

THE LOWDOWN ON GUN & PRODUCT TESTING

SHOOTING

TIMES

NOVEMBER

1971 75¢

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This Month

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J M HOFFMAN
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KIRKWOOD MO 63122



ST:
r's New
Parabellum

Autos in .38
9mm & .380

■ Astra Constable .380

■ Husqvarna .30-06

■ Two Winchester .22s

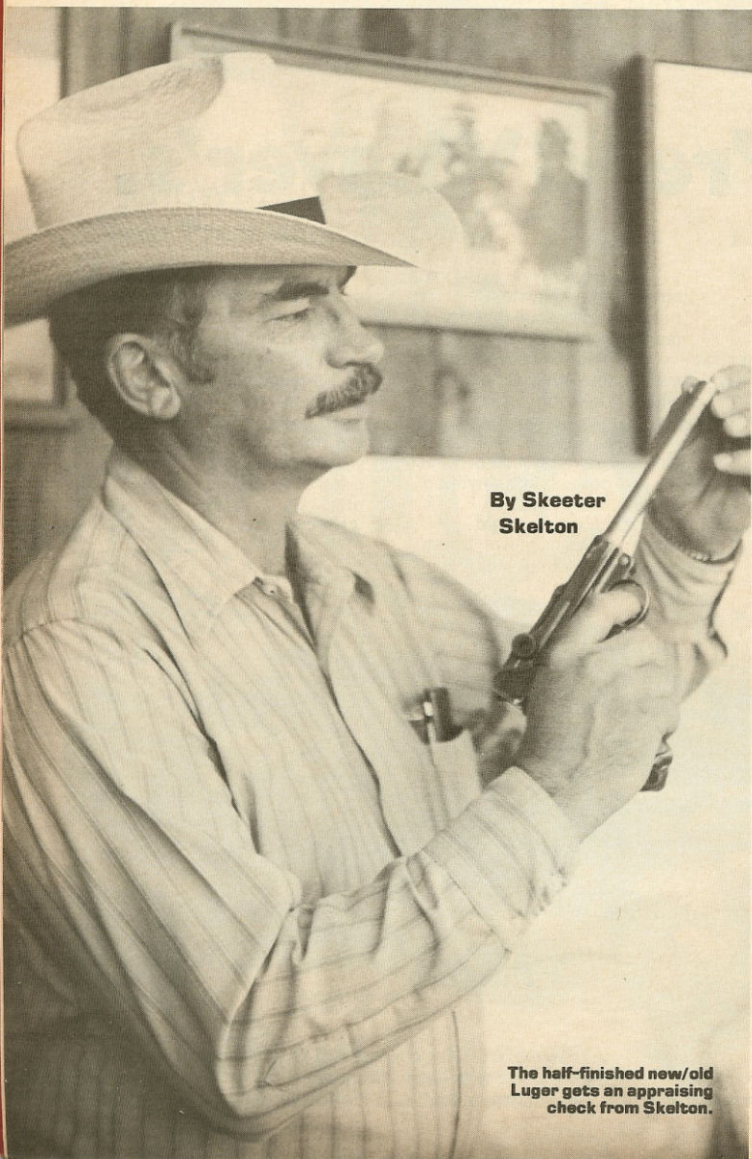
Skeeter Builds A Long Luger

**How To
Load the
.300 Win.
Magnum**

**Sears
Has Ev-
erything
—Guns, Too!**



For the LOVE of a LONG



By Skeeter
Skelton

The half-finished now/old
Luger gets an appraising
check from Skelton.

I have always wanted a long-tubed Luger in good shooting condition, and I was even willing to pay cash money for it, within reason. But no reasonable offers were tendered, so I rebarreled a short, 50-year-old Parabellum. I'm glad I did.

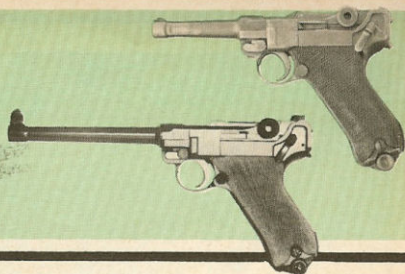
ABOUT FIVE YEARS ago I ran an ad in the *Shooting Times* classified section, offering to pay a good price for an eight-inch Artillery Model Luger in good shooting condition. The want ad ran for several issues, and much as it might embarrass the ST advertising staff I have yet to receive my first reply.

The lack of response would have been the same if I had advertised on the back cover of every shooting and outdoor journal in print. The jasper lucky enough to own a long-barreled *Pistole Parabellum* is going to husband it for his own use, or else sell it for enough to lift the mortgage on the old homestead.

