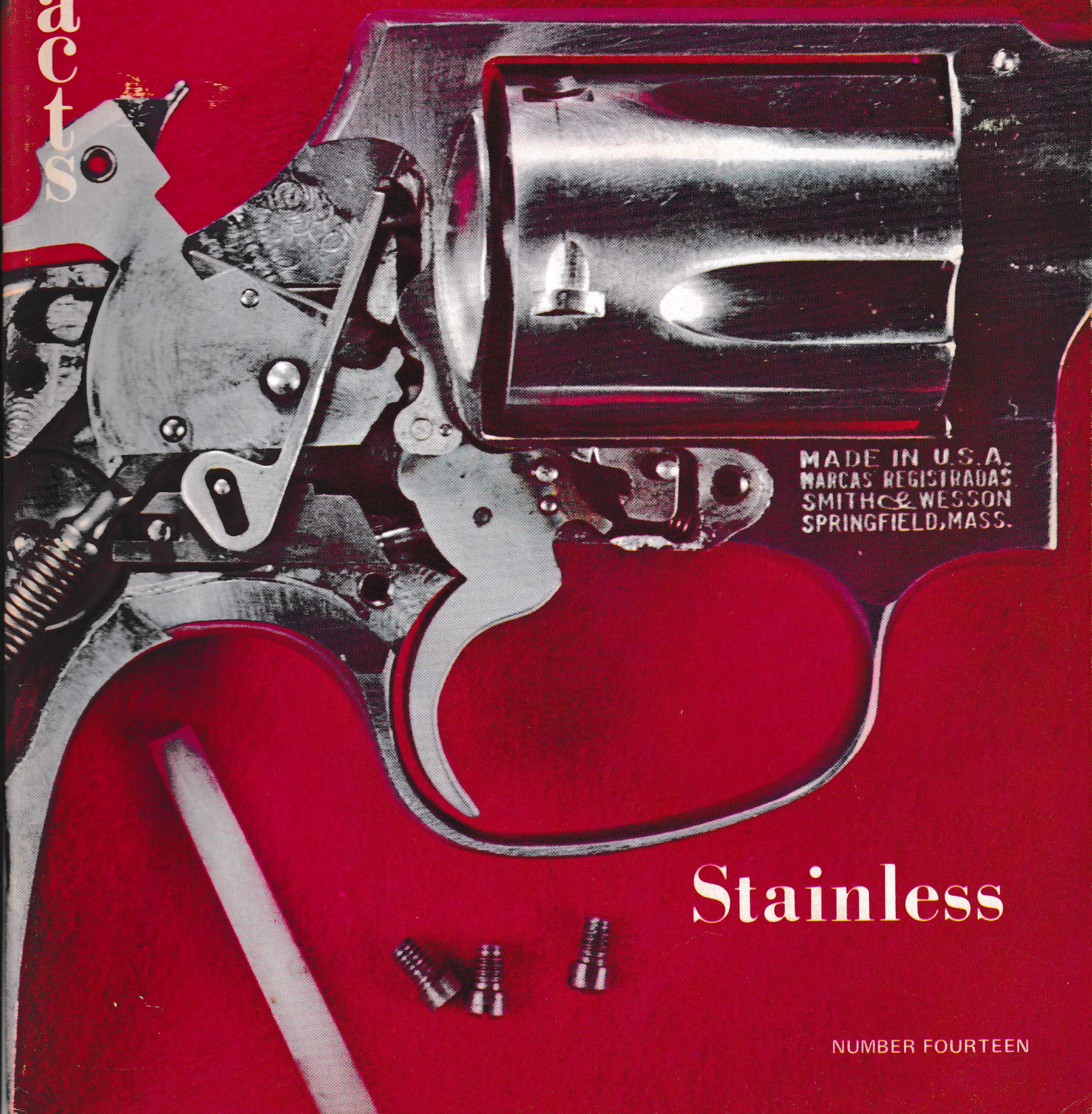


75¢ MARCH 1970 PDC

Gun
facts

Gunfacts

THE MAGAZINE FOR SERIOUS STUDENTS OF THE GUN



MADE IN U.S.A.
MARCAS REGISTRADAS
SMITH & WESSON
SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Stainless

