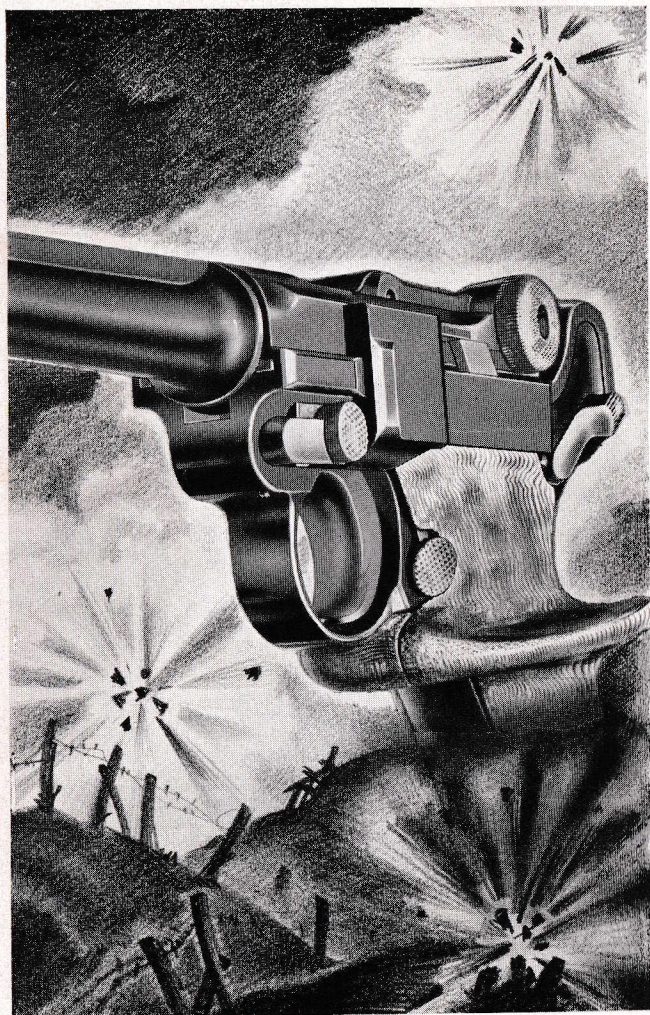


AUTOMATIC
PISTOL
MARKSMANSHIP



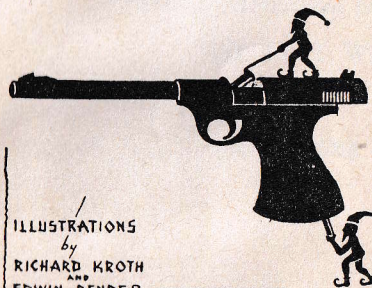
WILLIAM REICHENBACH



With towering strength, foreboding, yet beautiful, it looms sky-high.....

AUTOMATIC PISTOL MARKSMANSHIP

By
WILLIAM REICHENBACH



ILLUSTRATIONS
by
RICHARD KROTH
AND
EDWIN BENDER



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Dedicated to
'THE LEFT WING'
of
Our Pistol Shooting Fraternity

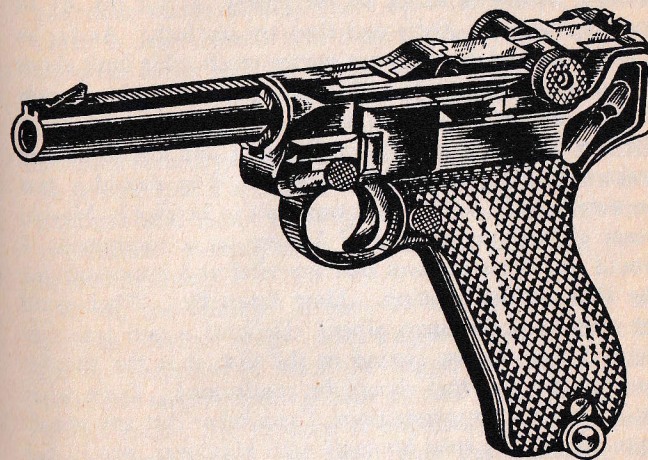
THE "LUEGER"

I suppose it seems natural to favour things that have a sort of sentimental past. I must confess that my next selection, the "Lueger," is kind of tinged that way. I carried it during the last lamentable debacle and had a chance to get well acquainted with it. Its powerful slenderness appealed to the artist in me while its deadly accuracy overshadowed any of its possible shortcomings. I played around with it after the war and my attachment grew deeper, if that had been possible.

