

# *My Luger in Spain!*



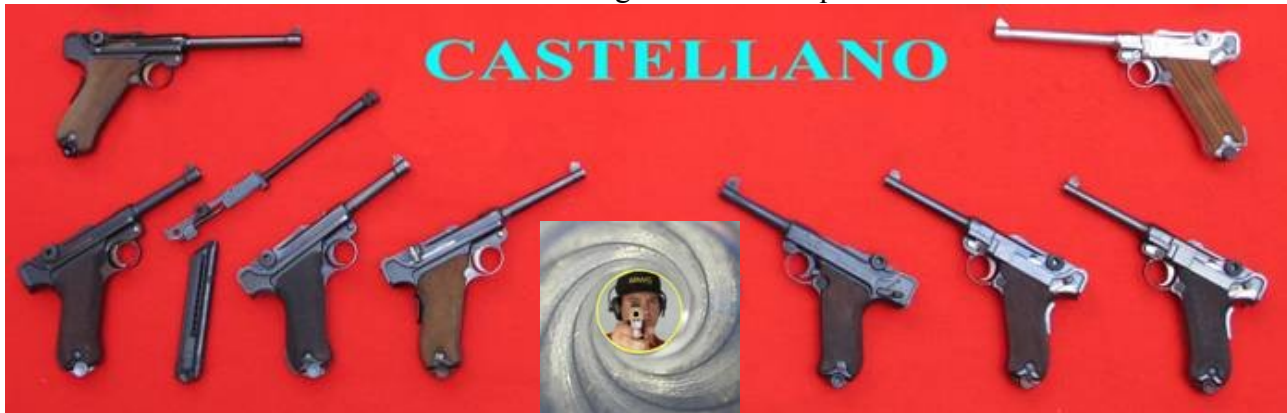
I'm happy to share several personal experiences that demonstrate working with the Luger and our Olympic Shooting activities in Spain. Clearly, on several issues, there are a variety of controversial views. In a short and succinct way in this document, I'm providing easy to understand information accompanied by detailed photos to help answer the endless questions an interested in buying one of these gems can generate.

My love for shooting began several years ago. Here, new fans to the sport focus their attention on certain historic military weapons, despite the number of years since their manufacture. One of the MOST famous (although I would also qualify it as the most infamous and emblematic) is the P-08 Parabellum, better known by all as the Luger. This gun is the successor of the first semi-automatic pistol (the Borchardt) was created and began shipping after 1900, There Are Many variants or models of the Luger.

BORCHARDT (1893) LUGER P-00 (1900) LUGER P-08 (1936)
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All Lugers are NOT equal!



## ATTRACTION

For some people, much of the appeal of the Luger is related to their use by NAZI German soldiers during WW-II. For these people Lugers are even more attractive if they are covered in little eagles on swastikas or the like. In my case, I prefer those built Before WW-II, and particularly those made between 1900 and 1917, as in my opinion these are the most accurate and better built.

I value the perfection and uniqueness of the Luger's mechanism and the high precision devoted to making these weapons. Often Lugers achieve greater precision than modern weapons, including those expensive competition guns designed and built for match accuracy.



I don't want to focus on these different views since different tastes create controversy. All Lugers were built in the past and are historic. In this brief article, I just want to share a little advice to those who have never had access to a Luger, but are curious and considering whether to purchase one.

### **There are two main reasons why we can buy a Luger:**

#### **a) As a collector's item or investment.**

I DO NOT want to delve too much Into this (we'll leave for Another interview), because there are a large variety of models, and this would require discussing too much detail. In a nutshell, if you want to have a Luger's collector value increase each year, your gun has to be in the best possible original condition. Even if somewhat worn, it is important to be all original with all parts matching with the same number. It is difficult to get replacements with matching numbers and also difficult to find the matching numbered magazine. It is surprising how much having the complete original matching holster, magazine and tools can greatly increase the value of a Luger.



## b) For the shooting.

Many shooters get their first Luger because they were curious to examine and fire one of these legendary weapons. The Luger has a mechanism that is no longer made (unlike the similarly famous type 1911). If examining this first Luger's unique design peaked your interest, you'll be pleasantly surprised to find that it's also one of the best firearms ever created for precision shooting.



In Spain, Lugers often play a major role in historic military firearm championships.

While few competitions are held in this mode, it is becoming more attractive between sports shooting groups that don't focus on "Official Competition Modes"

I have several prestigious guns and I've tried firearms that are supposed to be the best of their class in accuracy such as the Infinity Scepter, the SIG P-210 5 P9S HK,. In my personal case, I find it easier to achieve significant shot groups at 25 meters with one hand using some of my Lugers.