NUMBER FOURTEEN

Gunfacts

THE MAGAZINE FOR SERIOUS STUDENTS OF THE GUN

Published eight times a year by Hazard Publications, Inc.,
Fred Davis Jr., President

Volume 3, Number 2

March-April, 1970

Table of Contents

3	Editorial	.....
6	Cast That Throat To See It	..... Ken Glanzer
10	The New Winchesters	..... Fred Davis, Jr.
12	Make A Winchester 52 Sporter	..... Jim Carmichel
16	A Real 80-Yard Duck Load Lives!	..... Francis E. Sell
20	Gunfacts Checks: The Astra Constable	..... Jan Stevenson
24	Part II, Smoothbores Should Be Smooth	..... Francis E. Sell
27	Frankly Spoken	..... Frank Marshall Jr.
28	The New Remingtons	..... Ken Warner
30	The Children of the 30-06	..... G. O. Ashley
35	The Webley R.I.C.: A Big-Little Six-Gun	..... George C. Nonte Jr.
37	Make A Takedown Mauser: Part II	..... C. S. Lanham
44	About Gun Books	..... Larry S. Sterett
51	COVER STORY: Stainless Is Practical	..... Harry Archer
54	First Look: Survival Knife	..... Ken Warner
55	A Stainless Colt	..... Staff
56	The Parabellum Story, Part V: The Impractical Luger	..... Jan Stevenson

COVER PHOTO: This month's cover shows a brush-finished Model 60 Smith & Wesson with its pants down, so to speak. This marvelous little gun offers one big problem: There aren't enough made. We explore that statement beginning on page 51. The remaining objects include a screwdriver, some Arkansas stones and a set of Herret's Ace grips for the M60. Photo on 4x5 Ektachrome by Ken Warner using floodlights.

TYPOGRAPHY: Computer Graphics, McLean, Va.

COVER PRINTING: Prince Lithograph Co., Fairfax, Va.

Hazard Publications, Inc.

MAIL ADDRESS: Box 9335 Arlington, Va. 22209 703-534-0245

President FRED DAVIS, JR.	Vice-President CHARLES S. LANHAM	Vice-Pres. and Publisher KEN WARNER
Business Manager JUDITH K. LANHAM		

Gunfacts Staff

Ken Warner, Editor	Fred Davis, Jr. Technical Editor
Charles S. Lanham, Test Director	

Regular Contributors

John G. Lawson	Jan Stevenson	George C. Nonte, Jr.	
Larry S. Sterett	J. B. Wood	Francis E. Sell	G. O. Ashley

OFFICE: 1141 N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, Va. 22201

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 240 W. Madison St., Waterloo, Wis. 53594. Gunfacts, The Magazine For Serious Students Of The Gun, is published monthly, except bi-monthly during Nov.-Dec., Jan.-Feb., Mar.-Apr. and May-June by Hazard Publications, Inc., 1141 N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, Va., 22201. Printed in the United States of America. Copyright, 1970, by Hazard Publications, Inc., and all rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Waterloo, Wisconsin 53594. The publishers are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos, letters or other material, although due care will be exercised. All material unused will be returned; send stamped and self-addressed envelope. Direct all mailed material to Box 9335, Arlington, Va. 22209. Single copy price is 75¢; single annual subscription (eight issues) is \$6.00. Group and bulk rates are lower. Back issues, \$1 each, ppd. Foreign subscribers other than Canadians add \$1 to above rates. Address changes should be directed to Gunfacts Circulation, Box 9335, Arlington, Va. 22209 and mailing label included. **POSTMASTER:** Send Form 3579 to Box 9335, Arlington, Va. 22209.

the editor says

Last issue we blathered a bit about the British view of capital punishment. Turns out the Parliament knew its own mind and voted the rope out forever—or until they change their minds—as a practical device for the extinction of serious criminals.

So be it, more or less.

The only quibbleable quibble lies in the fact that the British man in the street was reported as opposing—by a wide margin—the elimination of the death penalty. Created quite a hullabaloo about it, matter of fact. But the Parliament went ahead and dealt with the matter according to its own lights.

Oh well, there goes another interesting opportunity. Had they tried another five year plan, this time with a hangman on tap, it might have produced some statistical comparisons worth having.

