

Notes on the Abbreviated Test Luger Data Base

I recently obtained a "likely" American Eagle Test Luger at auction.



In investigating the information concerning this pistol I was, frankly, appalled at the dearth of solid data. I do not care to review what we don't know, which seems to be the subject of most writing about these pistols, rather I would like to provide a summary of what we do know and at the same time to include images of documents that support our knowledge base.

I have not included conjecture or supposition. For example, there is a recurring reference to 10 pistols that were sent to West Point. That may well be but we have no evidence as to which pistols were sent. I have seen the Ordnance Department document included here (Appendix I) put forth as "evidence" because it contains 10 serial numbers. Coincidence is not evidence. If a reader has an additional documented data I will happily include it.

I have taken what we know and created an abbreviated data base. It does not contain, nor was it intended to contain, all known extant examples. I will describe it's contents below.

This is what we know.

1- There are 18 entries that are "Confirmed". That is to say that these serial numbers are tied to Lugers that were in the possession of the US Government as confirmed by US Government documents or references. The first set (14 Serials) are unquestioned examples that were issued for testing. These came down to us in three documents (attached as Appendices I, II & III). The first numbers are 6339 - 6346 (Ord. Dept. document). The second set is 6167, 6361, 6501, 6541 & 6602 (Orlando). The third is a

single number mentioned in the Cavalry Journal: 6282. Note well that these are the ONLY serial numbers for Luger pistols where we have confirmation of actual deployment for testing.

2- The remaining four serials that have been described as "Confirmed" are so called because they have the necessary physical characteristics AND are or were in the possession of the Government. It is deemed highly likely that these weapons are, too, unquestioned Test Lugers. Two of them are in the possession of the Springfield Armory Museum (Appendix IV, Serials 6885 and 7018). The last two (Appendix V, Serials 6761 and 7019) were reported as being mentioned in the Chief of Ordnance Reports by an independent research concern (The Archival Research Group). The precise reference is being pursued and for this reason the somewhat equivocal term "TBD" has been appended to their entries.

3- Eighty five serials have been included that appear in Michael Reese's book **The Model 1900 Luger: U. S. Test Trials**. In the book, he shows 87 entries because two serials are repeated. Reese notes "these are the only Test Luger pistols still (sic) known to exist". He provides no documentation for the claim that the reported serial numbers are, indeed, those of Test Lugers. These are included for the sake of completeness (given the dearth of data) and are not to be construed as an identification. That is to say that if you have an example with a serial number reported by him, all you can say is "I have a Reese Luger that *might* be a Test".

4- In a similar vein, the infamous "Bannerman Serials" are also included as ranges. As collectors know, there is controversy regarding the interpretation of these numbers (are they continuous or not?). They, like the Reese numbers, are included for the sake of completeness. They are shown when a serial from another source (Government or Reese) coincides with the range or when a serial is the first or last of a range. I have not assumed that they are continuous so I have not cluttered the chart with all of the included serials. A listing (the earliest that I have been able to find) is included as Appendix VI. Note that, in spite of suggestions to the contrary by some noted authors, there is NO government confirmation of any of these numbers.

5- A total of 29 serials are included with the identification "High Probability". These pistols were examined physically or photographically by Dr. Mohamad Hassoun and singled out as having a high probability of being a Test Luger. The reasons for this identification are:

- Being in the serial range 5978 - 7976

- Having neither proof marks nor import stamps (a given but still ...)
- having grip wear consistent with being carried in the unique holster created for these pistols at the Rock Island Armory
- Having the metal wear to be expected with undergoing a testing regimen

Twelve of these are within the Bannerman sequence which provides a level of mutual confirmation.

Please see the references section for a link to discussion of this identification process.

6- Solely for the sake of completeness, Appendices VII a and b show the distribution of pistols to various Army units for purposes of testing.

