

The Luger Journal

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1906 LUGERS

In 1906 there were several design changes and though they are generally considered to have been minor changes they nevertheless separate Luger production into two eras, the early series and the late models.

In the 1906 variations the slightly longer frame of the early series was shortened, the toggle lock was eliminated and the toggles were machined flush instead of cut back, the extractor was made stronger and to serve as a loading indicator, and the flat laminated recoil spring was changed to a coil type spring. The familiar grip safety was retained, however.

In addition to its minor, but significant, design changes the 1906 Luger firmly established the DWM firm as a financial success. The 1906 series developed the major portion of the foreign market for the Luger as well as the German commercial market. There still were no sales to the German Armed Forces, however, excepting the very limited orders from the Navy. Luger and other DWM representatives had been attempting to sell the German Government since 1900 for they full well knew the value of selling the home market. There is no question that the hesitancy on the part of the German Government to accept the Luger dampened the sales potential of the Luger to other foreign powers such as the United States, Great Britain and France. Through the entire span of its production the Luger remained, practically speaking, the weapon of smaller nations, excepting, of course, Germany who finally adopted the Luger in 1908. It is interesting to consider what greater effect the Luger might have had if the German Government had accepted the P.08 in 1900. It would certainly have given the Luger at least a 10 year edge on the Browning designs that so greatly influenced the hand gun development among the major powers.

There were major contract sales of the 1906 model to Switzerland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Holland, Russia and Brazil. All of the above were basically sales in 7.65mm though several of the named Countries ordered small quantities of pistols in 9mm. In addition major commercial sales were made to Switzerland, the United States, France (including a few test pieces to the French Government) and many small sales to numerous other Countries especially in Latin America. From the collectors standpoint many of these sales have not been officially accepted and there are still some discoveries to be made.

1906 GERMAN COMMERCIALS

Two interesting 1906 variations are the German Commercial in 7.65mm and 9mm. Unlike the commercials sold in the United States and Switzerland the German Commercial have no chamber markings. They are typical, marking wise, of almost all series of German Commercial. Their principle market was sales in Germany and to other nations with whom Germany had close trade agreements.

9mm COMMERCIALS

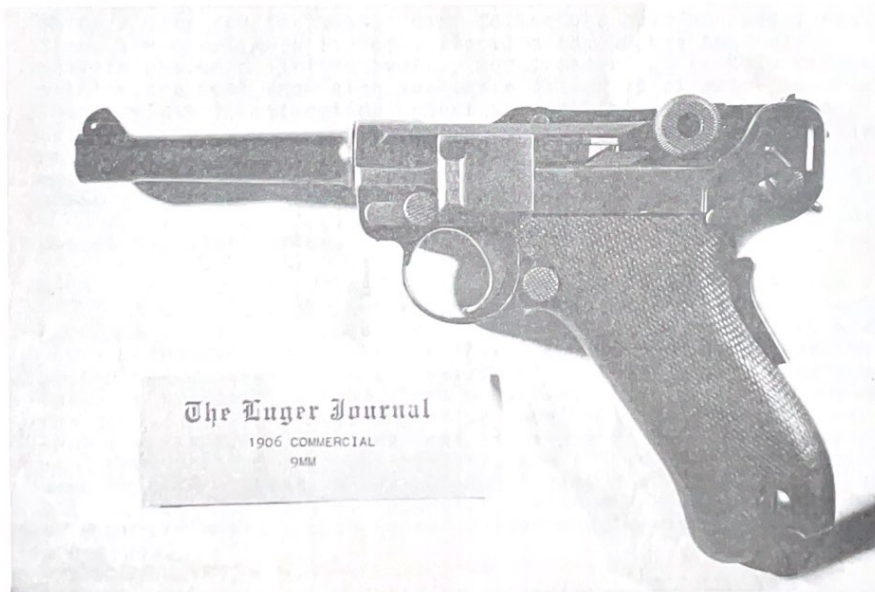
Of the two variations of 1906 German Commercial the 9mm model is somewhat more scarce. Very few were sold in this Country as the American Eagle version was by far the most popular Luger in the United States. In Germany the 9mm type was also known as the 1902/06 commercial. Approximately 5,000 7.65mm types were sold while less than 3,000 9mm were sold indicating a preference for the older, less powerful, cartridge. It may also be that the longer more slender barrel of the 7.65mm version was more attractive than the bulky appearing 9mm variation.

9mm COMMERCIAL

This Luger shows a fair amount of aging and while it definitely was used it was not abused. Most of the original finish remains though most of it is worn thin evenly overall. The blue is worn off completely on some of the high spot areas indicating it was probably kept in a holster. This may be an indication that this was a privately supplied military sidearm carried during World War One, as many were. While I have had several of these 1906 9mm Commercial's I have never had one in anything like mint condition. Most have been about like this one, complete and all matching but with quite a bit of finish wear. This one does have the seldom seen BUG proofs. (SEE PROOFS) The grips match the gun in every way including wear and have several smooth areas. The magazine is unnumbered and unmarked. It obviously matches the rest of the gun.

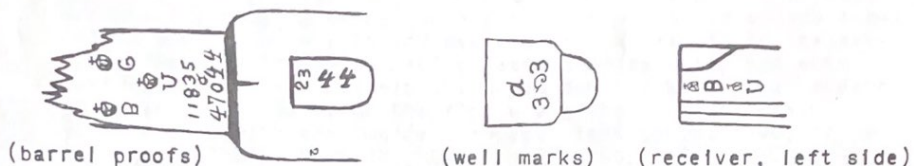
SERIAL NUMBERING

Number 47044 is typical in its numbering system. The full serial number appears on the front of the receiver and across the bottom of the barrel (from side to side). The last two digits of the serial number (44) appear on the bottom of the side plate, locking bolt bottom, back of the rear toggle, left side of the trigger (underneath the side plate) on the grip safety, underneath the middle toggle link and on the left side of the front toggle. Incidentally the blue in these areas is like new except where worn from the recoil action.

