

THE MAUSER MONTHLY
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The newsletter for fans of Mauser rifles - the REAL "Riflemen's Rifle!"
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Contents:

1. Reader's comments
2. Mauser Clones Part 1 - The 1903 Springfield - by WClark1046@aol.com (Ward M. Clark)
3. Accuracy Testing of Surplus Firearms - by dolmen@tiac.net
4. Commercial 6.5X55 ammo - by ebertycb@leland.Stanford.EDU (Christopher B Ebert)
5. Publisher's Comments

Reader's Comments

Readers -

I am curious about bolt differences in 93 and 95 Mauser. Just handled a 95 with what appears to be a 93 type bolt. Checked headspace and found it to be within acceptable limits but advised owner not to fire it until I got expert info. Can anybody out there help? Have had some major accuracy problems with lighter bullets in my 7x57 with 3" groups at 100m. 120gr are all over the paper whereas the 175gr seem to group at 1" or slightly better. The bore is less than perfect but still should do better than that. I'm wondering if there is a correlation between the distance between the chamber and the beginning of the rifling. Seems like those 120 gr bullets would have a pretty good jump to catch the rifling whereas the 175 seem to seat right up to the rifling. The bore appears to be a little worn right at the beginning of the rifling. When I gave the rifle its initial cleaning there were massive amounts of crud in the throat area, mostly lead and copper fouling. Hope others have tried my bore cleaning solution and have had good results. Speaking of results: I should have some loading tips from Aimo and Delbert on the 256 Scheisskopf and the 313/'06 Kamikaze Disruptor, the latter being a 7.7 Jap rechambered -sort of- to 30-06. Good thing those Arisakas are very strongly designed although they are uglier than homemade sin. Have a chance to pick up a Swede carbine CHEAP but it has a rough chamber. Any suggestions for either rechambering for ??? or a source of new bbls? Friend has a 6.5 Dutch/Roumanian in absolutely mint condition but is at a loss for ammo. Can this thing be rechambered or re-barrelled for any common cartridge? I thought it better for him to just leave it alone due to its condition and the fact that it would take some major engineering to make the thing even look like a sporting rifle. Does anybody have any info on LOYOLA dbl. bbl. shotguns? Acquired one with engraving and inlays in 12 ga. Has the most beautiful stock on it that I've ever seen. Don't know what it is worth but the widow was asking \$250. Gave \$450 which I thought was closer to its real value. Comments?? It has occurred to me that we might have a "yay&boo" column for various companies that sell parts and equipment. It might serve to help well-meaning but sloppily run companies to clean up their act, encourage the good ones to continue, and put the hurt on the crooks and junk peddlers. I'd love to do it myself but never have enough spare cash to buy much, and so would be lacking in input. HOWEVER-if the disgruntled (and those who remain grunted) would e-mail their sad or happy tales to me, I would be happy to edit and submit to you for inclusion in the newsletter. Could carry it one step further and e-mail, fax, or snail-mail copies to the interested merchants.

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Mauser Clones Part 1 - The 1903 Springfield
by WClark1046@aol.com (Ward M. Clark)

During the Spanish-American War, the War Department decided that the 1892

ED5VOL1

Krag-Jorgensen rifle and its low-velocity .30-40 cartridge stacked up poorly against the Spaniard's 1893 Mausers firing the 7X57mm round. The Mausers had the advantage of being loaded by stripper clips, allowing a high rate of sustained fire, while the Krag rifle could only be loaded one round at a time. (There was an adapter for the Krag, the Parkhurst & Warren, that allowed the use of stripper clips, but it was not generally issued.)

The design that succeeded the Krag was, of course, the M1903 Springfield. The first '03's fired the caliber .30, model of 1903 cartridge with a 220-grain bullet. Three years later, however, the '03 round was modified slightly, given a slightly shorter neck, a 150-grain bullet and named the Cartridge, Ball, caliber .30, Model of 1906 - and thus was a legend born, although the success of the .30-06 is a story for another time.

The '03 Springfield was not, however, a modified 98 Mauser, as the conventional wisdom states. War Department documents indicate that the designs of the 1903 model was influenced by three other designs. Two of these were the Krag, from which the '03 got its cock-on-opening mechanism and distinctive cocking piece; and the Spanish Mauser, from which came the five-round Mauser-type box magazine, claw extractor and stripper clip feed. Also mentioned in the War Department documents is the "old Mauser", presumed to mean the 1889 Belgian - 1891 Argentine pattern, which had been evaluated by the War Department before. It's difficult to see any design characteristics adapted from the 1889-1891 pattern in the '03 Springfield, but it was mentioned.

What resulted, though, was an action very similar to the 98 Mauser. The final 1903 action had a large, Mauser type claw extractor, a fixed ejector, a two-stage trigger, and a Mauser-style solid box magazine/triggereguard assembly. The bolt stop was combined with a magazine cutoff, however, eliminating the distinctive large flat extractor/bolt stop housing on the left rear of the Mauser receiver. The action cocked on the opening stroke of the action, and the large, knurled cocking piece design of the Krag was retained.