As this issue closes, we are preparing to attend the NSGA Show in chilly Chicago in February. That means that long before balmy breezes occur in the Windy City, you'll be reading here about gadgets and guns, tools and fixings, gear and foofaraw in our Show Report next issue. We'll call them like we see them, as always.

Oh, this is the place to apologize for something left out of the last issue, and present herein. On page 54, you'll see the Hackmann knife which was listed by error in the January-February issue Table of Contents. Such things happen.

We present in this issue the normal number of the Gunfacts sort of thing, I hope you'll notice. Specifically, I refer to a pair of projects—Charlie Lanham's take-down Mauser conversion and Jim

PART V: THE PARABELLUM STORY

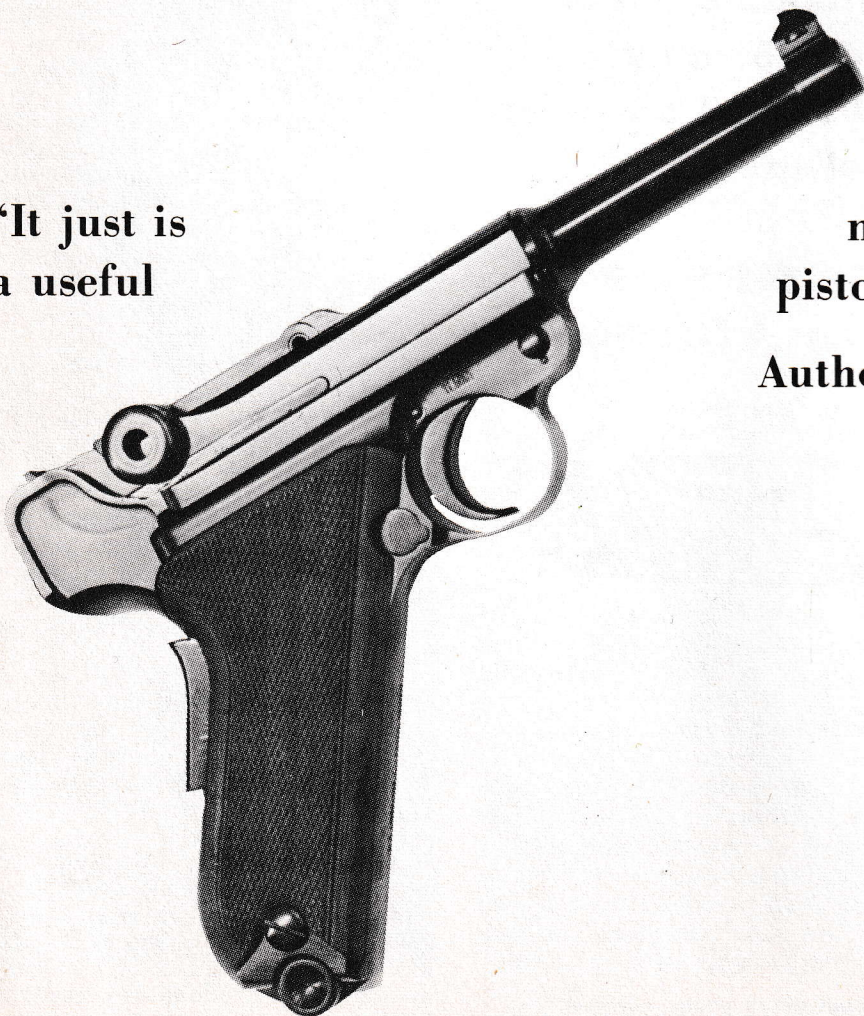
The Parabellum was in continuous production, barring brief and unavoidable interludes, for 42 years. In that time some 2½ million were built, mostly on military order. The gun slugged it out through two World Wars and countless minor ones. It has been used in some official capacity or other, we are told, by roughly 40 different governments. It is still in service in Switzerland, Portugal, and numerous more remote jurisdictions, and has always been a favorite of Swiss

target shooters. Today the Luger is going into production once again, this to our astonishment. Even more surprising, military orders are said to be already on hand.

With a past and a future like this, the Luger would seem some sort of super-gun. In fact, it got by on nothing but sex appeal. Today it's hopelessly outdated, strength being its sole virtue, and on this there's no monopoly. In any practical

A PRACTICAL LOOK AT THE PARABELLUM

"It just is
a useful



not
pistol"

Author

by Jan Stevenson

application, the Luger loses when compared to other designs.