However, if the first Luger that comes into your hands is a restored or reblued gun, and has lost it's original dimensions, it may be all full of surprises. It may not group, scattering too much on impact, and may malfunction continually, frustrating its owner. However, although a Luger is reblued or restored, there are ways to get it to work perfectly and group as if it were preserved in its original state.

### **SO TELL ME, WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING A LUGER FOR USE IN OLYMPIC STYLE SHOOTING?**

Many things can affect the value of a Luger, but here we will focus on the points that affect its proper functioning and accuracy:

a) As with all firearms, it is **NECESSARY** to look at the conditions of the rifling of the barrel, however, in the case of Lugers, if the rifling is a bit worn, you can still obtain great accuracy.

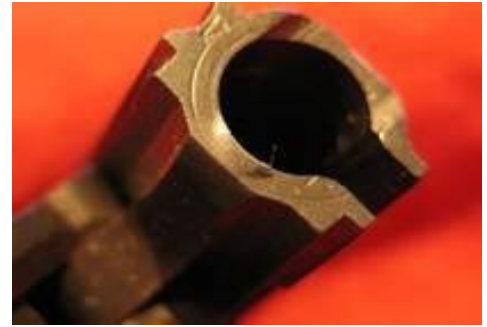


b) We must bear in mind that if you choose to buy a Luger that has some kind of mechanical failure, is relatively easy to find replacements for many defective parts, but remember that government bureaucracies make some pieces very difficult to import. Specifically, these include essential parts like barrel, slide, frame and bolt.

Of these four pieces mentioned, the most vulnerable is the bolt, and the place where it's most often broken is located at the back, just where the firing pin retainer locks into its lugs.

BOLT IN EXCELLENT  
CONDITION

BOLT BURSTING NEAR  
RETAINING LUGS



Breakage at this particular site, is caused by ammunition with unfit primers or a mis-shapen firing pin that produce a hole in the primer. Gases escape through the hole and push the firing pin back “hammer hard”, driving the firing spring retainer through the back of the bolt.

c) Here's another part that is difficult to fit – The Sear. You hve to watch to ensure that the disconnecter (button on the right) is correct and check the sear angle where it contacts the firing pin. This must be set at a nearly 90 degrees angle, If it's worn open to another angle, it can cause dangerous mis-firing.

SEAR ANGLE CUT SHOWING ABUSE AND  
WRONG DISCONNECTOR PLUNGER BUTTON



SEAR IN EXCELLENT CONDITION



d) It's somewhat easier to get a spare firing pin, and it should be examined, especially where it contacts the sear. Look for proper fit and engagement that prevents it from slipping off by itself.

STRIKER HELD WITH WORN OR IMPROPERLY  
FINISHED SEAR



PERFECT STRIKER



Please note, when fitting the barrel, bolt, the sear bar and the firing pin, focus on the details. You can replace other parts relatively inexpensively and, with a little skill, can solve problems yourself.

## MY LUGER JAMMED! WHAT CAN I DO?

a) First, I'll point out, based on my experience) factory made ammunition like Full Metal Jacket 115gr white box 9mm Winchester and Full Metal Jacket Sellier & Bellot .30 Luger works best. .

b) When good quality ammunition is being used, you should know that 50% of the time of jamming is related to the condition of the magazine. Test with alternate brands or types, including modern P-08 magazines (that can be purchased for about 45 euros).



c) Verify that the receiver slide fits the frame smoothly and without unnecessary play. If the area has developed roughness and friction, there are special polishing pastes for firearms such as Stock Sheen & Conditioner Brand by Birchwood Casey. This paste, like a thick white oil, is applied where there are areas with friction. By moving the slide on the frame the paste will polish these areas. When finished, clean the slide and you'll notice a lot smoother movement.

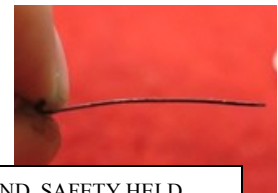
d) Swap the slide with another Luger that functions properly to determine if the fault is on the slide or frame.

\* It might be necessary to replace the mainspring. Also, if it shoots properly with the magazine hold-open catch removed, this could relate to a frame problem.

\* If the receiver fails when you slide it in a properly functioning frame, replace the extractor spring, replace the ejector, or change the firing pin spring.

