similar to the case associated with the Diaz carbine (55c - adjoining picture). And they are both remarkably similar to the Teddy Roosevelt case below. In particular see





the brass corner reinforcements as well as the blind stamped border. These might well be factory provided. While I have not had the opportunity to personally examine these cases, I have, with permission, taken the liberty of sharing the excellent description of the case for serial 9106c (shown above) written by Kurt Allemeier for Rock Island Auctions¹:

This presentation Model 1902 Luger carbine from Georg Luger to Hugo Borchardt is complete in its original apple green velvet lined burgundy leather covered presentation case with gold plated latches, reinforcing corners and handle hardware. The top of the case has a large very decorative gold plated plaque engraved with a large "B" and multiple decorative border lines. The front of the case has a mortised gold plated 2-pronged lock. The lining is French fitted for the carbine, as well as its matching numbered stock, three spare correct wood base magazines plus a fourth magazine in the pistol, an original tin of vaseline, an original small flat sided tin oiler, both encased in burgundy leather sleeves, a rare brass and steel carbine length cleaning rod/oiler, a pin punch and takedown tool. The rear edge of the lower compartment has a hinged lid with ivory pull which conceals a compartment containing five period nickel-plated dummy cartridges with "D.M./K" head stamp and a 5-pointed star on each side. There is also the original gold-washed functioning key for the lock and the extremely rare original burgundy leather sling with leather-cover buckle making this an absolutely complete and original cased presentation Luger carbine, one of the few known in private hands in the world today. (RIA 1)

¹Thanks to Joe Engesser of RIA for permission to use this quotation.



References

Discussion of Albrecht Fine (AKAH) holsters

<https://www.landofborchardt.com/AKAH.html#images>

Luger carbine adverts

<https://www.landofborchardt.com/lugerads.html#images>

Holsters and Scabbards for the Luger carbine

<https://www.landofborchardt.com/LHCH.html>

"Vickers Scabbard" as appeared in Sturgess p. 1446

<https://www.rockislandauction.com/detail/88/1329/vickers-presentation-dwm-1902-luger-carbine-with-stock-and-case>

Dittus, Ed. (2026). **Ammunition for the Luger Carbine.**

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Görtz, Joachim & Sturgess, Dr Geoffrey. (2011). **The Borchardt & Luger Automatic Pistols.** Brad Simpson Publishing, Galesburg IL USA. pp. 1446

Kenyon, C., Jr. (1990). **Lugers at Random** (Revised ed.). Hand Gun Press. p. 401

Reference RIA 1: Borchardt Carbine

<https://www.rockislandauction.com/riac-blog/luger-carbine-presented-to-hugo-borchardt>

Simpson example of scabbard:

<https://www.simpsonltd.com/products/M11520>