In the minds of the public (Myself included), the Lueger is classified as a German Automatic. Imagine my surprise when I read in Hatcher's latest book that the Lueger idea was conceived right here in America, by a fellow named Borchardt. It seems that the Germans knew a good thing when they saw one, faster than the American Official circles. Anyway, the Lueger has been manufactured in Germany these many years and any improvement over the first crude model, was, probably, made in that country. The reason why I touch the history of this Automatic casually, is to sort of underline a certain irony in the affair. The Parabellum (significant name, by the way) is an American invention, but, despite its superiority over other models, it is American no longer—What a pity! And what a joke! When American Officials *did* need an Automatic for military and other purposes, they had to shop around and fool around with European models and finally adopted and bought the rights of one, which cannot even hold a candle to the Lueger. And here is the joke: The model which they adopted and bought from Europe, was invented right in our own back-yard—Ho—ho—ho—. Now, we heard about all the intensive tests that were made with all kinds of different guns at the time—Again, the most modern, the most progressive, the most promising among the models tested, was not recognized. For the

second time, America did not grab the chance to manufacture the excellent Lueger gun right here.

I am not a historian, certainly not on astral affairs, but there is no doubt in my mind that the fellows who were responsible for rejecting the Lueger are not playing the



LUEGER 7.65 mm. with factory handle. Disappearing front sight when gun is used with conversion assembly.

harp among Elysian clouds. I only hope that it is warm enough for them down in Mephisto's inferno.

Now, in discussing the Lueger, I don't want you to rely on my testimony. I am too prejudiced. Ask anyone who has ever handled a Lueger—(Of course, I am talking of the "genuine" Lueger and not the oriental fakes that the gullible American public was fooled with, shortly after the war—I am being shown some of these relics at times and they impress me like a demimonde imitation of an aristocratic lady.)

Well, let's get on! Take some of the mossbacky objections against the Lueger. It was claimed that the gun jams.

The story goes that the various models under test were put in muddy water for a day, fully loaded, and then hung up to dry. Without cleaning they were then put to shooting tests and the model that still functioned, was selected for its ruggedness and abusibility. Of course, a soldier is trained, before an attack on the enemy, to put his .45 in muddy water, let it dry and then try his luck. As far as I am concerned it would not matter much. He can't shoot the damn thing anyway. Would a commission bent upon finding the best wristwatch, throw the various models from the top of the Empire State Building and condemn any make that couldn't stand the shock? Why should a gun be watertight? I thought it was built to be shot? Maybe, I am all wet myself, but if I were on a commission I would test those features that are vital and important for the thing under scrutiny. Most assuredly. What good are sound-proof tobacco pipes? Heck, if a gun jams because it was thrown around in the dirt, it is the shooter and not the gun that should be condemned. From what little I know of war-conditions, I remember that any sonof-a-gun who didn't treat his tools with kidgloves, was in for merry hell. And, do you think for one moment that a man, when he knows damn well that his life may depend on the proper condition of his tools, will neglect to keep them in condition?

Let the scientists get busy and invent primers and powders that won't corrode the barrel.

How about the metallurgists finding an alloy that won't corrode or erode nevermind *what* you put in the cartridge?

Where the hell is the man in the trenches to get hot water from to clean the barrel of his gun with, so that it won't rust, etc.? With our Luegers and ammunition we used an oil-rag and were safe. My Lueger never jammed, but then I had no ulterior motive to find the gun faulty and—I treated it right.

Then they said: "It has an awkward trigger pull!" My

Lueger and many, many thousand others, has the finest and smoothest squeeze that you will ever find in *any* gun.

As for the ballistics, they were so far superior to anything in existence then, that all they could dig up was the lame pretext of insufficient calibre. These Santa Clauses had their minds already made up—Obviously. Just because a few Moros had been tickled with some .38 Revolver shells and had the audacity to survive, the ".45 calibre craze" became the credo. "Knock the bastid down so that he stays knocked down." And "Shocking-Power" assumed such importance that it makes one sick. As ballistic science grows up, more and more actual data are made available and many a mossy concept will be thrown in the ashcan. Among them the famous "Shocking Power-Idiosyncraziness."

Well, the damage is done—I was, in contrast to a number of the "Wags" who waggle earnestly about ballistics, compelled to work the trigger in combat, that is with the targets spitting back at one. And, being done under duress, the memory is unpleasant in the extreme, but in retrospect I can assert that less extremely large calibres do more effective work than the .45 calibre. It all boils down to the question of how good the shooter behind the gun is and I claim that a calibre unnecessarily large, is not conducive to good handling.