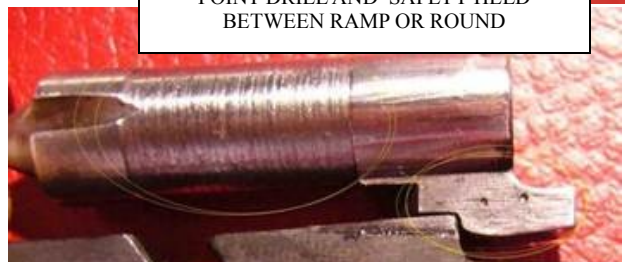
## IF YOUR LUGER MALFUNCTIONS LIKE A MACHINE GUN

a) Replace or re-form the sear spring.



POINT DRILL AND SAFETY HELD  
BETWEEN RAMP OR ROUND

b) Try Another striker and a sear bar.





It's possible that the contact between the edges of the firing pin and sear are at an inappropriate angle.

c) Change the trigger lever that connects the the trigger and sear.

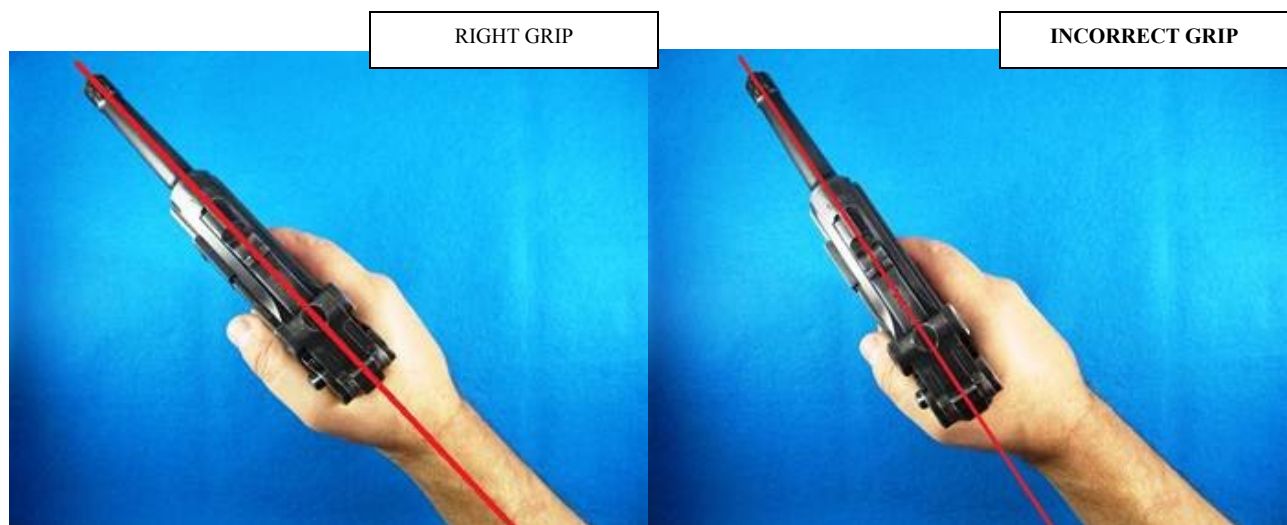


### **MY LUGER JAMMED, BUT ONLY WHEN I SHOOT IT, WHAT HAPPENS?**

This is very unusual, but it happens. The problem and it's solution intrigued me for a long time....