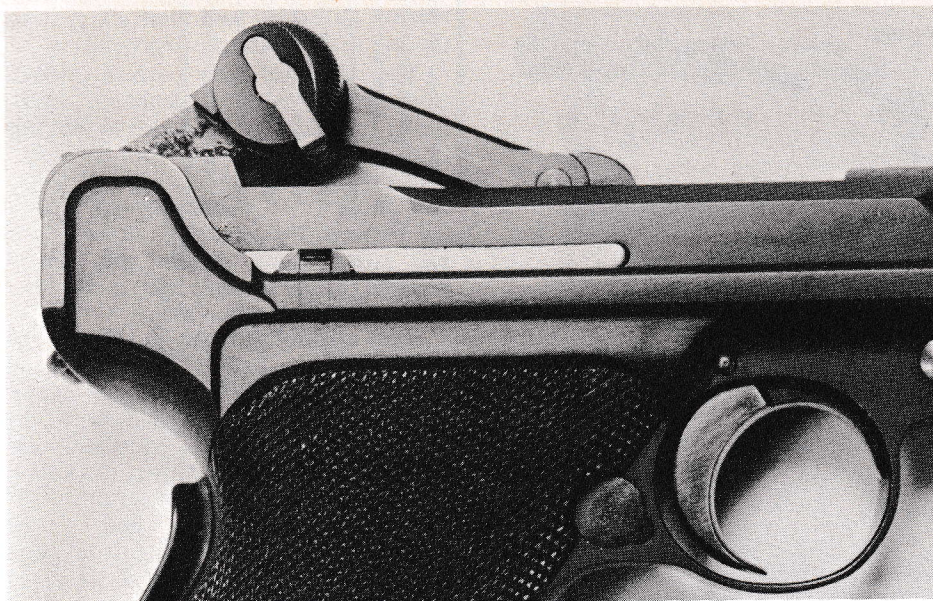
The slim, naked barrel throws the balance point right into the hand exactly where it doesn't belong. To correct this, a bull tube must be custom mounted—an expensive move, and one which destroys the beauty of the gun and ups the weight objectionably as well. Since the barrel is a recoiling unit, there are limits to how much tonnage can be mounted forward before proper functioning is impaired.

The expansive sear-striker engagement surfaces, absolutely vital to safe operation, mean that a crisp trigger pull is impossible. The best that can be hoped for is a fairly smooth European type mush pull, and this is dreadfully hard to achieve. Trigger pressure has four corners to negotiate before reaching the striker—a record approached only by the Browning Hi-Power—and adjusting the pull is a specialist's job. Most gunsmiths prudently refuse to go beyond fiddling with the trigger spring. Doing it right requires special jigs to bend the trigger lever and the sear. With Mauser now using a powdered metal sear, adjustments on this part will be nearly impossible. Even when tuned to the limit, it is *despite* the Luger trigger that Swiss target shooters do good work with the gun.

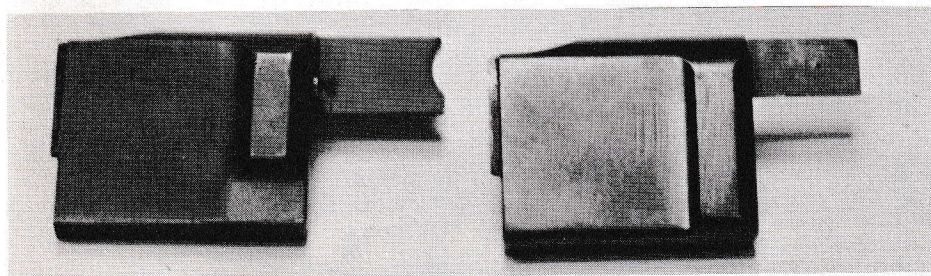
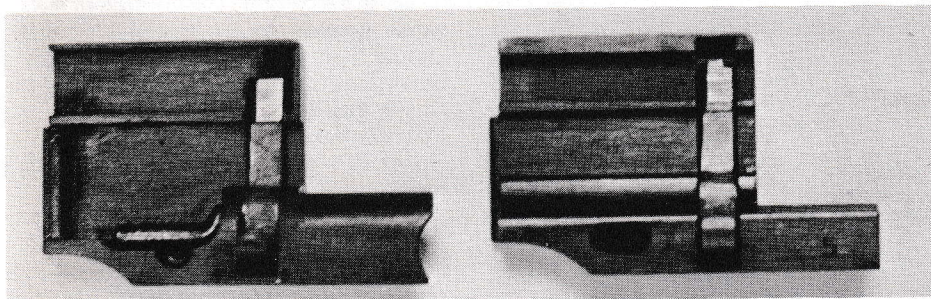
In various *official* tests—notably the U.S. Pistol Trials of 1907—the Luger, though no match for Colt-Browning efforts, has shown itself to be surprisingly reliable. Strange then that I've never found one which could be counted on to get through a box of ammo without a malfunction. A look at the Luger design shows it's inherently jam prone both going and coming.