An offer of a "good price" proved uninspiring, and the single Artillery Model that has been offered to me in these last five years was a holster-worn 1914 DWM for which the indifferent owner said he would accept \$300, because I appeared to be a "nice guy." I declined to accept this sharpie's largesse, and kept looking. I wanted a long-tubed Luger for one purpose — to shoot.

When I was young I preferred the 3% and 4-inch versions of the German
SHOOTING TIMES

LONG LUGER



toggle gun, even though I knew the eight-inch Artillery and six-inch Navy models shot better. They didn't seem as handy, and were carried by older people I knew, such as a rural mail carrier who toted his artillery piece on the seat of his Model A Ford and sniped geese and coyotes with it, or an elderly relative who packed an identical old gun in a saddle holster for mountain horseback rides in northern New Mexico.

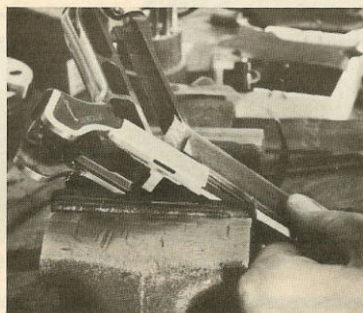
The Luger is inherently an extremely accurate pistol. Fitted with a long barrel it is a tack driver, due to its longer sight radius and the added velocity that aids in long-range shooting. When a friend presented me with a beat up, short-barreled DWM pistol this spring, I decided to quit trying to buy a long Luger. I would make one.

No collector would mourn the conversion of the gift gun. According to my reference books it was one of the most common and least sought after Lugers, a DWM 1920 Commercial model. Originally a 9mm, its barrel had been crudely sleeved to 7.65mm, and a rudimentary front sight filed from the original sight base. The grips had dried and shrunk until they actually fell from the grip frame, and someone had worked on the locking bolt and sideplate with a ball peen hammer.

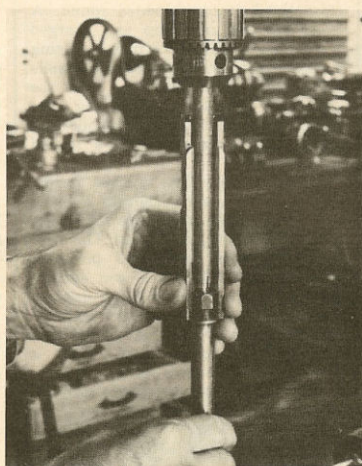
The pistol's redeeming features were that its numbers all matched, it was tight and free from rust or pits, and it had that rarest of Luger virtues, a good, two-lb. trigger pull.

Luger barrels of new manufacture and in various lengths are available now from a variety of sources. Deciding that I would imitate the scarce Navy model with its six-inch tube, I ordered a new 9mm barrel of that length from Sherwood Distributors, Inc. (9470 Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210). Since they also list new Luger magazines and walnut grips at attractive prices, I included new clip and stocks in the order.

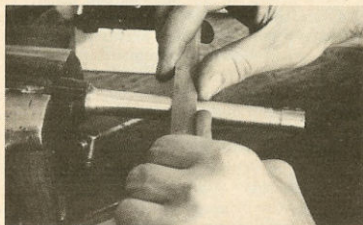
The barrel came in the white, less front sight blade, which was okay, since I wanted to install a Patridge blade instead of the customary German inverted V. It was threaded, chambered, and cut for the extractor, ready for installation and bluing.



Dents and nicks were cleaned up with file.



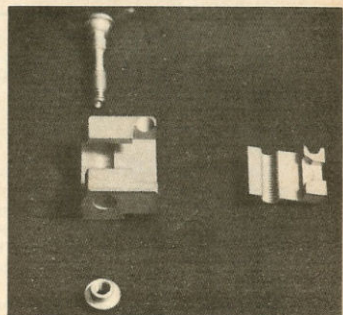
Chamber was polished with brass lap.



Tool marks were drawfiled from new barrel.



Heating with torch restored straw color.



