

THE LUGER JOURNAL

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WAS THE LUGER AN EFFECTIVE WEAPON?

Did you ever talk to a rifle man about your Lugers and have him tell you about the ineffectiveness of the pistol, in fact of all small armed hand guns? Many so called weapons experts express sentiments that the handgun was only for the psychological security it offered the carrier, and that it actually was a waste of money to produce and equip troops with hand guns. Of course these "weapons experts" feel the Luger, and the big Mauser too, were the biggest wastes as they were among the most costly. Next time you hear this tell them about this actual incident of the WW1 period.

A German regiment of Reichswehr officers were attacked, one afternoon, by 28,000 Polish troops equipped with full artillery and machine guns. The German troops, completely outnumbered, were outfitted with only the 8" Artillery Luger, most of them with 32 shot snail magazines.

By the time the battle was over half of the Polish troops, 14,000, were dead or wounded. The rest retreated and the German officers with only the Lugers, captured the Polish supplies including the artillery, machine guns and most of the Polish rifles.

These Lugers, part of a German concept for firepower, were designed to be used by machine gun nests and when equipped with 32 shot magazines were truly effective for that time.

1900 SERIES LUGERS

Last months Journal discussed the 1900 American Eagle and illustrated the proper US ordinance marks that identify the Army Lugers.

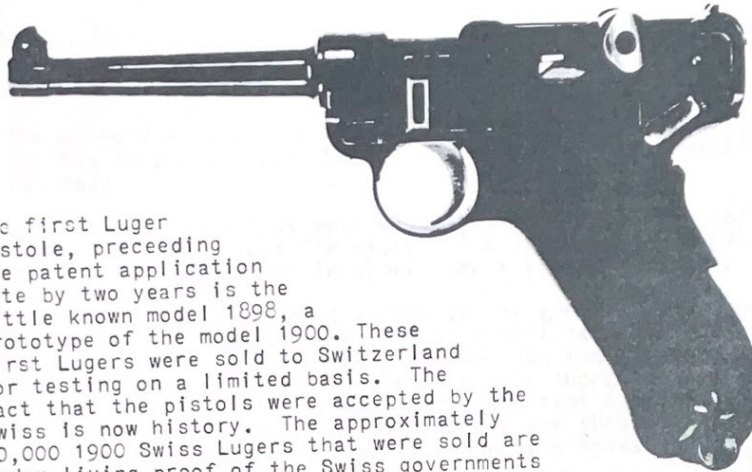
Much correspondence was received this month about early Lugers and so in response to many requests the 1900 series will be discussed here at some length. There are many variations of the 1900, some extremely rare that will not even be mentioned at this time, one notable collector has promised a detailed article on the 1900 Bulgarian, a rare Luger indeed.



The Luger illustrated above is not the first of all Lugers, but is an early 1900 commercial, made for sales within Germany. This is not primarily a military weapon. Rather it is one of the finest, if not the finest commercial handgun ever made. The American Institute of design, 50 years after the pistols first introduction, named the Luger one of the 100 Best designed articles

made in the 1st 50 years of the 20th century. Incidentally the Luger was the only handgun named.

In patent application #4399 dated March 7, 1900, Georg Luger specifies his design to be related "to improvements in breech-loading recoil firearms provided with moveable barrels and toggle actuated or knee-jointed breech blocks, its object being, whilst simplifying the construction of breech-loading recoil firearms of this class, to perfect their operation in such a manner as to enable them fully to meet all reasonable requirements."



1900
COMMERCIAL
LUGER

The first Luger Pistole, preceeding the patent application date by two years is the little known model 1898, a prototype of the model 1900. These first Lugers were sold to Switzerland for testing on a limited basis. The fact that the pistols were accepted by the Swiss is now history. The approximately 10,000 1900 Swiss Lugers that were sold are today living proof of the Swiss governments acceptance as most of the pistols remain, and that is a remarkable tribute to a remarkable people.

The Luger illustrated above is a 1900 Commercial, if the author is able to persuade the owner of a M1898 Luger to send a photograph it will be run in a later issue. (I know a kind gentlemen who has one & I think he will let us have a photograph of his prize when I ask him.)

The model 1900 is a beautiful piece, it weights just 30 ounces, has a barrel length of 4 3/4 inches, and is superbly finished. Few modern pistols are its equal in finish and workmanship.