I am quite serious when I say that the Lueger is the most accurate handgun ever built. It was modern and far ahead of its time when it was invented. It still looms sky-high over other large calibre Automatics.

With adjustable sights and trigger-pull adjusted to a nicety, its accuracy is uncanny. It has a scientifically designed grip, good lock-time and is an easy shooting gun. By that I mean: You don't have to buckle down and *lick* the thing. You just get acquainted and it will almost shoot itself.

The only outstanding technical objection I have to the

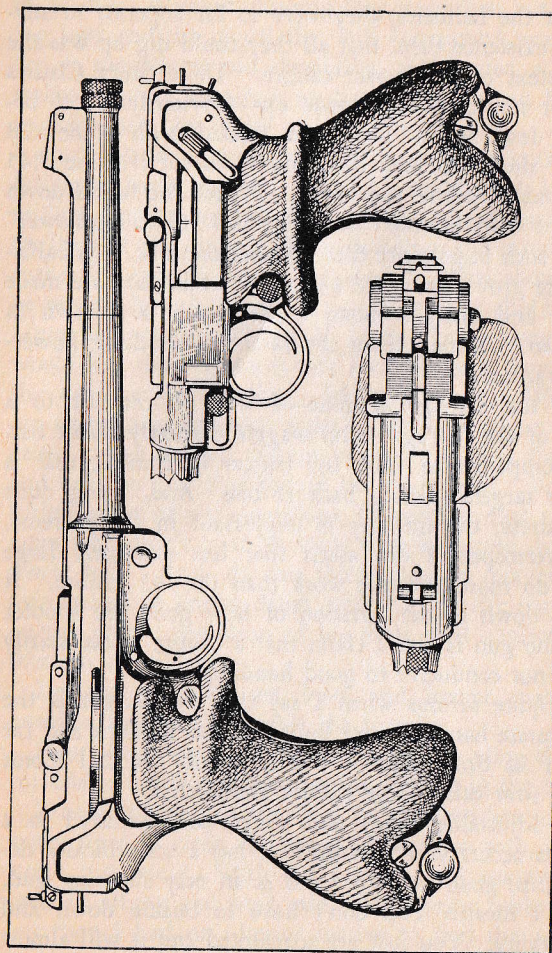


Illustration No. 4
Individual Handle for Gaspipipe—The right side view shows the groove for the trigger-finger, permitting it to float freely. The left side of the gun shows the thumbrest. As can be seen, the position of the middlefinger has been lowered by the stock. The top view gives the thickness of the handle.

Lueger, is a certain muzzle-lightness. A heavier barrel could take care of that.

Another objection (that of a civilian) is the cost of the shells.

And the price of the gun asked by the Importers is, probably, too high also. These foreigners are not used to American methods of quantity turnover and resultant drop in cost. They want to retire into fortune in their own thickheaded way. Speaking for myself: I would pay *any* price for a good Lueger and so will all the other dumb gun-nuts.

One of the crowd of infernal pluggers, tinkers or what have you, a fellow who seems to like me, offered to make a handle for my Lueger that would, as he expressed it: Knock my eye out. I viewed the offer with misgivings—After all, I like to keep my organs in good shape. I gave him a few pointers, still sceptical. But, when I saw the handle and tried it—Have you ever heard a gentleman audibly “smack” his lips over a plate of some exotic, exquisite soup or other dish? Well, I “smacked”—Look at Illustration 4 yourself and judge—Can you blame me? Boy, am I exclusive. That handle has everything—everything but an automatic bulletholepunch. I told that philanthropist that he should manufacture the thing—He said, he would.

THE “GAS-PIPE”

Here in Illustration No. 5 we have our “Mystery Gun.” I’ve put it in, not because I wanted to show something sensational or exciting, but because this combination is proof of a really serious attempt at modernization. It has always puzzled me why we should not have a powerful Center-Fire-Gun and a *conversion* that is easy and economical to shoot for the .22 Long Rifle Rim-Fire shell. Practicing with a large calibre gun costs so darn much

in the way of support. If you have to pay around a nickel for every squeeze, your pocketbook will feel it, particularly in Time-and Rapid firing. The consequence is that most shooters lay off and stay very much "average" in these calibres. I suppose these larger calibre shells do *have* to be expensive—Well, since they are, matters are not helped along. Now, if we had an attachment suitable for the cheap .22 shell—You fertile minds of America, you inventors, you clever gun-tinkers: Here is a field for the better mousetrap.

