

# Austrian Lugers

Dick Herman

**George Luger** was eager to introduce his pistol to Austria, his homeland in 1901. He supplied four (4) Parabellum P.08 pistols and ammunition for demonstration tests in Vienna. Luger also provided fifty of his pistols, free of charge, for Austrian field tests. The Luger P.08 pistol was tested along with the Mannlicher and Roth M7 pistols, both Austrian designs. The final report of the 1902 testing listed numerous issues of concern and problems with the Parabellum pistol. In 1903 all of the remaining Parabellum pistols, holsters, magazines and ammunition were collected and returned to the manufacturer, DWM (a: 667). Subsequently the Parabellum was not utilized for Austrian military service until after the Second World War.

After Germany surrendered in 1945, the French occupied Oberndorf am Neckar and kept the Mauser factory operating producing various pistols. Under French control, P.08s, P.38s and HScs were manufactured for limited commercial sale and, more extensively, for their Colonial Army. The French Occupation P.08 was a mixture of German war surplus and new parts (a: 397). They were originally made for the French Colonial Wars in 1945/1946.

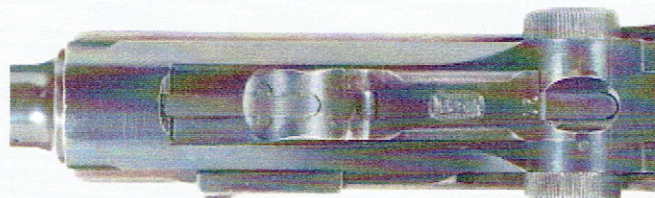
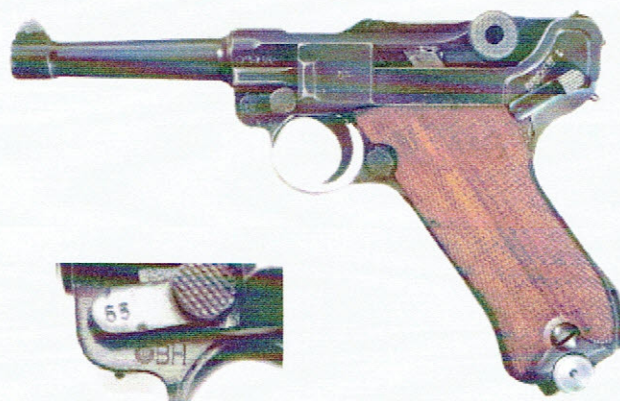
According to Mauser records, the Commercial Banner Lugers manufactured during French Occupation the serial number range was from 1300 to 2600 with no suffix. Initial occupation production of P.08s was in the order of 500 units with a star acceptance mark. Mauser records indicate that the French produced 2,680 P.08s, however, the records indicate that 3,098 P.08s were shipped from June 1945 to April 1946 (a: 795).

Some of the Commercial Mauser Banner Lugers manufactured during French occupation, were 9mm Parabellum with 4" barrels. The receivers were unmarked, with blued finishes, walnut grips and commercial proof marks. These are limited to serial number range from 1300 to 2600 with no suffix (a: 621).

The French also assembled ex-Wehrmacht WWII P.08s for their Colonial Wars (a: 621). The Mauser shipping records imply that approximately 500 to 1300 P.08s may have been made with WWII Wehrmacht components.

Allied Occupation of Austria ended in September of 1955. The Austrian Army (Bundeswehr) was reconstituted in 1955 (a: 397). By 1958 the Allied Occupation Forces returned civil and military control to Austria. The departing occupation forces gave over their weapons to Austria for their police and army (a: 620).

An unquantified number of French Army P.08s were given to Austria around 1958 for use by the Federal Army and Air Force. Some were delivered to the Austrian Bundeswehr (Federal Army). These were stamped with Austrian Eagle & BH property marks (c: 229). French authorities also supplied ex-Wehrmacht WWII P.08s to the Austrian Federal Army and Air Force in 1958.