A note on the range of possible serial numbers

Dwight Gruber has written an excellent document on the "chaos" (as he calls it) around the information (or lack thereof) concerning these historically important weapons. I provide a link in the reference section, it is certainly worth a read. In that document he cites a number of authorities with regard to their published estimates of the serial range of the Test Lugers:

- Datig (1958) between *sns* 5000-11000 (presumptive, undocumented)
- Kenyon (1969) "about" *sns* 6100-7100 source "U.S. Army archives" (undocumented)
- Reese (1976) *sns* 6099-7098 source "Bureau of Accounting" (undocumented)
- Meadows (1993) 6000-7500 "approximate" (presumptive, undocumented)
- Walter (1995) range "conventionally attributed" to be *sns* 6151-7150 (presumptive, undocumented)

<sigh>

	Low	High
Mean	5870	7970
Median	6099	7150

I know I said that I would only include data that is solid. But but I think some boundaries for what we are examining (wobbly as they might be) are useful. As the

saying goes "Good enough for Government work". Barring real data I like the Median numbers.

Multiple Confirmations

As a point of interest, only one serial number (6282) is Confirmed (Cavalry Journal) AND appears in BOTH the Reese data and the Bannerman ranges.

The five serials reported by Orlando appear in the Bannerman range.

Three serials appear in the Reese listing AND occur in the Bannerman sequence (6620, 6727 & 7047).

Serial 6345, reported in the Ordnance Dept document, also appears in the Reese data.

Serials 6885 and 7018 (Springfield Armory Museum) appear in the Reese data as well as serials 6761 and 7019.

Some Notes on Reading the Data Base

The serial range of the entries is from 6100 to 7788. This is defined by the Reese numbers and the High Probability examples identified by Dr. Hassoun.

Note that a Bannerman number only appears if:

- It is the first or last number defining a sequence
- It is associated with a Confirmed, High Probability or Reese number.

The Bannerman numbers are indicated by the rightmost cells that are filled with red. Letters are used to identify their significance: S=Start of sequence, E=End, X=only one number in sequence.

"SPAR", with an inventory code, is the designation that appears for examples that are in the Springfield Armory Museum.

Individual examples are not generally included in this Data Base: it is not meant to be an inventory. If an existing pistol is included it is because it is notable, such as being one that is confirmed as a Test Luger.

American Eagle Test Luger Database

SN	Status	Reference	B	SN	Status	Reference	B	SN	Status	Reference	B
6100		Reese		6758		Reese		6780		Reese	
6112		Reese		6760		Reese		6825	High Prob	Bannerman	
6124		Reese		6432		Reese		6847	High Prob	Bannerman	
6128	High Prob			6440		Reese		6861		Reese	
6137		Reese		6446		Reese		6865		Reese	
6153		Reese		6469		Reese		6885	Confirmed	SPAR 865/ Reese	
6164		Reese		6475		Reese		6886		Reese	
6165		Reese		6486		Reese		6898		Reese	
6167	Confirmed	Orlando	S	6489		Reese		6905		Reese	
6188	High Prob	Bannerman	I	6497		Reese		6930		Reese	
6196		Reese	E	6501	Confirmed	Orlando		6965		Reese	
6225		Reese		6502		Reese		6974		Reese	
6239		Reese		6506		Reese		6989		Reese	
6242		Reese		6508		Reese		6992		Reese	
6246		Reese		6519		Reese		7006		Reese	
6248	High Prob			6526		Reese		7014		Reese	
6265		Reese		6532		Reese		7015	High Prob		
6275		Reese		6534	High Prob	Bannerman		7017		Reese	
6282	Confirmed	US Cav Doc /Reese	X	6539		Reese		7018	Confirmed	SPAR 864/ Reese	
6285		Reese		6541	Confirmed	Orlando		7019	Confirmed	TBD	
6290	High Prob			6542		Reese		7027		Reese	
6312		Reese		6547		Reese		7031		Reese	
6320		Reese		6562		Reese		7044		Reese	
6335	High Prob			6567		Reese		7047	High Prob	Reese	
6339	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6574		Reese		7050	High Prob	Bannerman	
6340	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6576		Reese		7051		Reese	
6341	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6582		Reese		7078		Reese	
6342	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6587	High Prob	Bannerman		7089		Reese	
6343	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6601	?	Bannerman		7097		Reese	
6344	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6602	Confirmed	Orlando		7108		Bannerman	E
6345	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc/Reese		6620	High Prob	Reese		7147		Bannerman	X
6346	Confirmed	Ord Dept Doc		6632		Reese		7179	High Prob		
6350		Reese		6655		Reese		7187	High Prob		
6357	High Prob			6656		Reese		7263	High Prob		
6358		Reese		6672		Reese		7294	High Prob		
6361	Confirmed	Orlando	S	6689		Reese		7352	High Prob		
6372		Reese	I	6694		Reese		7364	High Prob		
6392		Reese	I	6703		Reese		7366	High Prob		
6399		Reese	I	6727	High Prob	Reese		7429	High Prob		
6402		Reese	I	6728	High Prob	Bannerman		7472	High Prob		
6413		Reese	I	6735	High Prob	Bannerman		7637	High Prob		
6415		Reese	I	6745		Reese		7751	High Prob		
				6761	Confirmed	TBD	I	7788	High Prob		

