

# The Luger Journal

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

AS IF THE LUGER JOURNAL HAS NOT SUFFERED ENOUGH FROM DELAYS IT RECENTLY FELT ANOTHER AND ONE NEARLY DISASTEROUS.

EARLY ONE SATURDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19, 1966, I WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL FOR AN EMERGENCY APPENDECTOMY COMPLICATED BY PERITONITIS AS THE APPENDIX HAD RUPTURED SOME 15 HOURS EARLIER, AND WHILE APPENDECTOMIES ARE USUALLY RELATIVELY SIMPLE PROCEDURES I NEARLY LOST MY LIFE.

IT IS NOW JUST ABOUT ONE MONTH LATER AND I FIND MYSELF WITH A MOUNTAIN OF WORK MADE ALL THE HARDER BY AN ALREADY LATE SCHEDULE, THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS, AND THE PROCESS OF BUYING A NEW HOME. SO FRIENDS AND READERS CONTINUE TO BEAR WITH ME PLEASE BETTER DAYS ARE COMING.

## THE RIFF LUGERS

An interesting side light to the NAZI REWORK story is the following choice information supplied by THOMAS SMITH, a dedicated Luger Collector and a fine gentleman.

It is common knowledge now, as MR. SMITH explains, that when DWM moved to MAUSER at OBERNDORF in 1931 millions of parts as well as the machinery made the move. Information on the REWORKS appeared in print for the first time in the JUNE 1965 issue of THE LUGER JOURNAL. Subsequent issues have added to the story.

Not so commonly known is the fact that there were also approximately 4,000 completed Lugers in the shipment. In this group of pistols there was one batch of 600 that was a CONTRACT order of 1926 from ABD-EL-KRIM, head shaik of the RIFFS. (The Berber tribesman in French Morocco.)

This order had been placed with DWM by OTTO KLEMS, the military advisor for ABD-EL-KRIM. Herr Klems, a Germany mercenary who earlier had deserted the FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION, had taken up residence with the Berbers. KRIM was outstandingly successful in his campaigns to rid North Africa of the French and Spanish and had it not been that for once in the histories of France and Spain these two Countries had combined forces, against the Berbers, KRIM might well have pushed the Europeans out of North Africa.

At any rate the Riffs were beaten and DWM was unable to deliver the order. These finished pieces were among the 4,000 that were shipped to OBERNDORF. OTTO KLEMS, or el-Hadj was he was known to the Berbers, escaped and returned to Germany where he died only recently. He apparently was quite a man and if things had gone differently would have been something of a celebrity.

In the meantime German Chancellor KURT VON SCHLEICHER, who incidentally was sympathetic to the rising Nazi party and who managed to sabotage the WEIMAR REPUBLIC, ordered a quantity of Lugers from Mauser to be delivered to certain "LOYAL" units of the BROWN SHIRTS, THE SA. In 1933 many of these Brown Shirt SA's were acting as police units under General von Schleicher, then head of State.

RIFF LUGERS - CONTINUED

Under the restrictives of THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES the Brown Shirts were reluctant to have the world know much of what was developing in Germany at that time. Accordingly the secret code designation for MAUSER an "S" was developed during this time and continued in one form or another as a MAUSER code for some years thereafter.

To deliver these pistols to the SA Mauser used the unissued Riff contract DWM's plus others that were on hand and completed. The toggle's, of DWM manufacture, were removed and new ones of Mauser production were installed, as were Mauser grips and possible other minor parts as well. It is MR. SMITH'S understanding, and I agree, that none of these reworked Lugers bore the REWORK PROOF (THE MA or MAUSER ARBEITEN PROOF). It is my belief that these Lugers all bore the WaA proof however, and MR. SMITH'S LUGER IS SO MARKED.

TWO RIFF LUGERS

NUMBER 3805 This Luger in 9mm, the property of the author, has no markings on the toggle except for the last two digits of the serial number. This Luger is undated, frequently mistaken for a 1920 commercial (or lunch box special), and has the CROWN OVER N PROOF on the LEFT side of the receiver followed by the four digits of the serial number. The barrel is proofed and numbered in the commercial manner as are most of the parts. Additional numbers appear on the side plate, the sear and on top of the toggle.

On the right hand side of the receiver appears the proof WaA66 under and Eagle. Inside the well appears a small "s" (for MAUSER). On the front grip strap is L.L. 147.