The barrel-receiver unit recoils 3/8" before the toggle joint is broken upwards by the toggle knobs striking ramp faces on the frame. At the rearmost limits of recoil the feed-ramp portion of the chamber mates with its lower half, which is milled into the frame. This happy union, unfortunately, lasts for but a fleeting instant. As soon as the recoil spring begins to return the breech block assembly to battery, the same spring flings the barrel-receiver unit forward again. The cartridge then must literally chase the chamber for almost half an inch. Sometimes it doesn't catch up. (With guns of Browning design, the barrel doesn't begin to return forward until the fresh round is fully chambered.)

"Stovepiping" occurs when a cartridge case is caught sideways in the ejection port when the bolt or slide returns forward. Many pistols will stovepipe an empty which didn't eject, but the Luger is the only handgun I know of which chronically stovepipes loaded rounds during the feeding phase. In addition to the cartridge-chasing-chamber problem, the sharply canted Luger magazine probably does its share to contribute to the Parabellum's feeding doldrums.



Weaknesses, both for production and in use, led to modifications all through Parabellum history. Above, it took a toggle lock and frame hook to hold the delicate beast closed in early models. To keep trash out of the trigger linkage, the Germans made the intricate sideplate at left below; this cost the Swiss too much, so they sliced straight across (at right). The latter plate is the one to be on the new Parabellum. Eventually, the Germans couldn't stand the gaff, dumped the Luger and went for the P-38 (bottom), a much better combat pistol.



Walther's P-38 was a vast improvement over the Parabellum, and could be built twice as fast. But even after its adoption, Hermann Goering insisted on Lugers for the Luftwaffe.

As the 1907 test panel unambiguously noted, the Luger's recoil spring is nearly relaxed by the time the breechblock is 3/4 way forward. The rest of the distance is covered mostly on inertia, which means that when other pistols would have slammed on shut, the Luger will jam partly open while trying to seat a round in a dirty chamber, or when trying to force a dented cartridge into any sort of chamber.

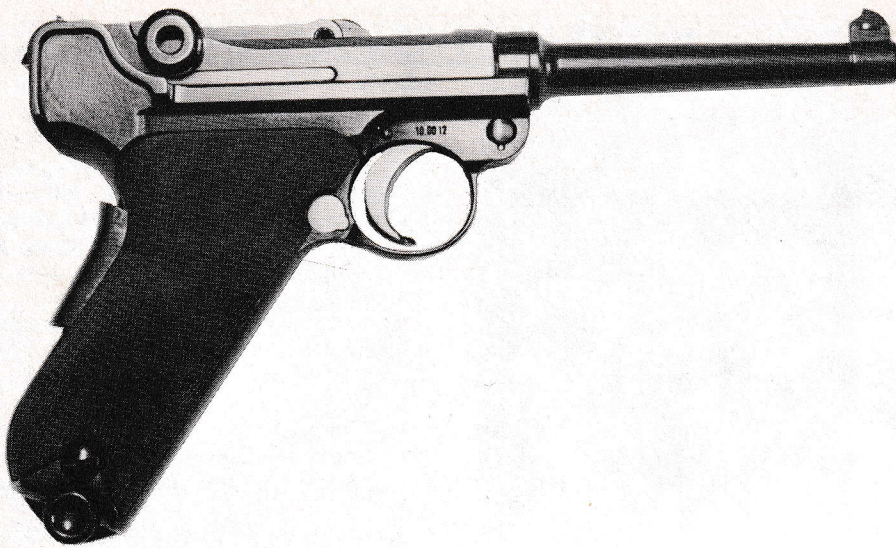
If the gun feeds, ejection is the next problem. The idea here is to fling a 3/8" diameter cartridge case out through a 4/8" ejection port. At best then there is 1/16" clearance on each side of the departing hull. This would be OK had Georg Luger managed not to foul things up.