Appendix I

Ordinance Department Document

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF ORDNANCE
 DEC 12 1901
 23377
 WAR DEPARTMENT
 Washington, D.C.
 Dec. 11, 1901
 Board of
 Ordnance and Fortification,
 Extract from proceedings of
 Dec. 7, 1901, recommending
 that of the Luger automatic
 pistols remaining on hand 10
 be sent to West Point for trial
 by the officers of that post;
 15 to the Presidio of San Fran-
 cisco, 10 to Ft. Hamilton, and
 40 to Ft. Riley, for test by
 the field artillery stations
 at those posts.
 DTS 4.10. 1901
 The: Eastman - Dept. 11.11.11
 S. A. Hiss { 23377-1000
 23377-1000
 23377-1000 } Dec. 11, 1901
 New York Arsenal
 Springfield Armory
 ✓ Issues to Post Officer
 of Post Armory

Appendix II
Lieutenant Orlando Palmer Document
Serials 6167, 6361, 6601, 6541 and 6608

Luger automatic pistol:

No. 6167: Used by C.M. Sergt. Whitaker,

Missed fire: 3 times. No. of shots fired: 120

No. 6361: Used by Private Allist,

Missed fire: 10 times. No. of shots fired: 120

No. 6601: Used by Private Hush,

Missed fire: 12 times. No. of shots fired: 120

No. 6541: Used by Private Norwood,

Missed fire: 12 times. Cartridge ejector broke after 55 shots
had been fired.

No. 6608. Used by Private Simpson.

One (1) miss fire. No. of shots fired: 120

Respectfully submitted,

Orlando G. Palmer

2nd Lieut. 7th U.S. Cavalry.

Appendix III

Cavalry Association Document for Serial 6282

CAPTAIN WILLIAM T. LITTEBRANT, TWELFTH U. S. CAVALRY.

The firing-pin spring (illustrated in pamphlet, Figure 2, constituent part No. 13) should be twice as strong as it is or else the pin (illustrated in pamphlet, Figure 2, constituent part No. 12) should penetrate the primer more deeply. On one occasion I had two cartridges of one magazine charge fail to explode (pistol 6282) and since then it has occasion-

Journal of the United States Cavalry Association
v.13, #45m p. 351 1902/03

Appendix IV

Serials 6885 and 7018 Documentation



PISTOL, SEMI-AUTOMATIC
Springfield Armory

Catalog Number: DWA 885

Classification: HISTORY
TOOLS & EQUIPMENT FOR
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
ARMAMENTS
Firearms

Description: GERMAN PISTOL, LUIGER MODEL 1900 7.65mm DWM 6885

Material: METAL WOOD

Artist/Maker: LUIGER, GEORG

Origin: SPRINGFIELD MA USA

Place of Manufacture: BERLIN GERMANY

Other Manufacture Site: DWM

Manufacture Date: C 1901

Related: DWA 884

Collection: DWA 884

Dimensions: OL: 24.1CM 9 1/2" SL: 12CM 4 3/4"

Description
GERMAN PISTOL LUIGER MODEL 1900 7.65mm DWM 6885
Manufactured by Deutsche Waffen & Munitionfabrik (DWM), Berlin, Germany - Standard German semi automatic pistol with 8 round feed mechanism. Used by U.S. Army Ordnance for testing at Springfield Armory. Blued finish, two-piece checkered walnut grips, dotted for grip safety. Toggle action; fixed V notch rear, dovetail front sight. Complete with 8-round detachable box magazine. Approximately 1,000 of these were manufactured for military testing.

