

COLLINS GUNSMITHING

HOWARD COLLINS

User name PoliceLugers

STRAWING

This is a fast and very simple process. Do not make it complicated. If it is not going smooth, stop, take a break and start again. You cannot mess it up. You may have to start over, especially if you have achieved a color darker than you wish. It just a matter of re-polishing and heat treating again, of course buffing can take a toll on proof marks and serial numbers so you want to be cautious. I learned this process from Harry Jones in his Torrance California shop approx. 35 years ago and have done perhaps 400 or so lugers since then.

On the checkered areas, mag release, take down lever, it may be good enough just too heavy wire brush the checkered areas, I use a wire wheel on my buffing machine. However, I have used a small wire wheel on a Dremel tool and achieved the same degree of cleaning. I polish the small parts with 240 grit polish on the buffing wheel. You do not want to take the surface to a bright chrome finish, as that would not be in pace with factory work, and you want to come close to what was done at that period. Tight hard to get in places can be polished with approx. 360 grit sand paper. You do not need to polish the surfaces that do not show when the gun is assembled, even if the part is already blue or patinaed. It makes for a more professional job if you do, but in areas behind the trigger, this may get tough to get too, also if your ejector has a bit of pitting, you want to polish it out on the area that shows when assembled, but if removing pits on under side is going to make it too thin, stop after outside is done.... Un-seen/un-polished parts will not affect the outcome of the polished areas.

Once polished, I use something like gun scrub too degrease the entire part...the entire part...also degrease the tools you are going to use. I use heavy tweezers too handled the parts once cleaned, and as they come out of the oven. Degrease the part of the tool that will come into contact with the part. Even clean washed hands will leave some oils on the parts so be careful. Oil will mess/gung up the finish. Heat oven to approx. 450* (degrees f), the hotter the oven the darked the color. But a hot oven will also color faster, so watch out. Go to 530* for a darked Krieghoff look 530*, 510* for 1940-43 ejector temper blue.... But just stick with 450* and you most likely will be just fine. Place parts in a small de-greased pie tin in center of oven and stand back...before your eyes it will start turning that magical straw color. Now smaller thinner parts will color faster, take them out as you achieve the color you want...if it is past what you want in color, cool/re-polish and degrease and start over. Heavy thicker parts will take longer. Important here, and this is where Mr. Jones and I differ. Once you got the color, right out of the oven start cooling with oil, any light oil. I use 3in1, but any sewing machine/lite gun oil will work.... Several light drops, don't be cheap on the oil, but no need to have the part swimming in it. Cool down too room temp, wipe excess oil and install. Wow!!!! It is that easy, I have instructed people all over the world. On how to do it, have fun and pride in doing it, and save a buck....