The ejection port and the extractor are at 12 o'clock, which means the ejector belongs at 6 o'clock. We find it, however, at 4 o'clock. The case then is flung as much leftwards as upwards, and of necessity smashes into the left wall of the receiver. With luck, like a billiard ball, it will make it out the overtight ejection port on the first bounce. Obviously it doesn't always find the exit. That this poolroom routine is in fact what happens is easily proven by a look at an ejected empty. One side of the mouth will be bashed flat, and if the brass is soft you'll be able to see the ejector imprint on the opposite side of the case on the base.

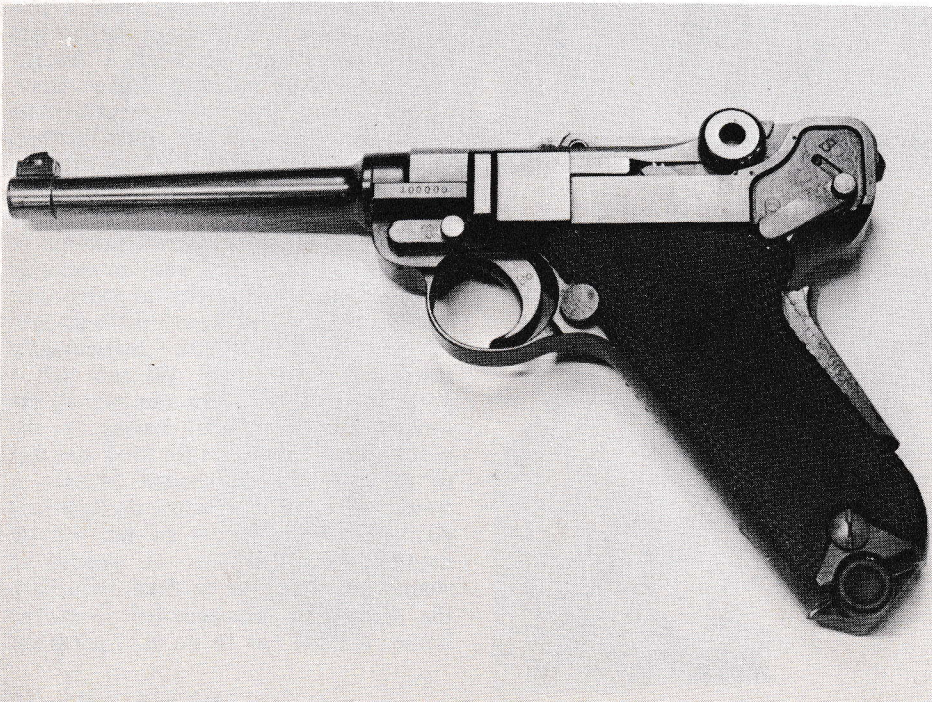
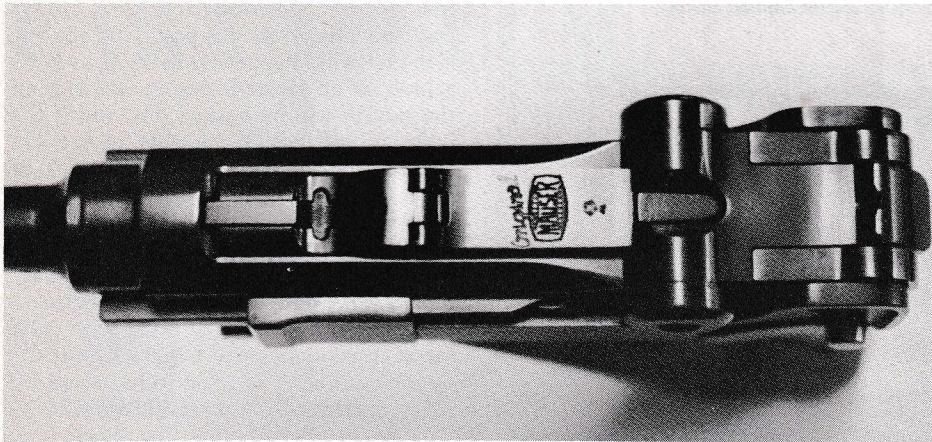
Unsanitary circumstances never suited the fastidious Parabellum, and the gun's extreme susceptibility to incident garbage dictated the design of the almost hermetically sealed holsters that went with it. A bit of mud under the toggles meant the hypochondriac Luger had to be carted off to the sidelines for a scrub down.