Markings:
Barrel: 6885
Frame: 6885
Slide: U.S. Army style eagle.
Toggle: DWM (JURIG)
Take down lever: T.M.S.
Slide plate: 18.



PISTOL, SEMI-AUTOMATIC
Springfield Armory

Catalog Number: DWA 884

Classification: HISTORY
TOOLS & EQUIPMENT FOR
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
ARMAMENTS
Firearms

Description: GERMAN PISTOL, LUIGER MODEL 1900 7.65mm DWM 7018

Material: METAL WOOD

Artist/Maker: LUIGER, GEORG

Origin: SPRINGFIELD MA USA

Place of Manufacture: BERLIN GERMANY

Other Manufacture Site: DWM

Manufacture Date: C 1901

Related: DWA 885

Collection: DWA 885

Dimensions: OL: 24.1CM 9 1/2" SL: 12CM 4 3/4"

Description
GERMAN PISTOL, LUIGER MODEL 1900 7.65mm DWM 7018
Manufactured by DWM, Berlin, Germany - Standard German semi automatic pistol with 8-round detachable box magazine. Blued finish, checkered plastic grips. Used by American Ordnance for testing at Springfield Armory. Grip safety, toggle action. Wooden bottom on magazine. Composite piece - easy for deliberate to test interchangeability.

Markings:
Barrel: 6796
Frame: 7018
Slide: U.S. Army style eagle.
Toggle: DWM (JURIG), 77
Take down lever: 18
Slide plate: 15.

Appendix V

Serials 6761 and 7019 Documentation

SERIAL	MODEL	MMDDYY	USAGE
6761		060103	TRP B 6TH CAV
7019		020828	OO (STOLEN)
9704	.30	011544	DONATED TO USN (ISSUED)
22433		080610	POWELL CTGE INDICATING DEVICE
SERIAL _____			

Appendix VI

Earliest Report of the Bannerman Purchase Serials

United States Martial & Collectors Arms, MARS TM-156 (20 April 1969) page 36
PISTOL PARABELLUM, LUGER PATENT, MODEL 1900 AMERICAN EAGLE, SECOND ISSUE
CALIBRE 7.65MM U. S. ARMY TRIALS

THE LISTED SERIAL NUMBERS REPRESENT 770 PISTOLS PURCHASED BY BANNERMAN AND SONS FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD ARMOURY, MASSACHUSETTS IN 1906. THESE ARE THE ONLY DOCUMENTED SPECIMENS OF TRIAL PISTOLS ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES ARMY FROM 1901-05. THE ORIGINAL ORDER FROM DEUTSCHE WAFFEN UND MUNITIONSFABRIKEN, GERMANY WAS FOR 1000 PISTOLS. THE 230 PISTOLS WHOSE SERIAL NUMBERS ARE NOT SHOWN WERE PROBABLY RENDERED USELESS IN VARIOUS TESTS. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE HOWEVER THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF THESE UNRECORDED SPECIMENS CAME INTO PRIVATE HANDS.

SERIAL NUMBERS

6167 TO 6196
6282
6361 TO 7108
7147

THERE IS NO DEFINITE MARKING EMPLOYED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL POSITELY IDENTIFY THESE PISTOLS. ANY STAMPED LETTERS, NUMBERS OR ORDNANCE TYPE FLAMING BOMBS FOUND ON THE FRAME OR RECEIVER CAN NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO ANY UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AGENCY. IF A MODEL 1900 AMERICAN EAGLE, SECOND ISSUE PISTOL IS SUSPECTED OF BEING A TRIAL SPECIMEN IT WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS

1. SERIAL NUMBER RANGE 5800 TO 7800.
2. THE WORD GERMANY WILL NOT APPEAR ON THE PISTOL.

Appendix VIIa

Shipment of Test Lugers for Testing

LIST OF TROOPS OF U. S. CAVALRY, TO THE COMMANDING

OFFICER OF EACH OF WHICH 5 LUGER PISTOLS

HAVE BEEN SHIPPED, ON THE DATES

AND TO THE PLACES SPECIFIED.

November 7, 1901.

