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Subject: Draft from Norm
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Mike.... The following came from Norm and I think will be the FORWARD in the book. My thought at this point is that it will be followed by our comparison of #33 & #51.

Wanted to run it by you for your thoughts and comments.

"The Luger automatic pistol was introduced at the beginning of the last century and was an immediate success. It was the first automatic pistol to be adopted for military use, Switzerland in 1900, the German Navy in 1904, and the German Army in 1908. The militaries of many other countries also chose the Luger and it has been called, with good reason, "The International pistol".

The Luger was an immediate hit with gun enthusiasts and collectors as well. It was much admired for its futuristic appearance, the precision of its workmanship and its accuracy. None more so than the Navy model with its 15 cm (6 inch) barrel and long sight radius. Its long distance accuracy could be further enhanced with the addition of its accessory wood stock. As so often happens, success breeds imitations and anyone thinking of collecting Navy Lugers needs to be warned they are venturing into dangerous waters. I should know, the first two Navies I bought turned out to be fakes.

The rarest variation is the 1904 model with only between 100 and 150 produced. It was basically a test model for carrying trials. This was followed in 1906 by wide spread distribution which continued until the end of the war in November 1918. In all just over 54,000 Navy Luger of all variation were produced.

"The Navy List" reproduced later in this book lists all known Navy Lugers world wide and is updated annually. The 1904 variation is on the first page and currently lists 37 pistols. The 18 printed in red are known to be fakes. Of the remaining 19, eleven were reported almost 50 years ago before the advent of the internet and digital photography and we must assume that some of these were fake also. Two of the remaining eight, #68 and #69, were fitted with shortened (4 inch) barrels during the Weimar era. #'s 38, 69, and 80 appear from their photos to have been either refinished or have replacement parts. Pistol #61 was a complete and original 1904 Navy but unfortunately it suffered severe rust damage back in 2005 and has since been fitted with a replacement side-plate and trigger although I believe the current owner has saved the original rusted parts.

That leaves us with #33 and #51.

For many years #51 was the gold standard. It was the only known complete and original (except for the grips which appear to be replacements) model 1904. It was the pistol by which all others were judged and was lavishly illustrated in reference books by Jan C. Still, Gortz/Sturgess and others.

I was privileged to be present at the S.O.S. gun show in Louisville, Kentucky in February of 2019 when #33 was shown to a small group of collectors for the first time. Mike Cogswell, the present owner of #51, was kind enough to bring it along so we could have the opportunity of comparing these two historic pistols side by side. Only a fellow collector could appreciate how I felt actually handling these two pistols!

I hope this book will illustrate to the non-collector the importance of these two pistols in the history of gun development in general and the Luger pistol in particular."

Norman Rabinowicz 2020

Be well.... dave