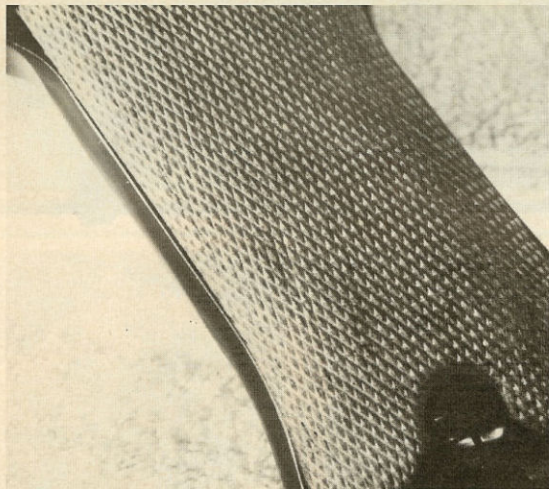
"Skelton style" sight in the white.



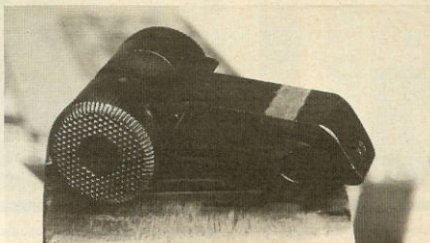
Refreshed gun awaits sight installation.



Rechecked by power checking tool.



Replacement stocks checkered with Miniature Machine tool.



Power grinder cut through hardened toggle "skin."



Milling the sight dovetail slot into rear toggle.

Sherwood's magazine was blued and of the two-piece folded-metal type. It was fitted with a black plastic bottom plug, and was rather stiff in its operation until dismantled and the interior surfaces polished and lubricated, after which it functioned satisfactorily.

The grips were of good quality walnut and fit the old gun well, needing only a few file strokes to set them snugly into place. The checkering on these inexpensive handles was good, but not quite carried out to the ends in a place or two.

Bob Sconce, my pistolsmith amigo who manufactures the MMC adjustable pistol sight (Miniature Machine Co., 212 E. Spruce, Deming, N.M. 88030) was pressed into service to rejuvenate the weary 50-year-old Parabellum.

A few problems were encountered. The first was that the old barrel refused to budge from its moorings, being thoroughly rusted in place. Penetrating oil didn't help, nor did putting the barrel in a lathe and turning off the shoulder up to the receiver. Careful pounding with a hammer against the sides of the barrel while holding the receiver in a vise finally disturbed the rust enough to permit removal.

Prior to installation of the new barrel, the receiver's threads were bead blasted to get them thoroughly clean. Turned up to its fullest, the new tube failed to index by a hair, so .003 inch was turned off its shoulder and it slipped into its proper place.

The chamber seemed slightly tight, and it took some force on the toggle to

close the bolt on a loaded round. A brass lap was made up and charged with 400-grit silicon carbide, utilizing a drill press to polish the chamber walls and remove about .001 inch from the chamber's shoulder, increasing the headspace by that amount and allowing the bolt to close freely on a loaded cartridge.

Although smoothly finished inside, the Sherwood barrel showed a great many tool marks on its exterior. These were removed by draw filing. The complete gun was then hand polished, finishing with 500-grit silicon carbide paper. A high gloss not being desired, the pistol was given an even textured eggshell finish by blasting it with .004-inch diameter glass beads under a pressure of 40 pounds per square inch.

I talked over the rear sight proposition with Sconce. The fixed rear sight of the standard Luger is integral with the rear toggle link, leaving the only possible sight adjustment a lateral one accomplished by tapping the front sight blade to one side or the other. Even the rarely seen original Navy Luger's rear sight was a two position job, with elevation increments for 100 and 200 meters, and no windage at all.

The upshot of several evenings of rapping and numerous rough drawings on the backs of odd envelopes was a completely new and streamlined MMC rear sight. This fully adjustable model is quite tiny — a further miniaturization of the original, miniaturized style that has become so popular on such large automatics as the 1911 Colt and

Browning P35.

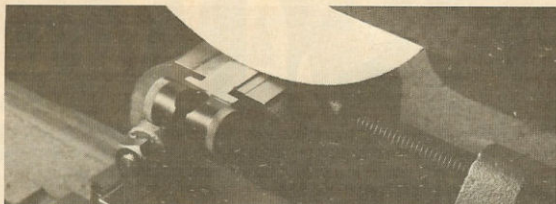
After a lot of sweating with experimental bases, Sconce came up with a complete sight that is one-half-inch wide — exactly the width of the Luger's rear toggle link. My only real contribution to the new sight was to suggest a front and rear sloping cut that streamlines it considerably, and to recommend that its dovetail be made to coincide with the sight slots on the popular Walther PP and PPK pocket automatics. Thus it is adopted to the little Walthers with a bare minimum of fitting, and requires no alteration of their original front blades.

As a reward for my rather obvious suggestions, the new MMC sight will be named the "Skelton Style." Such accolades from the gun industry have been a long time coming!