I often marvel that the Luger can sometimes make it through a full clip without a jam. Obviously, given a preference, this would be about the last gun I'd choose to carry anywhere I thought my life would be in danger. There's more.

The most important part of the mechanism, the sear, lies along the outside of the receiver and is fully exposed for half its length. This is a hell of a daft place to put such a critical part. The Germans, in an effort to keep trash out of the trigger mechanism, went to extreme pains fitting the sideplate to the frame, and in partitioning off each of its devious internal crannies with meticulously machined levees. This was too rich a route for the Swiss, who ran cuts all the way across the piece, leaving in the process new entryways for mud and dirt to get into the mechanism. Mauser, it seems, will offer this feature on their new gun. A cunning aspect of the outside mounted sear is that it permits a chambered round to be fired even when the receiver is disassembled from the frame. All one has to do is to grasp the



Still, the sex appeal that carried the Luger and now will doubtless carry the Mauser Parabellum on to more glory is quite evident in these photos of a reworked M1929 Swiss Luger, which was quite the crudest basic model. It's too slim forward to holster in any usefully rapid fashion, it doesn't like dirt, it doesn't feed and eject unless everything is just right, it's muzzle-light—the list of negatives is long, but it sure is pretty. It never would have gone back into production except that economic factors changed radically.



receiver amidships, and there she blows—the sear is automatically depressed.

The German army, which viewed casualties in terms of depleting a regiment, never took much notice of this, but it caused German police sufficient embarrassment that Mauser is reported to have fitted 150-300,000 pistols for police use between the wars with an automatic sear safety which obviated this sort of accident. This laudable device will not appear on the new Parabellum.

The original Parabellum had to be rendered unsafe before the breech could be opened, creating a moment of danger while both hands struggled with the mechanism. Georg Luger soon took care of this by simply running the safety cut-out in the sear forward another 3/8". The safety then never had to be disengaged except for firing. The Swiss never got around to making this elementary alteration, and Mauser seems to have forgotten the old lessons. We may be thankful though that the Swiss did pass the grip safety on to Oberndorf. The thumb lever of the P-08, no matter which direction it worked, was awkwardness incarnate to disengage.

As a carry gun, there's never been a worse weapon to try to build a holster around than the Luger. It's hopelessly top heavy, and there's nothing ahead of the trigger guard for the leather to grip save that thin reed of a barrel. Were I a holster maker, I'd turn customers who dared mention the gun away at the door.

The highly touted, sharply angled grip creates another problem. A concealment holster which cants the gun forward as it should will pitch the grip beyond the flex limits of the wrist, making a comfortable and moderately expeditious draw virtually impossible.

Indeed, the only options which look remotely interesting from a practical, shooter's point of view are the high velocity 22 models which will hopefully be forthcoming within two years. Out of the 8"-barreled pistol or the 16"-barreled takedown carbine, this will be fascinating item.

Otherwise, we're left with a gun that's ill balanced, jam prone, hypersensitive to dirt, unsafe in certain respects, virtually impossible to holster properly, with an exposed mechanism, and with a poor trigger pull which can't be corrected. On top of this, the Parabellum is the second most expensive service type pistol, price from factory, in the world, and is pushing SIG's SP47/8 hard for first place. At least when you pay the SIG price you get some highly worthwhile and extremely practical features in return. With the Luger you get an academically interesting piece of machinery, and a handful of history—rather ancient history at that.

For many, that will suffice admirably, but I simply had to put this opinion in the record.