The attempts made so far have been sort of feeble and unsuccessful. Somebody think and think and finally came down with a .22 attachment for the .45 Automatic. He blew his horn lustily and the dumb shooting world pricked its ears. But it turned out to be a "fizz," just a poor and unintelligent brainstorm. Hell, that thing isn't worth a nickel, since it works only "Single-Shot," when it works at all. Still, one should praise even that attempt, dumb as it was. Somebody, somehow, realized a crying need—That's something! Now, I know that there must be hundreds of intelligent gun-nuts with mechanical ability in this country of ours. Fellows, let me tell you: Get out a mousetrap that works and your fortune is made!

Over in Germany, somebody approached the situation with a bit more initiative. It concerns a conversion for the Lueger-Automatic. When introduced in this country, it was received with lukewarm mistrust. I became interested—and I am still cursing the day when I laid eyes on the damn thing. Mind you, a clever approach, but as painfully a termination as a caesarian miscarriage. I don't know how annoying a miscarriage can be, but let it pass.

Like other nuts, I was stubborn though. I fooled around with it. Spare me the recount of what the darn thing has cost me so far—But, here is the point: I have up to a short time ago, not been able to contact a clever gun mechanic who was willing and able to cooperate.

If, among you readers, there should be one ambitious soul, let him get in touch with me. He can have all the credit and financial rewards—as long as he succeeds in perfecting an ideal conversion. Look at the picture: You see the original 7.65 Lueger. The centre-fire breechblock

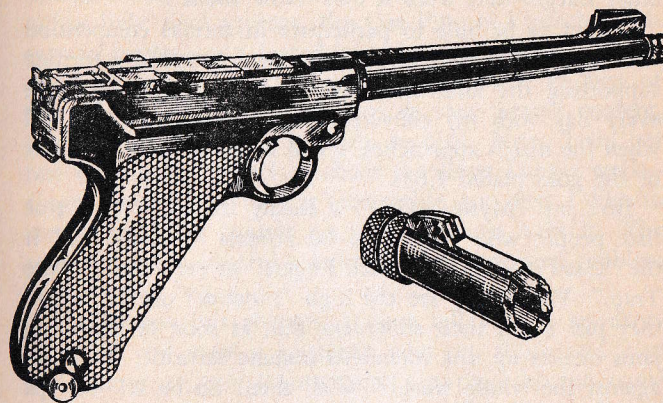


Illustration No. 5

LUEGER 7.65—Conversion into .22 cal. Factory handle. Note special breech-block and junction of centrefire with rimfire barrel. Frontsight of centrefire-gun is now out of the way. The sights for the conversion are adjustable for both windage and elevation. Insert shows gun with Whitex-frontsight.

has been replaced by a rim-fire-block. A .22 rifled tube was stuck through the 7.65 barrel. Theoretically, it should be possible to fire either rimfire .22s or centrefire 7.65s by exchanging breechblocks, with or without the .22 tube.

The conversion I have *does* work, but it does not work ideally. (I wish I were a mechanic. I would show you fellows something!) The firing pin travel is too long, the blow too weak and the trigger too sloppy and indistinct. But each shot that *does* go out shows remarkable accuracy. I don't dare enter the conversion in Time and Rapid fire competition because I never know beforehand whether it will shoot "fully automatic" or just "jam."

A simple mechanical problem—Here I wrestle with my thoughts and ideas and hundreds of clever technical guys are worrying about where their next Rolls Royce is going to come from.

I *want* that ideal conversion, damn you! And all the other Lueger nuts want it too. How about it?

I want to be able to participate in serious competition with my 7.65 Lueger, but I don't want to spend a fortune supporting the ammunition hounds. I want to practice every day with my conversion on cheap .22 shells and when the match approaches, I will be ready to blow a box of the gold plated 7.65s.

Isn't my "Mystery Gun" a beauty though? It is true that people who profess to be friends of mine, call it the "Gas-Pipe" or the "Buck Rogers" or even the "Mouse Trap." When they see the high "nineties" on the target, they just shrug their shoulders, but, as soon as the thing jams or acts up, the comments become sarcastic. Is it "I" against the whole world? Well then: So be it! I'll get that damn thing to work yet and all the sneerers can go to hades!

I know that I am, basically, right in my demand for a conversion and I know that, after this book gets around a bit, things will start to move.