The Model 1903 Short Rifle was the original issue version of the Springfield rifle. The pattern was approved as the "United States Magazine Rifle, Caliber .30, Model of 1903". In 1918, after some troublesome receiver failures, the Springfield Armory and other contract manufacturers began a "double heat treatment" of 1903 receivers. The improved hardening process began about serial number 800,000 at Springfield Armory, and serial number 285,507 at Rock Island Arsenal. Rock Island Arsenal also made some guns with nickel steel receivers, which were marked NS on the receiver ring.

The Model 1903 Mark 1 was designed to use the Pedersen device, an adapter that replaced the bolt assembly and converted the rifle to a semi-automatic firing a small .30 caliber pistol-type cartridge. The Pedersen device used a rather clumsy magazine sticking out of the rifle at an angle to the upper right, while spent cartridge cases were ejected out a small port on the left side of the receiver. The device was intended to allow riflemen to deliver a high volume of fire while "advancing at the walk" across No-Man's Land - a tactic that would be considered suicidal (at least by this former Infantry type) today. The end of WWI ended procurement of the Pedersen device, although Mark 1 rifles remained in service and may be identified by the legend "Mark 1" legend below the "Model 1903" on the receiver ring, and the small ejection port cut in the left side of the receiver.

The Model 1903A1 was a standard 1903 rifle fitted with a modified pistol-grip stock, which replaced the straight wrist Style S stock. The M1903A1 was produced from 1929 through 1942.

The Model 1903A3 was approved and began manufacture in 1942. The 03A3 was designed to speed up production and reduce costs. The straight grip Pattern S stock returned, along with a stamped trigger guard/floorplate. A peep sight mounted on the receiver replaced the barrel mounted rear sight.

ED5VOL1

The Model 1903A4 Sniper Rifle was a 1903A3 fitted with a pistol-grip stock and a 2.5X Telescope M73B1, a militarized Weaver 330C. The M1903A4 was used as a sniper arm into the Vietnam years, although it had been largely replaced by the M1C Garand and the M70 Winchester by the late Forties.

Several civilian versions of the 1903 pattern were produced. The Model 1903 National Match was made specifically for military style match shooting, and was available through the Director of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM.) The Model 1903 "Match Springfield" was a 1903 National Match model with a heavy barrel, barrel blocks for optical sights, and a headless cocking piece. From 1924 to 1938, Springfield produced the Model 1903 NRA Sporter, which was a National Match grade rifle with a half-stock (what we would now call a "Sporter" stock, a Lyman receiver sight, and a barrel turned down to a smaller profile. Production of these rifles stopped in 1938 after complaints from sporting gun manufacturers about the U.S. Government armory producing sporting rifles. The final version was the Model 1903 Style T, similar to the NRA Sporter but with the Match Springfield's heavy barrel and scope blocks.

The Springfield actions have long been popular with custom rifle makers as well. Col. Townsend Whelen carried a custom 1903 Springfield on many hunts, as did President Theodore Roosevelt.

Upon examination, the 1903 Springfield's relation to the Mauser is obvious. The rifles' reputation for accuracy is well-documented as well. It has been said that of bolt-action military rifles, the Mauser was the best hunting rifle, the Springfield the best target rifle, and the Lee-Enfield the best battle rifle (due to a smooth, fast action, short bolt throw and 10-round magazine.) Many National Match marksmen would agree.

Next month - Nambu!

Accuracy Testing of Surplus Firearms - by dolmen@tiac.net

Just some quick, general comments on my weekend preliminary accuracy testing on several mil surplus firearms: Swedish M96, Carl Gustafs dated 1919; Swedish M38, Husqvarna dated 1941; Mosin-Nagant, Tula Arsenal, 1939; Mauser-Vergueiro M1904, Portuguese military, DWM mfg, converted by Portugal from 6.5mm to 8x57mm and redesignated M904-M39.

Each of these rifles was selected because they have excellent-new bores and thus have some potential for at least average military accuracy. The two Swedes are essentially "unissued";

Ammo: 6.5x55 Swedish mil FMJ, 140 gr., non-corrosive, as sold by SOG -at \$80/200rds inc. S&H - somewhat expensive IMO; this ammo is not reloadable, at least not w/boxer primers. It is excellent appearing ammo with headstamp "87" which I assume is the date of mfg.

7.62x54R eastern European mfg. Not sure what country, apparently Slavic (Bulgarian?) per packaging, w/headstamp on each "21" and "78"; this is Light Ball, with silver tip and steel cases.

8x57mm, German mfg (probably East). steel case, greenish laquer, headstamp "04" and "61"; package markings: "7,92-mm-Patr.SmE mit St-Hulse, 38/2, 21,3,61".