With the introduction of the pistol came the introduction of the famous DWM trademark, and the name Parabellum.

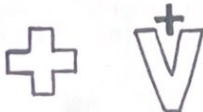
Serial numbers of the 1900's are from 1 to 21,000 (approximately) and are reported to be broken down as follows.

1 to 2,000	1900 Commercial & Swiss Comm.
2,001 to 5,000	1900 Swiss Military
2,001 to 21,000	1900 Commercial, American Eagle & Swiss

SWISS LUGER 1631

This pistole was bought in Switzerland and brought to this Country by my Parents who visited Switzerland, and other Countries, in 1964.

Swiss Lugers are difficult to find any place, and Switzerland is no real exception. However after a reasonable search this beautiful piece was located and is offered as a typical example of the 1900 series. The Swiss are true lovers of fine weapons, and the Luger is or has been until just recently their very favorite. Number 1631 is mint, has the beautiful Swiss Cross in Sunburst that is the identifying mark of the Swiss Luger and of course the Swiss proof illustrated below.



These proofs appear on 1631 on the left side of the receiver, top of the toggle in back of the knobs, back of the frame, and on the left side of the barrel. Some Swiss also have commercial proofs in various places.

Swiss Lugers are identical, in appearance, to other Lugers except for their particular markings.

The Swiss did make other modifications not easily noticed.

1. The Swiss felt the trigger pull was too hard and so they replaced the heavy trigger return spring with a lighter one. The modification is an excellent one and it is strange that the Germans did not follow the Swiss example.
2. The second Swiss modification concerns the rear sight block, and the front sight. #1631 has a wider front blade sight, and a broader cut V in the rear sight than do other models of the 1900 series.

These sight alterations were made while the gun was actually being sighted in and so Swiss Lugers are known for their particular accuracy.

I have heard it said that most Swiss Lugers are or were refinished. I doubt this, and believe the story got started because most Swiss Lugers are so much better in appearance than other models.

Swiss Lugers and others of the 1900 series are like all Lugers in that DWM did not find it necessary to remove tool marks and other manufacturing reminders as do, for example, American gun makers. So if you have a Swiss or other Luger look closely for the sharp corners characteristic of all Lugers, look for tool marks and fine surface scratches that all go in the same direction. If you can see these, and the finish is a deep velvety blue your finish is probably original.

Those Swiss with the reworked rear sights have the fire mark remaining on the V. As this alteration was done before the Lugers were issued or sold if you can see the fire mark you can be sure the finish is original as any reblue would cover it.

1900 CONTINUED

That others were interested in the 1900 Luger is a historical fact. Reportedly the pistole was tested or purchased by Switzerland, The United States (Commercial and Military), Bulgaria, Sweden, Austria, Spain and probably many others. That these are significant collectors items today is without question. I consider it of prime importance that every Luger collection have at least one example of the 1900 series.

COLLECTOR OF THE MONTH

The Luger Journal would like to feature the pieces and interests of a different collector each month. It isn't necessary that the collection described be an advanced one, all collectors are interested in what others are doing and experiencing to advance their hobby.

Through such an article you can reach other collectors, all the readers of the Journal—some 300 to date, tell them what you have, what you need, and what particular field of Luger collecting you may be specializing in.

Tell as much or as little as you wish. If you have an interesting piece share it with others, and if you specify your name will be quoted also your address if you want, and give you an opportunity to hear from other collectors.

If you are interested just send details to the Luger Journal, we'll take care of the rest. Remember this is not a commercial publication, it is written by Luger Collectors, intended only for Luger Collectors and it needs your help.