My collection includes a MAUSER Banner Luger P.08 that was manufactured during the French Occupation. The P.08 is 9mm Parabellum, SN. 2201, with a 4" barrel. The receiver breech is unmarked with the blued finish, walnut grips and matching magazine. The pistol incorporates the stamped markings of a eagle/N proof mark and the Austrian Eagle & BH property marks. The property marks is for the Austrian Bundeswehr (Federal Army). This is a recognized Parabellum variation.

Also in my collection is MAUSER Banner Luger P.08 in 9mm Parabellum, SN. 1761y, with a 4" barrel. The receiver breech is marked 1941. The finish is blued with black plastic grips and black plastic magazine knob. The pistol incorporates a police sear safety. There are no Nazi police or P.08 markings on this pistol.

The breechblock left side incorporates a post war 1946 Mauser commercial rework eagle stamping. (d: Fig. 284). The right side of the receiver and barrel

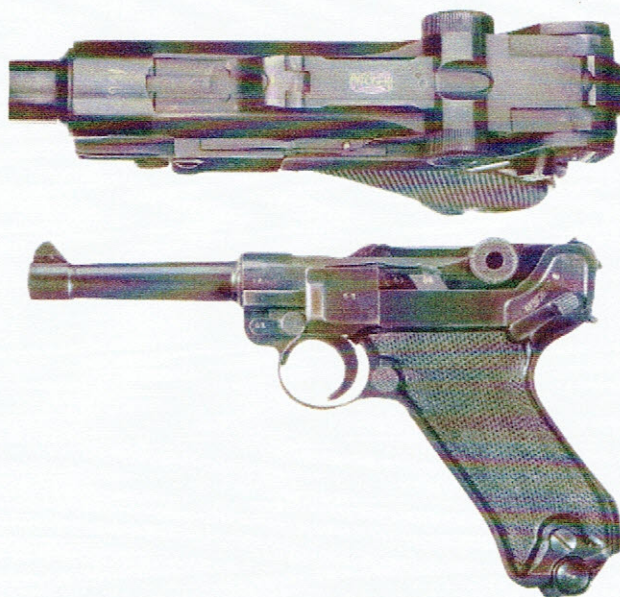


When the German Army stopped buying the P.08 in 1942, Mauser shifted their production to the P.38. Quantities of P.08 components were still in inventory and were available for assembly by the French during their occupation. Mauser records indicate that the P.08 assembly ended in April 1946 with the shipment of 3,098 units (a: 618).

These seem to be a very small number of weapons for an army. However, the French continued producing the P.38 and the HSc until June 1946. According to the Mauser records the French produced 37,950 P.38s and 14,492 HScs (a: 795). Many examples of the French HSc and P.38 were imported into the United States in the 1960s.

incorporate Vienna Austria proof markings. There are Vienna Austria proof test eagles (2) and markings "NPv/1044.60" on the right side of the barrel & receiver. These indicate Nitro Proofed/Vienna tested in 1960 (e: 2403). Purchasing and supply of the P.08 for the German Wehrmacht (Army) ended in 1942. However there are blocks of serial numbers for Mauser Commercial Lugers (Banner) variations with the two digit dates of 41 or 42 ranges 600y-1100y and 8126y-9194y (b: 220). These are late WWII serial number ranges that straddle this pistols number.

The French authorities supplied reworked or new Mauser Banner P.08s to the new Austrian military. This P.08 was assembled from Mauser surplus parts or was an undelivered pistol during the French Mauser Occupation in 1945/1946. While it does not have the Bundesheer property mark, this Parabellum was subsequently given to the reconstituted Austrian government. Perhaps this P.08 was used by the Austrian Air Force.



## Further Reading

Key (Reference: Page)

1. "Borchardt & Luger Automatic Pistols" by Joachim Gortz & Dr. Geoffrey Sturgess
2. "Third Reich Lugers" by Also in Jan Stills
3. "The Luger Story" by John Walters
4. "World of Luger" by Sam Costanza
5. Austrian Proof Marks