11th Cavalry:
Troops "E" - "F" - "G" and "H", Fort Ethan Allen, Vt.

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November 9, 1901.

11th Cavalry:
Troops "A" - "B" - "C" and "D", Jefferson Barracks, Mo.
Troops "I" - "K" - "L" and "M", Fort Myer, Va.

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November 12, 1901.

1st Cavalry:
Troop "E", Fort Washakie, Wyo.
Troops "F" and "G", Fort Yellowstone, Wyo.
Troop "H", Fort Meade, S. D.

4th Cavalry:
Troops "A" - "B" - "C" and "D", Fort Riley, Kan.
Troops "E" - "F" - "G" and "H", Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
Troops "I" - "K" - "L" and "M", Jefferson Barracks, Mo.

5th Cavalry:
Troops "E" and "G", Fort Apache, Arizona.
Troop "F", Fort Huachuca, Arizona.
Troop "H", Fort DuChesne, Utah.

8th Cavalry:
Troops "A" and "B", Fort Reno, O. T.
Troops "C" and "D", Fort Sill, O. T.

12th Cavalry:
Troops "A" - "B" - "C" and "F", Fort Clark, Texas.
Troop "D", Fort Huachuca, Arizona.
Troops "E" and "G", Fort McIntosh, Texas.
Troops "H" - "I" - "K" - "L" and "M", Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

13th Cavalry:
Troops "A" - "C" - "G" and "H", Fort Assiniboine, Mont.
Troops "B" and "D", Fort Robinson, Neb.
Troops "E" and "F", Fort Keogh, Mont.
Troops "I" - "K" - "L" and "M", Fort Meade, S. D.

Appendix VIIb

Shipment of Test Lugers for Testing

14th Cavalry:

Troops "A" - "B" - "C" and "D", Fort Riley, Kan.
Troops "I" - "K" - "L" and "M", Fort Grant, Arizona.
Troops "E" and "H", Fort Logan, Colo.
Troops "F" and "G", Fort Wingate, N. M.

15th Cavalry:

Troops "E" and "F", Benicia Barracks, Calif.
Troops "H" - "I" - "K" - "L" and "M", Presidio, S. F., Calif.

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November 14, 1901.

In the following cases, the Luger pistols have been sent in lots to some of the Troop Commanders for distribution, 5 to each of the other Troops as indicated:

2nd Cavalry:

40 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "A", Matanzas, for distribution, 5 each to Troops "A" - "B" - "C" - "D" - "E" - "F" - "G" and "H".
20 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "I", Pasa Caballos, for distribution, 5 each to Troops "I" - "K" - "L" and "M".

7th Cavalry:

60 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "A", Havana, for distribution, 5 each to Troops "A" - "B" - "C" - "D" - "E" - "F" - "G" - "H" - "I" - "K" - "L" and "M".

8th Cavalry:

5 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "E", San Luis.
5 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "G", Guantanamo.
10 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "F", Santiago, for distribution, 5 each to Troops "F" and "H".
20 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "I", Puerto Principe, for distribution to Troops "I" - "K" - "L" and "M".

10th Cavalry:

5 sent to the Commanding Officer of Troop "C", Bayamo, Cuba.
5 sent to each of the Commanding Officers of Troops "A" - "L" and "M", Manzanillo, Cuba; and "B" - "D" - "I" and "K", Holguin, Cuba.

305 sent to the Commanding Officer, Manila Ordnance Depot, Manila, P. I., for distribution to the Cavalry Troops in the Philippines.

Making 900 pistols in all.

n. [AUTHOR'S NOTE: Plus 100 pistols to Springfield for exclusive tests.]

References

Fuller, Stephen. *United States Martial & Collectors Arms*. MARS TM-157. Military Arms Research Service, 1971.

Reese, Michael II. *U.S. Test Trials: 1900 Luger*. Union City, TN: Pioneer Press, 1976.

Link to discussion of the identification of High Probability Test Lugers:
https://www.lugerforums.com/threads/a-list-of-high-probability-1900-us-test-lugers.139851/?post_id=1146030#post-1146030

Link to Dwight Gruber's excellent summary:
https://www.lugerforums.com/threads/test-eagle-chaos.124743/?post_id=964932#post-964932