**Number 47044**

9mm COMMERCIAL - 1906

The proofs on this piece are interesting-especially on the barrel area. There the three B U G proofs (with crowns) appear along with the full serial number. The bottom of the bbl., as can be seen from the illustration below, is a very heavily marked area.

PROOF
MARKSMILITARY USES

While it may be interesting to speculate on the possible military uses of these commercial Lugers there is no definite information to substantiate such theories. Certainly they were used randomly by German Officers in World War One, and possible World War Two. Germany allowed her officers to supply their own side arms if they wished, much as the United States has done, and it is likely that many such pieces were carried into combat. From the condition of this piece externally as compared with the condition inside one might easily assume that such was the case with this Luger.

COLLECTORS NOTES -- HOW TO BUY AT THE RIGHT PRICE

The hobby of Luger Collecting is fascinating indeed, and rewarding in proportion to the amount of time and effort a collector is able to give it. (I give it a full 36 hours each and every week.)

While a very few fortunate Luger Collectors have no budget restrictions the great majority of collectors add Lugers to their collections on a limited basis. For those of US in this category getting the most from each available dollar is of prime importance. When one starts collecting Lugers the initial reaction is to pick up whatever Lugers are available locally and the price that is paid, either too much, too little or just about right, depends mostly on the shopkeepers personal integrity. Later COLLECTORS NOTES (TRICKS OF THE TRADE) sections will discuss how to select a Luger etc. This section is concerned with helping the collector buy at the right price.

FIRST : When you enter a gun store, shop etc., be casual. Don't go right up to the shopkeeper and ask what Lugers he has unless he knows you to be a Luger collector. Don't tip him off to what you are interested in until he starts to sell-then you have the psychological edge. The shopkeeper already knows that Lugers are valuable and hard to find, that many many collectors are looking for them, especially Lugers in fine condition. You must realize that every shopkeeper knows that if he starts high he can always come down (he can't go up, however) and if you don't buy his Lugers someone else probably will. So don't give him any tipoffs to begin with. (This also applies to dealings with other collectors some of whom are sharp enough to watch even your eyes and facial expressions.)

SECOND : As soon as you enter look around and notice everything you can for when you finally get started talking with the sales people your attention will then be occupied with conversation and you will have little additional opportunity for observing the store and whats in it.

THIRD : Tell the shopkeeper only what you want him to know. Don't brag about your collection, about the deals that you have made, how much you know about Lugers or anything else that will give him an insight into your interests or your WEAKNESSES. Very few shops that I go into ever know that I write THE LUGER JOURNAL or anything else about me or my hobby. If a store keeper tells me he has a 1909 Commercial or something else strange to me I just listen and ask to see what it looks like.

FOURTH : When you have observed the store, some of the prices, perhaps overheard a sales conversation (and this is a good tip-off to whether he wheels and deals or sticks firmly to the asking price) and generally feel at ease then casually ask what automatics he has. Let him think you don't like the new modern stuff and that you favor the fine old pieces. If he doesn't come forward with any Lugers then you might ask, as I do, if he has any WALTHERS, MAUSERS, LUGERS, BERGMANS, P-38S, BROWNING ETC. In this way he doesn't have an opportunity to single out your main interest. Actually I collect all these, in addition to Lugers as most make excellent trading pieces for Lugers anyway, so I single out the best deal in the bunch and confuse the issue as best I can and go after that.

FIFTH : Look over all pieces equally well. Don't spend all your time looking at the Luger. When you have looked over all pieces including the Luger try to determine in your own mind what piece is the best in the lot and if you are interested in any one or more items. At this point it is best not to consider price unless it is completely out of the question. (No amount of bargaining will get a carbine for the price of a 1920 commercial) Consider the variation that it is, its rarity, condition, finish, mechanical quality, and ESPECIALLY is it ALL MATCHING? Naturally for the rare, scarce or very seldom seen Lugers you can forgive some of the blemishes that wouldn't be acceptable in a common variation.

SIXTH : This is very important. Determine in your own mind what you would like to pay for the piece, the most that you will spend, and then ask the price. What ever the answer don't make any comment but ask the price of the others as well.

SEVENTH : If the price is too high tell the shopkeeper you think it is too much, don't be argumentative, but you'll offer \$, (THE FIGURE YOU'D LIKE TO GET IT AT) and then act like you think its a fair offer, he may accept it. If he counter offers something lower than his first price you can continue. He may refuse to lower his price. If he won't work with you and you think the price is too high forget it or pay it. Don't argue it gets nowhere and you may lose a contact for the future. If he says he won't bargain but you suspect he might then ask him what his lowest price is-it might be lower. If the price of your major interest is really too high then select your second choice and go through the whole routine again.

EIGHTH : If the seller made a counter offer to your first offer then give it a very close look. You may see something you missed before and it actually helps with the bargaining. When I look at a piece under these conditions I make it a practice to point out casually, sort of under the breath, the blemishes that I see etc, let him know that I am looking closely. When I have finished with my second look I make a counter offer to his-if I am still interested.

If you think all this routine is so much nonsense you are paying too much for your Lugers and more importantly you are missing some of the fun of Luger trading. Next month we will have more tips. ONE LAST WORD FOR THIS ISSUE IS ALWAYS BE HONEST.

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE WILL FEATURE THE INITIAL ARTICLE ON MAUSER LUGERS INCLUDING THE MAUSER K DATE. IF YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTING INFORMATION PLEASE SEND IT IN. THANKS.