All firing done at measured 100 yards, prone position; the M96 Swede did not drive tacks at this session! Five shot groups spread laterally 6" across target. Suspected bedding problem; checked screws for normal tightness. Appeared all OK.

The M38 Swede carbine delivered average military rifle groups of about 3", centered slightly low in 8 & 9 rings.

ED5VOL1

The old Russian warhorse made a commendable showing, equalling the M38 in group size and location.

The big surprise of the day came at the end, when I tried out a M1904 Mauser-Vergueiro which, externally, has seen some better days, but has a like new bore. Believe this or not, but the first 5-shot group went into one ragged 1-1/2" hole at the lower left of the target, almost off the paper. The second one was almost as good, with one possible flyer. I could not continue as it was starting to rain. Once inside, I noted for the first time that the front sight, normally partially concealed by the large sight protector on the Vergueiro, was positioned well to the right, accounting for the point of impact to the left. An SKS sight tool worked fine in adjusting the windage dead center. My next extended session may be something for the books! I may have a \$75 MOA clunker here!! I wish it were a M98, but can't expect everything. Now I'll have to check SGN to see if that Commie East German 8mm ammo is still available!

Comments welcome, especially how to correct the nice M96.

Commercial 6.5X55 ammo - by ebertcb@leland.Stanford.EDU (Christopher B Ebert)

Here's my list of commercially available 6.5 x 55 ammunition. Please help me to correct any errors, and also to fill in anything I may have missed. I'm particularly interested in ballistic info for the Hornady Light Magnum Round and the S & B 131 gr SP. I've only listed the manufacturers' claims for MV and ME. I realize these are often optimistic and exaggerated, but at least it's comparing 'apples to apples.' Please let me know if there are any other cartridges that I've missed. Any other questions or comments would also be appreciated.

Manufacturer	Bullet Weight & Type	MV(fps)	ME	BBL	Remarks
Federal	140 gr Hi-Shok Soft Point	2600	2100	24"	Federal lit.
	140 gr Nosler Partition	2550	2020	24"	" "
Remington	140 gr Pointed Soft Point Core-Lokt	2550	2021	24"	Remington lit.
Winchester	140 gr Soft Point	2550	2022	24"	Winchester lit.
Norma	139 gr Softp Prot PC	2854	2512	?	Norma lit.
	156 gr Softp Alaska	2644	2419	?	" "
	80 gr FMJ	Need ballistic info			Sold by Old Western Scrounger
Sellier & Bellot	131 gr Soft Point	Need ballistic info			
Hornady	129 gr SP Light Magnum	Need ballistic info			
Swedish Surplus	140 gr FMJ	2625			Is this correct?
Prvi Partisan (imported by Hansen and Century?)	139 gr SP	Need ballistic info			Mentioned in 'Shooting Times', Feb 1992 p. 57
	139 gr FMJ				
PMC	144 gr FMJBT	Need ballistic info		"	"
	139 gr SP				

ED5VOL1

RWS 139 gr SP Need ballistic info " "

Plinking ammo ??? ?? Anyone heard of this?

Publisher's Comments - by WCl ark1046@aol.com (Ward M. Clark)

Thanks to Len and Christopher for the contributiond this for this month's issue!

My first "Mauser clone" article had to be about the 1903 Springfield. I first became aware of the existence of this rifle when I was about 10. I was just developing a serious interest in rifles and riflecraft - my father was a hunter and an artist with a shotgun, but to him a firearm was just another implement. Dad showed me an '03 in a magazine and told me that was what he learned to shoot in the Army.

I read that article at least a hundred times. I had always been fascinated by Dad's stories of his WWII service, and here was a connection to what Dad had experienced. (Although Dad was a navigator in a medium bomber, so the last rifle he handled was in Basic.)

Fast forward a little over twenty years. I was wandering through a small local gun show, and there in a rack sat a sporterized '03. Something seemed odd when I handled the rifle, but for some reason I couldn't put my finger on it until the owner said, "Yeah, I can't give that thing away with that left-handed stock on it." Sure enough, the cheekpiece was on the wrong side - at least for me. I got the rifle for a bargain price; a few hours work with a draw knife, cabinet rasp, and sanding block fixed the problem and I had a nice '03 sporter with a straight Monte-Carlo style stock.

That October I took the Springfield out after antelope in Las Animas County in south east Colorado. I drew a doe tag that year, so a trophy buck wasn't my concern, but I did roll over a nice little eatin' doe on the afternoon of opening day - one shot from the old '03 at about 100 yards.

A month later I had an opportunity to swap the '03 straight across for two NIB Ruger 10-22 rifles - one blued, one stainless. I did the deal, since I had two other .30-06's already and my wife and I had planned to buy a pair of 10-22's in any case. On occasion I wish I still had the '03, but one day I will work my way into owning a 1903 or a 1903 Mark 1 in original trim. That one I won't trade!

- Ward M. Clark
Colorado