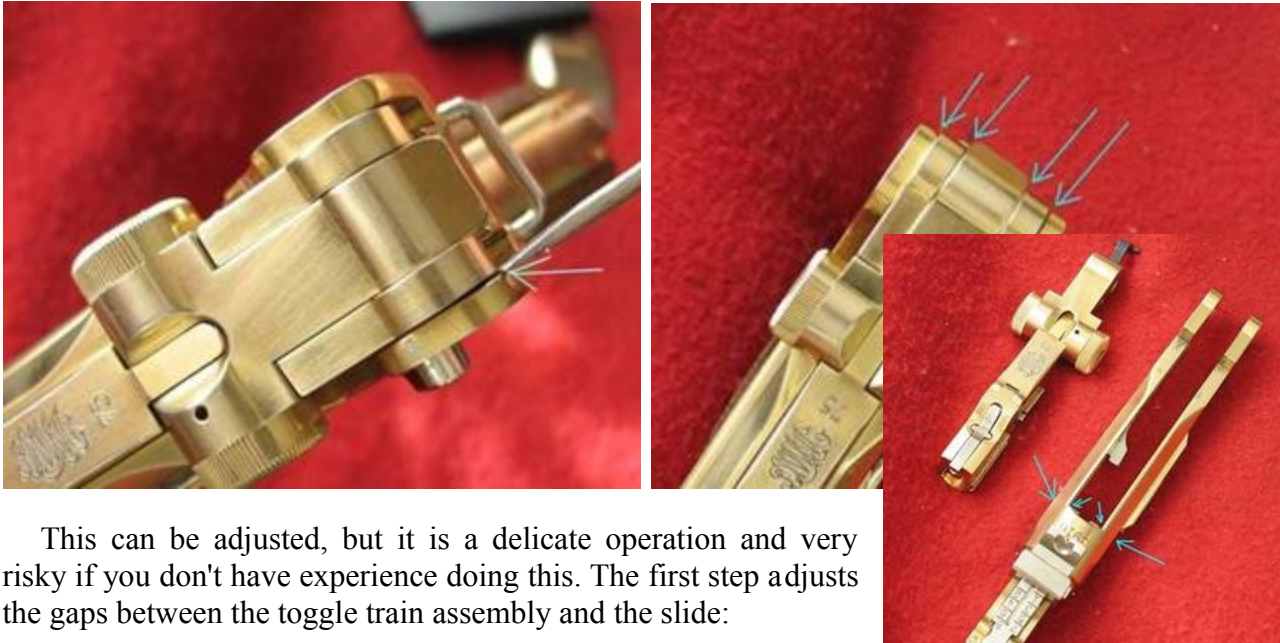
Some Lugers that are in perfect condition will jam in the hands of certain shooters. At first I thought it was the force with which I held it, but this wasn't the conclusive cause. When I observed the form and angle my hold of Luger grips in detail, I eventually realized one thing in common. I was gripping the Luger at an angle to the wrist by holding my forefinger along on the trigger. The butt of the gun was not supported against the palm of my hand, simply being held against the base of the thumb.

I did this test: I took the same hold and angle as I described before. Problems and interruptions began. I held it forward over the thumb, leaving less support on the index finger which moved left and jamed the gun. So if your Luger function fails only for you, adjust the angle of the grip of the gun so that the gun is properly aligned with the wrist.



## MY LUGER DOESN'T FIT PROPERLY TOGETHER, WHAT CAN HAPPEN?

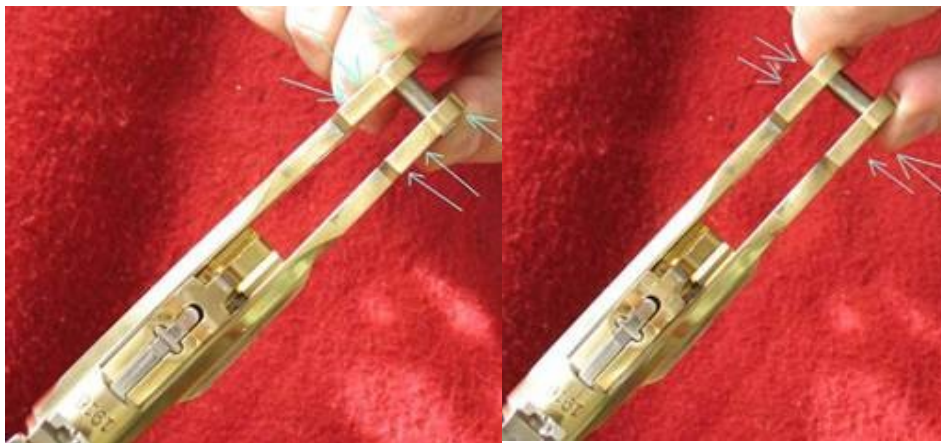
This occurs when you have lost factory fit and calibration of the parts. This is commonly observed when there is no contact in the rear toggle train axle area close to the sides of the slide at the fins of the frame.



This can be adjusted, but it is a delicate operation and very risky if you don't have experience doing this. The first step adjusts the gaps between the toggle train assembly and the slide:

- We take the slide, and remove the toggle train assembly.

It is very important not to force or push the receiver ears because doing so will cause it to bend at the location noted in the inserted photo above. If this is out of balance, it causes serious consequences. It will shoot sideways and eventually crack and break the slide.



- Replace only the breech block / bolt head on the slide and place it in its most forward position.