1900 LUGER DIAGRAM

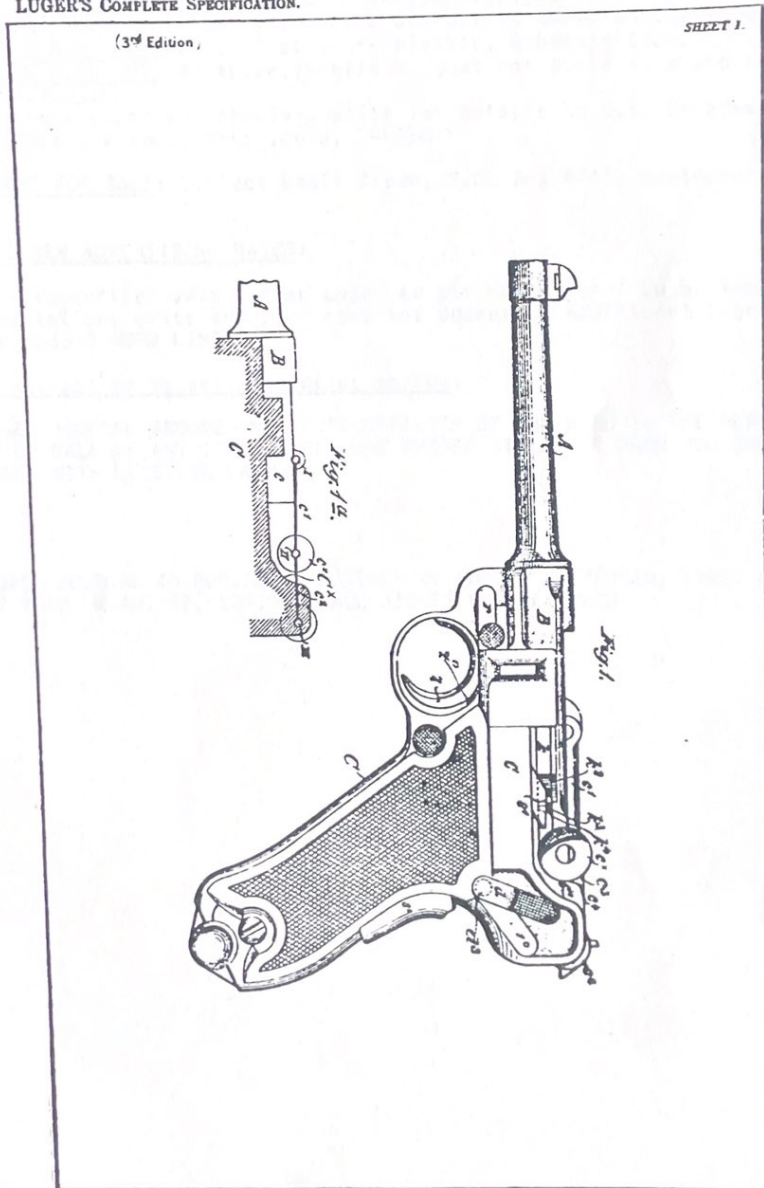
The following is a copy of the original blueprint by George Luger entered with patent application No. 4399, March 7, 1900.

NOTE THE BORCHARDT LIKE GRIPS. Many minor changes were made in the production model including the grips and in the safety lever.

A.D. 1900. MARCH 7. N^o 4399.
LUGER'S COMPLETE SPECIFICATION.

(3rd Edition,

SHEET 1.



1. WANTED: 1906 BULGARIAN, original or altered barrel, TOP PRICE PAID. Charles Kenyon, 1549 Alaska Road, Woodbridge, Va.
2. SWISS LUGERS FOR SALE: The following Swiss Lugers are for sale:
#1273, COMMERCIAL, close to mint, perfect grips, slight holster wear, 98% blue, perfect bore and exceptional straw coloring. \$275.00
#3636, MILITARY, much the same condition as above, slightly more holster wear, 95% blue remaining. \$250. BOTH OF THE ABOVE ARE 1900.
#11217-1906 POLICE, Cross in Shield. Excellent condition, 95% blue, excellent grips, some straw color wear, perfect bore. \$250.00
#6198, AS ABOVE, except the Cross in in sunburst and in general is in a little better condition. 97% straw, grips near perfect with two small skinned places. \$235.00
#25239, BERN 1906/24, A CLASSIC LUGER, 96% blue, excellent straw coloring, excellent grips, bright bore & overall is excellent. \$225.00
#77210 BERN 1929, MINT, grips black plastic, a beauty \$300.00
#75308 BERN 1929, As above, excellent, just not quite as sharp as above. \$265.00
 Also have Luger accessories, write for details to L.B. Devereaux, 1711 Mears Avenue, Cinn., Ohio. 45230
3. LUGERS FOR SALE: Contact Ewell Green, P.O. Box 4013, Montgomery, Ala.

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