NUMBER 3817 This Luger in 9mm, the property of TOM SMITH, is also a blank toggle Luger except for the last two digits of the serial number at the rear of the toggle. The chamber is undated. This Luger, as does the author's, bears the OBERNDORF PROOF on left side of the receiver but does not have any serial on the receiver as does #3805. Serials show on barrel and frame and the gun is commercially numbered throughout. The WaA66 appears on the right side of the receiver and in the well is an "s".

The clip is original and numbered to the gun, also marked number 1, with a bottom piece of wood. Interestingly the holster, also numbered to the gun, bears the date 1929, has an original numbered to the gun loading tool and bears the same number that appears on the front grip strap "L.M. 235".

IN CONCLUSION

JUST WHAT THE SERIAL NUMBER RANGE OF THESE RIFF LUGERS INCLUDE IS NOT KNOWN TO ME THOUGH I PRESUME THAT THE SERIAL NUMBERS RUN IN CONSECUTIVE ORDER. (NOTE THAT THE TWO EXAMPLES GIVEN ARE ONLY 12 NUMBERS APART)

THE FINISHES OF THESE TWO REPRESENTATIVE PIECES ARE OF THE HIGHEST ORDER AND TYPICAL OF THE BEST OF DWM AS FEW TOOL MARKS ARE EVIDENT. BOTH HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF DWM CONTRACT PIECES AND HAVE ABOUT 97% FINISH, AND MOST OF THE ORIGINAL STRAW COLORING. CERTAINLY THESE "FIRST" NAZI ISSUE LUGERS ARE AMONG THE MORE INTERESTING OF THE NAZI ERA LUGERS AND ARE LESS COMMON THAN THE K DATES OF 1934.

ONE OF THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THESE PIECES IS THE DATE OF 1929 THAT APPEARS ON MR SMITH'S HOLSTER. WAS THIS DATE PUT THERE BY MAUSER? IF SO WHY? CERTAINLY MAUSER DID NOT HAVE THESE LUGERS UNTIL 1931. IF DWM PUT THE DATE ON THE HOLSTER THEN WHY? THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT DATE WAS 1926. DO YOU HAVE ANY ANSWERS?

Bö MARKINGS

The following information is supplied by BERNARD LAFFERTY who obtained this information from a reliable source.

The Bö markings are an indication that the barrel is made of "Böhler Stahl" (Bohler brand Steel) a prestige firm, as Krupp was also.

The number following the Bö is a hardness index and varies from barrel to barrel. I have observed Bö-24; Bö-25; and Bö-28 although Bö-24 seems most common. (MR. LAFFERTY'S OWN OBSERVATION)

Mr. Lafferty further reports that he has observed the Bö mark only on 1913 and 1914 DWM Lugers, has never seen any on Erfurt's nor on earlier or later DWM's. Also, of course, not all 1913 and 1914 DWM's have the mark.

In conclusion THE LUGER JOURNAL must agree with Mr. Lafferty's findings unless other testimony proves other wise at some later date. Following Mr. Lafferty's lead THE LUGER JOURNAL contacted a German steel expert who confirmed the hardness index aspect of these marks and who further stated that the lower the number the harder the steel. This served as a suitable explanation as well for the marks that appear on the author's SCHMEISSER MACHINE PISTOL MP 40 (DEWAT) that has a Bö 13 mark on its barrel. According to this steel expert machine guns and rapid fire weapons required barrels of harder steel than semi-automatic weapons.

It is not known what quantity of Lugers were so equipped with these Bö marked barrels and whether their barrels are any harder than other Luger barrels within the normal limits of variance.

While these markings are interesting they do not in our opinion (THE LUGER JOURNAL) add to the value of Lugers upon which they appear. This is mentioned because THE LUGER JOURNAL has received reports from several collectors of fancy prices asked for Lugers with Bö marks and in some cases pretty fancy stories came with the pistols.

NEXT MONTHS LUGER JOURNAL WILL FEATURE THE START OF A SERIES ON THE SIMSON AND SUHL LUGERS-A WELL KNOWN BUT FREQUENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD LUGER. THE SIMSON LUGERS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE DIFFICULT TO FIND AND MANY COLLECTORS HAVE ASKED FOR DETAILS ON THESE INTERESTING PISTOLS. ALSO FEATURED NEXT MONTH WILL BE THE 1906 9MM COMMERCIAL.

ARTICLES FOR THE FUTURE INCLUDE LUGER HOLSTERS, ACCESSORIES, PRICES CLIPS ETC. IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE ON ANY OF THESE SUBJECTS PLEASE WRITE THE LUGER JOURNAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU.

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