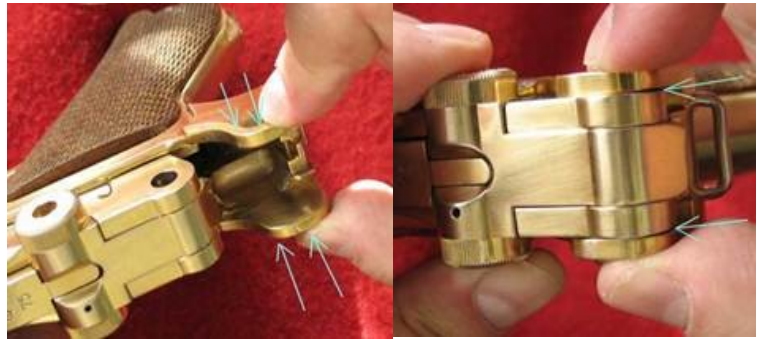
- Then replace the rear axle pin in the receiver ears. With these in place, it's possible to form and tighten / straighten the two receiver ears symmetrically. By using this technique, horizontal accuracy will not be affected.



The photo shows clearly where to press on the receiver ears to close them and how they return to their original position. You have to carefully apply pressure using just enough force to make their separation fit the toggle train exactly. The rear axle pin should slide smoothly with little force needed when it's properly positioned.

After Eliminating the Gaps Between the toggle train and the receiver, next eliminate the gaps between the frame ears and the receiver.

Apply pressure to the frame ears with extreme care, and only compress them a very very small amount, then test the receiver's fit. Repeat this until the space just disappears.



You can judge how correct your adjustments are by observing scuffs in this area caused by the parts rubbing together.

## **MY LUGER IS ALL MATCHING AND I DON'T WANT TO RISK BREAKING PARTS BY FIRING IT**

Well, as it happens, some genuine collector's items appear at our shooting events. Since all parts on these pistols are matching we're concerned about breaking one of these parts since it's difficult to replace one with the same number. So, one thing you can do is buy a set of the most commonly broken parts. When you shoot use the replacement set of parts, and leave the original numbered ones at home. Consider the following replacements: ejector (even though unnumbered), extractor and firing pin. That the ejector of an Erfurt Luger does bears a stamp.



Firing pins were redesigned to reduce the chance of breaking the breech bolt and more safely exhaust gasses through flutes added near the face of the pin.



Important: Be Careful Especially in removing and handling the extractor and ejector. You can break these parts by handling them improperly as much as by firing a Luger. So if you're not sure how you

remove them, leave them alone.

## HOW TO UNLOAD A LUGER?

a) As with all Weapons, before dis-assembly first carefully check that the magazine is empty and ensure that there are no rounds in the chamber.

Be aware that the Luger is a pistol that can shoot without being attached to the frame. There is a huge risk associated with leaving a round in the chamber. Furthermore, do not ever intentionally put round in the chamber without the receiver mounted to the frame. When the toggle train is closed, the firing pin is ready to shoot. With a small pressure on the exposed sear, the receiver acts as if it were a pen gun, firing the round in the chamber. If you tried to fire the unattached receiver, the toggle train joint closure could cause serious hand injury when it opened.



a

**NEVER PRESS THE SEAR WITH A ROUND IN THE CHAMBER, A LUGER RECEIVER CAN BE FIRED WITHOUT BEING ATTACHED TO THE FRAME**

b) Pull the receiver slightly toward the rear and turn the take down lever while holding the Luger as shown in the pictures.



c) Remove the side plate, and allow the slide to move forward.

d) Remove the rear toggle train axle pin from the receiver. pin of the slide. You can then remove the toggle train from the receiver.



e) Remove the firing pin by pushing and turning the firing pin spring retainer with a screwdriver that properly fits the slot. The firing pin, spring and retainer will come out of the breech block.



f) Unscrew the grip retaining screws on the frame and carefully remove the grips, providing access to the mainspring.

g) Insert a thin rod, screwdriver or Allen wrench-through the hole in the end of the mainspring, compress it and catch the hook, releasing it from the recoil lever. Position the hook inside the spring to relieve tension against the frame.



To re-mount the mainspring there is a trick to reduce the amount of work: Position the rod and hook inside the spring. Take the hook at the top of the rod and attach it to the last spring coil. The pre-compressed spring will be easier to place inside the frame. Once in position, the rod can compress the spring and you can more easily attach the hook to the recoil lever..



h) Put a punch into the hole on the spring guide rod. Compress the spring using the punch as a “handle” and move the hook through the hole in the frame and above the bar in the recoil lever. The hook can then catch the recoil lever and you can release the tension being applied to the spring with the punch.

i) To remove the extractor, use a small punch to slide out the extractor retaining pin. When you remove the punch, the extractor pin will push out the extractor.







