

The Luger Journal

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CHANGE IN ADVERTISING

IT IS WITH REGRET THAT THE LUGER JOURNAL NOW FINDS IT NECESSARY
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MENT NECESSITATED BY INCREASES IN PRINTING COSTS. YOUR UNDER-
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LUGER COLLECTING

The Luger Journal corresponds with many collectors, naturally most of these are Luger collectors but we do hear frequently from collectors of other weapons as well. In all this correspondence the Luger Journal senses a new trend in collecting and that is the collecting of items pertaining to periods in history rather than to broad areas of collecting such as there used to be. Many of the letters received, for example, include collectors who own and seek Lugers that belonged to the period they collect such as the First World War, or the turn of the century. The Luger Journal has always received letters from American Martial collectors requesting information on the US Ordnance Lugers, now there is an increase in WW1 enthusiasts and a great interest in WW2. Also amongst Luger collectors there is becoming a trend to collect just certain period Lugers or types such as contracts in general, or just Swiss, some collect only commercials, others just militaries etc.

Why these new trends? It is my opinion that these trends are the sign of the times, that Lugers by enjoying such a spectacular increase in value have priced themselves to the point that few collectors even consider having one of each type. Especially the new Luger collectors face the price barrier and by not owning the more expensive types to trade on other more expensive types face the prospect of having to part with a lot of dollars for one important piece and by the time they get enough cash to get another important piece the price may have gone up considerably. These fellows must face the fact that without a lot of cash they must have a goal or get out of Luger collecting altogether.

What kind of goals? Today there are few Luger collectors with over 25 Lugers, most have less, and darn few have even 100 which by the way only represents about half of the major variations. So why go about in frustration trying to pick up every Luger that comes along as a permanent part of ones collection. Naturally buy every Luger that is available if the price is right and you have the cash, they always make good trading pieces, but try and pick within an area and stick to it. Trade the surplus pieces and let the other fellow have a chance, the whole of Luger collecting will benefit.

I have seen truly beautiful collections of Lugers involving less than 10 pieces, such as a friend who collects only Swiss, has 7 or 8, and has them set off with Swiss relics, a Swiss flag, some documents, photos etc. This man is a happy collector and is intensely proud of his collection. Incidentally he once owned 50 Lugers from 1900's to WW2 models and while he had the quantity he had no story so to speak and I know he was frustrated trying to get this one and that one etc.

LUGER COLLECTING CONTINUED

The example given of the man with the Swiss collection is becoming more of the rule than the exception these days, and collectors write about other specialties such as Navies, WW1, WW2, Commercial, American Eagles etc.

What field should one choose? Naturally the choice must depend primarily upon interest but there are areas in Luger collecting where one will find a better selection and have a better chance of seeing his collection increase in value than in other areas. WW1, now 50 years in the past, is a prime example of a fertile field. DWM and Erfurts, etc., of this area are still depressed in value and available in quantity though the quantity of prime near mint pieces is very limited. The selection, by the way, is better than one might think. There are the standard four inch versions of both DWM and Erfurt; the Artilleries; the Navies of both; variations in regimental markings; rigs such as the artillery holster; the scarce Navy holster; the 1908 militaries that in most cases saw action in the First World War; and in the 1908 we have three basic varieties of the DWM, plus the 1908 Erfurt; and one might include the double dates that saw action in the war and the period right after. Try and collect all these in very good or better condition, spice the collection with a flag or two, some spiked helmets, perhaps a few medals of the period, and one will have a collection that will look like a museum.

There are other fertile fields as well, such as WW2 variations; 1920 commercials of which there must be 25 different ones at least; the WW1 post war period in general takes in a very broad field; for the better heeled collector there are the Eagles, and I know of one man who wants only 1902's (at \$500 and up per item this is expensive collecting); the contracts; Stoegers (and I think five Stoegers would make a fine collection in itself); etc. etc.

So give this idea of specializing your own consideration and whether you agree or disagree let us hear from you and tell us if you would like more on this subject.

MILITARIZED COMMERCIALS : BY RAY TAYLORPART TWO

Which are the COMMERCIAL-MILITARIES ? Are they rare? How rare?

First of all it is rumored that the German Officers that fought in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion (around the turn of the century) were armed with 1900 series Lugers. It is not known if this is pure rumour or if it has some basis in fact, but generally the rule to follow is that many German troops carried Lugers, and other pistols, from home, but just because a GI brought it back does not mean it was used in combat. As American troops took a town, in 1945, the civilians were ordered to turn over all their guns and thus many GI's picked up Lugers this way. We are not concerned with these weapons, but with guns actually issued to troops. The original 1908 1st issue Army is the first true example. This is a commercially numbered pistol that was purchased for German troops. These pistols had the high quality finish of the early DWM Lugers, and also a few of the earliest were issued without hold-opens. This was at the direction of the testing board but later hold-opens were ordered for these pistols as well. Very few remain without the hold-opens. One example is #993, no small letter, 1st issue Army. This pistol, probably among the last made without the hold-open, was never returned to the factory for "modernizing". Another 1st issue Army, #559B, is with original hold-open, but was fitted with a sear safety. These pistols were first to have sear safeties, to the best of my knowledge, this being a characteristic of those pistols of later production.