Let me dwell a little on the performance of the insert-tube, in slow fire. The long sighting radius is an advantage. The converted gun holds rather well, although it shares the common fault of most Automatics in that it is somewhat muzzle light. That is mostly caused by an unnecessarily heavy magazine. (Another cause to shake one's head at the thoughtlessness of the designing engineers. I am sure that if the designing were supervised by "shooters," our present day guns would be much more satisfactory. And that makes me ask a pertinent—or impertinent if you will—question: How many experienced shooters are there to be found among the designing en-

gineers, in any one gun factory? Aaaaah—no answer, what? Am I getting old, crabbing all the time? Oh no, fellows! Others before me, better men, have pleaded and cajoled—It's ever the old, old story—)

With the trigger function so adjusted that there is a smooth "Take-Up," a distinct point of resistance and a rather light final squeeze, the Gas Pipe is a peach. It is easy to master—and just think what could be done with the 7.65 gun if the .22 cartridge conversion permits of fine results—You could practice to your heart's content, grow onto the gun, its grip, its squeeze. Now, I am not just talking for myself: I shoot the large Lueger well—always have—It is such a remarkable gun that I like to see all my good friends get similar results with it. The answer is the successful solution to the conversion problem—And so to bed.

Ere I close this chapter, I must tell you of an experience. I *did* meet a gunsmith who can think and plan and whose meat is "Automatics"; a chap by the name of Hyde, a German expert over in Brooklyn. Friend George, after being told of my ideas, looked at the thing—a few handshakes and the Lueger fell apart in the manner so puzzling to the uninitiated. At first, George seemed stumped—I tell you, he actually sweat blood—However, his thickheadedness would not admit defeat, especially after I told him that nobody else could do a thing with my idea. I left him alone for a few days. He had a tough job on his hands—and we knew it. First off, we had agreed that the action should, necessarily, be confined to one type of ammunition. In view of the fact that as much recoil as possible was needed, I settled on a certain High Speed L. R. cartridge. I also had in mind to use "Trombone Oil" for the slide so as to diminish any trouble on that score. When George rang up after a few days, he informed me simply that the thing works. I inquired breathlessly what ammunition he had been using for test-

ing and he came back with "Any ammunition, ordinary or high speed, mixed or alone" and that the slide was riding dry, without any oil. You can imagine how quickly I hied me there. It was as he said. No ticklish picking of special ammunition or of a special lubricant. My troubles were over! I found, however, that the trigger squeeze was not as desired by me. A few more licks and I had what I wanted. We removed the insert barrel and exchanged breechblocks. The gun, practically, worked faultlessly on both blocks. All that was necessary was to raise the firing pin shoulder on the 7.65 block.

The way it is now, the conversion has weak points, naturally. There are things still to be ironed out.

So, you Lueger fanciers, you see, . . . ?

I am vindicated!

The centrefire-to rimfire-conversion.

MAUSER

Somehow, I never cottoned on to the Mauser pistols. Their workmanship is superb, but workmanship alone isn't what makes a pistol. The big 7.63 m/m model is an abomination and can be used effectively only in combination with the holster stock. With the latter arrangement, the accuracy is unexcelled—and I mean it. The cartridge is very powerful and shows, I believe, ballistics not approached by other shells of like calibre. However, in conjunction with the holster stock, the gun is practically a carbine and we shall therefore not waste many more words on this monster.

Used without holster stock, the gun punishes the hand fiercely and one needs iron nerves for continuous shooting—positively not the gun for sewing circles. The grip looks ridiculously like a blackjack and is out of all proportion with the heavy machinery. In short, the big Mauser is an unlovely, ungainly piece of apparatus and I hold no brief for it.

The .32 Mauser (7.65 m/m) way of thinking, inferior to should happen to own one recommend that the same ch .32 Colt, although adding to prove the already impaired ap modernized, the .32 Mauser valuable as a defense gun should show good results at M

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WAL

(A tale of stone and heads

I now take you, my Reader Up yonder steps—They are one finds on war-memorials—the pinnacle where stands t out of breath as we reach t the imposing portal—The w We blink into its cold shado Sterile pillars. Invitingly f pressive, oppressive silence.

This, my friends, is "WA preserves that which is magn

Will you follow me? No I must go in! I clamp my first step—Row upon row and smooth to the touch. T blasphemously through the put foot before foot, carefu if stalking. Through the ov light fall on the rotunda—T of greyish, polished stone.