## **WHERE CAN I GET THE PARTS I NEED?**

It is totally wrong to think that it will be difficult to obtain Luger parts just because the pistol is no longer being made. Nothing is Further from the truth. The Luger is one of the firearms for which it is relatively easy to get simple parts. This will show you some sources.

Remember, as I mentioned above, some essential parts are difficult to obtain. Some governments require special import or authorization permits for these parts, The other parts that you need such as: hammers, a variety of springs, pins, sear, magazines, and grips, should not be a problem to obtain.

EUROPEAN GUNSMITHS (where you can go in English):

- Collector Gun Parts: <http://waffen-teile.de>

- CDS Ehrenreich: <http://s323692152.website-start.de/>

- CMR International: <http://www.cmrfirearms.com/shop/>

- Swissdager: [www.swissdagger.com](http://www.swissdagger.com)

- AAS Sniper: [www.aassniper98.com](http://www.aassniper98.com)

## **IS IT TRUE THAT THE LUGER IS A DELICATE FIREARM THAT BREAKS EASILY? MYTH OR REALITY?**

In my opinion, these stories are unfounded myths: The Luger is not particularly delicate and it is not easily broken.

The only breakage I've seen in Lugers has been derived from the use of incorrect ammunition, improper handling, or the result of supposed improvements.

The barrels are easy to damage if you try to remove them improperly, but it is rare to see one fail on the pistol.

Parts of the toggle train can break if enough dirt accumulates inside, or the recoil spring is jammed, preventing normal movement. Simply keeping these locations clean, eliminates these problems.

Firing pin spring retention can be damaged (either by breaking the spring guide/retainer or the rear of the breech block) when the firing pin punctures the primer. This should never happen if the firing pin is in good condition, and ammunition is properly made with a quality primer that is correctly positioned in the cartridge. Almost all the holes I've seen have been reloaded, so I do not recommend using reloads at all. The greater risk is the type of piston used, and not the quantity of powder. To reduce this risk, always use firing pins that are fluted to release exhaust gases. These were created during WW II, just to lessen the risk of breakage of the breech block.

In some extreme cases, the frame may break in the rear near at the lanyard retaining ring. I have seen this failure with the frequent use of military loaded (NATO) munitions. At Santa Barbara I've seen the use of really heavily loaded ammunition made for submachine guns used in prepared Lugers cause damage. Use a Luger with normal 9mm ammunition. You may break the frame by manipulation of the mainspring. This is caused when some amateur gunsmiths cut back the recoil spring to make it easier to manipulate the action for loading. Also, keep in mind that the spring tension of a 7.65 (.30 Luger caliber) Luger is different from that used for one in 9mm Parabellum. Some people start with an original 7.65 (.30 Luger) caliber Luger, and acquire a complete 9mm Receiver upper. They try and interchange the receivers believing that the frame is the same, but it isn't! The mainspring used in the 9mm P-08 has around 20 or 21 turns, and the mainspring of the P-06 7.65 (.30 Luger caliber) is only 16 or 17 turns.

**Luger P-August 1938 9PB cal Luger P-06 Swiss Shield 7.65 cal Luger P-cal 9PB August 1936**



Always keep this in mind, because if you buy a spare spring, make sure it is for the size that fits your Luger, and keep in mind that if you order the replacement spring in a gun shop in Switzerland, it is likely you will receive one for the 7.65 (.30 Luger caliber) pistol, since Switzerland is dominated by Luger of this caliber.

*As we approach the centennial of the Luger's design, it is surprising that Lugers are still admired among sports shooters, even though their manufacture was discontinued 60 years ago. Given that this is the Volkswagen of pistols, just as we can see some "Beetles" that are transformed from junk to true collectors items active in beach areas. I do not know any other firearm so versatile. It's a model that has created a market in utilizing obsolete parts, with offerings by leading dealers, including Mauser Oberndorf in the 80's and others such as Franconia and Kettner. And even the basic design has been chosen to recreate centenary jewels of precision, by armorers such as Veit Rettinger, who sells refurbished Lugers to which have been added Lotta Walther precision, making them real adjustable precision tools.*

***The Luger was not the best weapon of war, as with dirt it can jam, but in my personal opinion, it lives on as the first firearm that was created with high precision. After all, what high precision optics work properly today if they are not kept clean?***

**AA CASTILIAN**

[For more information, or consult the e-mail address: p08dwm@hotmail.com](mailto:p08dwm@hotmail.com)