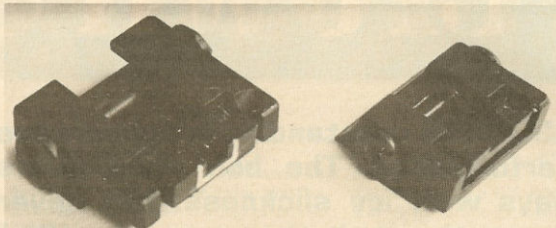
Meshing the sight with the Luger toggle is simple work for a milling machine. A Rockwell C-scale hardness test showed that the heat-treated skin of the toggle could be easily ground off to expose soft metal that could be handled by the milling machine.

The original sight was ground off with a surface grinder, the position for the new dovetail slot scribed, and the hard surface ground away with a hand grinder. The new dovetail was milled, and the tiny new adjustable sight was pressed into place over a coat of Loc-Tite.

The result was an extremely neat, attractive rear sight that conforms to the general shape of the original Navy rear, but is much, much smaller and



The original rear sight was removed with a surface grinder.



Skelton-designed sight (right) compared with regular MMC sight.



Rejuvenated Luger will be used for sport with such modern loads as Super Vel, S&W-Fiocchi, Browning.

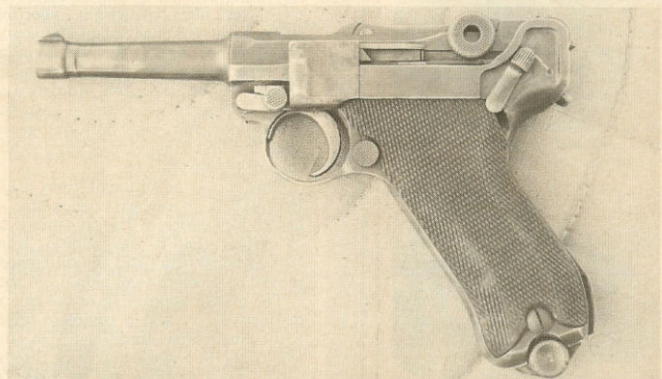
many times more efficient.

The pistol was then blued, except for the trigger, locking bolt, magazine release button, and ejector. These parts were returned to their original straw color by polishing, cleaning with acetone, a trip through the ultrasonic cleaning machine, and then heating to 460 degrees F to produce the yellow oxidation characteristic of this temperature. Rather than using a precisely controlled apparatus, this job was accomplished with Bob's welding torch and an eyeball sensitive to heat color changes.

A new front blade and dovetail were fashioned, the Patridge blade being .10-inch wide to match well with the square notch of the MMC. This blade was left extremely high — about ½ inch — so that it could be filed down as the gun was targeted and be finally set at a height that allowed the rear notch centered for elevation. This permitted maximum adjustment capabilities when different loads and ranges were attempted.

At the range, I shot and Bob filed until the Luger was shooting to the point of aim at 20 yards. It was then returned to the shop, where Bob shaped the blade to the same profile as the original Luger sight and serrated its sloping backside, coloring it with cold blue.

This sighting-in session was a revelation, and proved we were justified in the trouble that had been taken with



Starting results are shown in comparison of original (top) and finished gun.

(Continued on Page 68)

Long Luger

(Continued from Page 33)

the putting together of my new pistol. Several brands of ammunition were fired, including several bullet weights and shapes. The new "Navy" comes close to putting them in the same hole. Standing on my hind legs, holding two-handed, I fired two successive five-shot groups at 200 yards that measured less than 1½ inches, using Finnish military ammunition. This is accuracy that my much-doctored target guns would be hard pressed to equal, and I will emphasize that no accuracy work whatever

has been done on this Luger.

There are feeding problems that we haven't yet had time to overcome. They are not caused by the Sherwood magazine, nor yet the original magazine, as both these clips were tested with another P-08 and worked fine.

The occasional failures to feed that we have experienced are caused by the angle of the feed ramps or by the tension of the recoil spring, both of which will be tinkered with until my new Navy is perking satisfactorily. I have bought recalcitrant Lugers into line before, and this one, too, can be broken to harness.

While the 9mm Parabellum cartridge is a good one, it is not the very best available for defense use, and I seldom apply it to this work.

My long-johned Luger was made up as a sporting pistol. As such, it is exceedingly handsome, superbly accurate, and will soon be whipped into acceptable reliability, considering the variety of new bullets and loads it will be forced to swallow.

Shooting Times, please discontinue my ad. 