

An Interesting Mauser Luger
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A small number of Lugers, all manufactured by Mauser and having a Üb mark on the chamber, have surfaced over the years. The mark stands for "Übungswaffe" which is German for training or practice weapon.

Some of these have an "A" stamped on the barrel and/or grips. The "A" has been differently interpreted by different authors. Some suggest that it stands for "Ausschuss" (scrap or reject), others "Anschuss" or accuracy. The examples examined to date

are made from scrap parts with no final acceptance marks present. They have been used for pressure testing or, it has been suggested, as training weapons for manufacturing personnel. They are uniformly rough and the barrels are worn. They have sold at RIA and other Internet outlets for between \$1500 and \$3200. While references are slim, there is mention of this type of firearm in both "Borchardt & Luger Automatic Pistols" by Gortz and Sturgess (p. 453) and "Lugers At Random" by Kenyon (p. 300-301). As of this writing, it is safe to say that nothing definitive has been published on these interesting oddities.

Recently, the author purchased a variation on the foregoing theme: a Mauser Luger that is a VOPO rework



with a "Ü" (not "Üb") stamped on the chamber.



There is also the numeral "4" painted on the right tail of the frame.

There are no further markings on this weapon that are associated with the "Üb" pistols described above.

Further, being a rework, the weapon in question carries the full range of proofs and acceptance stamps that indicate Nazi acceptance consistent with its presumed date (the "G" mark indicates manufacture in 1935). The serial numbers match though some are clearly restrikes.

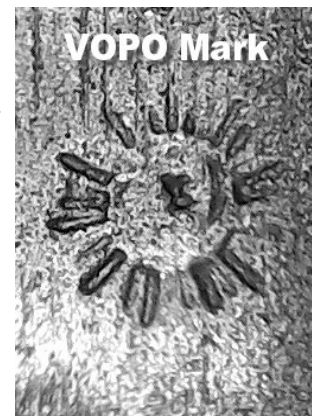


Barrel Marks



Toggle Mark

The other markings are consistent with a VOPO pistol, including the VOPO "Starburst" stamp, and need not be discussed in detail here.



VOPO Mark



This find was interesting itself but what followed is what gives special character to this story.

Shortly after the purchase of this pistol, the author came across a Trommel Magazine with a "Ü" inscription in white paint. And shortly

after this, a correspondent contacted the author with information about yet another Trommel Magazine for sale that appeared to be sequentially numbered to the one already purchased!

The inscription is repeated on the drum portion of the magazine on both examples. On one, the image is a "ghost" due to wear.

So, what do we have here?

Seemingly, the weapon in question was manufactured in 1935, proofed and accepted by the military with the appropriate marks. Later in it's life it was reworked by/for the East German police (VOPO). Some parts were replaced and or renumbered to match the frame. The VOPO mark was added to the left side of the slide, just ahead of the serial number.

At some point it was stamped with a Ü on the breech just forward of the G date mark. Was this done during it's service with the German military or after, under Communist rule? Was it part of some forgotten testing program? Unknown.

What is known is that Lugers marked with the Üb mark were not proofed, nor were they accepted into military service. They generally appeared rough, almost taking on the appearance of "seconds". Not so with the weapon in hand. In fact, The bore appears bright and the rifling sharp. Though worn, there is nothing about this pistol that suggests that it is anything other than what it appears to be: a Luger Pistol that had a long service life. And, while it has not been fired, the author has little doubt that it is perfectly serviceable. It might well have been reworked by the VOPO and pressed into service (or stored at an armory) without regard to the markings that have captured my interest. Or, perhaps, the mark was added by them.

In any discussion of Luger Pistols T. E. Lawrence's observation on the nature and characteristics of Crusader Castles comes to mind: "A series of

exceptions to some undiscoverable rule". Just so.

There is a tendency to associate these three objects. To link them as being part of some testing or related testing occupation at a factory or other facility, government or otherwise. The Ü and numeral, present in all of the objects, executed with white paint in all cases, is evocative. A most basic question is the meaning of the Ü mark.

When one has a curious example of something, the natural response is to look for other examples. After a fair amount of searching on the Internet, and having posted this weapon on one specialty board, no further "Ü" marked weapons, Lugers or otherwise, have surfaced. It is possible that it might be a contraction of the Üb mark or that German technicians made a mistake. Three times. This explanation is not overly compelling.

Now you know what I know. Thoughts? Speculations?

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