MILITARIZED COMMERCIALS : BY RAY TAYLOR

As mentioned earlier, these pistols were the first to go to the German Army, and were in truth commercials. Sometimes the regimental numbers were added. Luger #993 has : "B 8 R MG 21" which may stand for "8th Bavarian Regiment, Machine Gun Company #21". This is only the author's guess, any information from readers would be appreciated.

Next is an example of an 08 Commercial actually confiscated, reworked, and issued to German troops. This pistol is a 1908 commercial, #69190. It is equipped with a sear safety and commercially numbered and proofed. It also has a magazine safety. The alterations performed on the pistol include removal of the magazine safety, test fired (and here a proof may or may not have been added to the front sight block) and the side plate was renumbered in the military system using the original side plate, still bearing marks in the customary commercial place. No further proofing took place, except for an arsenal (RC) if refinishing took place or grips were replaced. The pistol was then issued to German units.

An example of the third method "rerouting" from intended commercial consumption to military use is serial number 1977X, Mauser Banner, sear safety, all matching, Nazi commercial proofs, dated 1940. The alterations performed before issue include the added chamber date (Note it looks exactly like a military date but is never with only two digits) and the clip was serialized. The only way the pistol can be told from a military is by close examination of the proofs on the receiver and front sight block. This pistol still has the original clip.

These factory re-routes are always Mauser Banners, never S/42's, 42's or byf's. They may be dated from 1936 to 1942. They will have commercial proofing not military alone, and they will probably have a sear safety.

If you own a Mauser Banner examine it closely it may be commercially proofed. Also, any early DWM 1908 model, with a 5 digit serial, but appearing to be a military should be looked at closely. The author is available to help any one who is interested, and will help to the best of my modest ability.

These commercial militaries are definitely rare, but only through correspondence and investigation can we figure out how rare.

The author majored in history at The University of Texas and is now attending Law School. He wishes to thank Dr. Oliver Radkey of the History Department for his encouragement in investigating the history of these fascinating pistols.

RAY TAYLOR, 722 E. Grayson Street, San Antonio, Texas

THE Bo LUGER

For some time the LUGER JOURNAL has been attempting research on the Bo Lugers. Mentioned in print only once, and that case stated that the Bo might be meaning slope or taper from the German word boschung, the LUGER JOURNAL has been encouraged in its efforts by a California collector Carl L. Lough. Carl has sent several pictures of his pieces and we have attempted to draw some conclusions from them and other miscellaneous data. At the very beginning of this article it should be stated we do not have any conclusions at this point and an appeal is made to the readers to please come forward with any information or suggestions. Certainly there is an answer and it is hoped that some collector has it.

CONTINUED:

THE Bo LUGER : CONTINUED

The following Luger, number 5637, dated 1914 on the chamber has the Bo proof on the under part of the barrel above the serial number. The toggle has DWM markings, fine finish and very sharp proofing illustrated below.



This Luger has no hold open, has a 4" barrel and a stock lug. NOTE THE PROOFS ON THE ABOVE LUGER CLOSELY-THE LUGER JOURNAL HAS ITS OWN IDEA WHAT THEY ARE BUT WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM THE READERS BEFORE IT SPECULATES FURTHER.

One note about this Luger, to encourage your own thinking, is that there may be some connection between the Bo marks and the proofing.

Some of the collectors I discussed this particular mark with indicated that it was a WW1 mark, why I don't know, except perhaps because they have seen it on pieces of that era. Others have speculated that it was a Nazi era mark, and that the Luger upon which it was placed was a Nazi rework? All suggestions received so far but facts??

An interesting sidelight and one that I have not yet discussed with Carl is that I found the mark on a very recent purchase-an MP 40 MACHINE PISTOL (NAZI ERA DEWAT) with the number 13 above-and very definitely the same mark as on the Luger. Interesting? Can there be any connection between the Luger and the MP 40? Very unlikely but anybody have any suggestions?

ADVERTISEMENTS

1908 BULGARIAN #1110C, all matching except takedown lever #36 but is proper type. DWM on chamber, Lion in shield on forward toggle, rampant lion on right receiver side. Lanyard loop at bottom of backstrap. Considerable blue wear on barrel, sideplate and straps. About 75% remain overall. Straw color is gun but still a RARE Luger. \$225. Ewell Green, P.O. Box 4013, Montgomery, Ala. (ED. NOTE: MR. GREEN HAS A VERY NICE LIST OF LUGERS FROM TIME TO TIME-SEND HIM A STAMPED ENVELOPE)
FOR SALE CHINESE LUGER, DWM, 30Cal., 4" barrel, #9103, Commercial with Chinese writing on the receiver and back of the frame-translated to mean "CANTON POLICE WEAPON". Grips are very good, 94% blue, matching, (no serial on the barrel) \$275.00. Ralph E. Shattuck, 6661 Castle Drive, Birmingham, Michigan. 48010. (ED NOTE: RALPH HAS AN EXCELLENT LIST, THIS MONTH ALONE IT HAS SOME 28 LUGERS, AND ONLY \$1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.)
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LUGER HOLSTERS

The LUGER JOURNAL is in the process of accumulating information about Luger holsters and needs information for a future article. If you have an unusual holster please let us have a description and a picture if possible. Also if you have unusual holsters for sale they will find a happy home here at the LUGER JOURNAL.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of every LUGER JOURNAL are still available and a few complete sets at \$5.00 (VOLUME ONE), the single issues are 50¢ per issue.

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