

THE MAUSER MONTHLY
 The newsletter for fans of Mauser rifles - the REAL "Riflemen's Rifle!"
 Editor/Publisher - Ward M. Clark, Aurora, Colorado, USA

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Reader's comments

Hi :

A friend of mine, Mauser nut, asked me to run the mystery code by your readers.

He is stumped:

German K-98

8mm - refinished

Mfg. 1940

"243" on top of receiver in front of date.

What does "243" mean?

John (cheyenne@gopher.chem.wayne.edu)

DISCLAIMER: The follow test procedure is not being given as a recommendation for anyone else to practice. I'm only responding to a question. The fact that the M1908 Brazilian contract and the M1912 Chilean contract Mausers are same type of action, does not insure that they will interchange parts. Caliber differences and imprudent conversions by foreign governments, can also lower the safety factors. Even if the swapped parts seem to fit up, it would be advisable to have a gunsmith check the headspace for safety.

While I do not encourage anyone to use my "tie it to a tree and fire it" method, this is what I do when I'm testing an inexpensive piece. This procedure is done only in a place where no one can be injured by flying receiver pieces or other displaced rifle parts. Nor by the projectile leaving the piece as it was intended to do or by any other exiting of metal resulting from a safe firing or from a failure. Once the weapon is secured and pointed into an embankment, the cord is attached to the trigger and I get well down behind a solid shield. After several rounds are touched off and all cases appear to be as they should, only then do I fire the weapon from my shoulder. If I encounter split or swelled cases, or have a problem ejecting same, I shut down the test operation and go to the friendly local gunsmith for a fix. Any time that a case does not look or act right, it is time to get professional help for the piece. Because I fire scores of surplus rifles during the course of a year, I try to avoid the cost of a gunsmith when I can safely do so. I'm aware that one foolish, unsafe incident can have permanent repercussions.

Again, I am not recommending this procedure to anyone else!

Steve Ashe (steven@universe.digex.net)

Having built sporters on the "93 and "95 actions (leaving the original barrels in 7x57), I have never had any problems with "hot" (Ken Waters) 7x57 loads, although I usually keep them "middle of the road." I have been thinking about an article for your newsletter on a recent project where I rebarrelled a shot-out small-ring "98 Yugoslav into an ultra-short "paratrooper carbine" like the little WWII German "98. Only my rifle sports a 7x57 barrel from Gun Parts Corp. (The ones advertised as brand new in the white). After considerable toil over the reference library, a friend and I determined that they had to come from, and I am recollecting

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from memory now (I am at work), the 1903 (09?) Mexican. These are great barrels, mine was packed in the obligatory cosmo, and had two or three tiny rust flecks on the outside. The inside was factory mirror-bright. The barrels are very short and the steps are in the wrong places for almost any usually encountered Mauser stock, but the normal -length carbine stock is easily shortened to the new barrel. The rear sight had needs shimming since the new barrel is of a smaller diameter. After shortening the stock according to illustrations of various paratrooper, I was appalled to find an illustration of an actual Yugoslav paratrooper carbine in that new Mauser book from the publishing house in Wisconsin. They did it in a simpler (but less elegant way).

By the way, here is an idea for you. I have a friend who is a cabinet maker. In their shop they have a duplicating miller/router. I have thought about taking the beat up stock from the Yugoslav, filleting in the rear sight hole in the hand guard, then running it and a nice walnut blank into the duplicator. The addition of an receiver aperture sight, or a scope, would make an unusual, attractive, and very functional little carbine.

Dan Burden (djburden@iastate.edu)

Hi guys,

Does anyone have any first hand experience with the sporterized Mauser 98s currently marketed by Century Arms for \$199 (dealer price)? It comes only in .270 and 30-06.

I have checked out sources and found there is no way I can build one from a 98 action and stay within the \$200 budget.

Please email me your comments. Thanks.

Howard Nguyen (nguyenh@ghg.net)

I went to one to the local gun shows the other day. I was looking for Mausers and may be a new stock of barrel. I had taken a shotgun that I got in a trade and was hoping to trade for something that I could use, The first booth that I passed the person asked if the shotgun was for sale or trade. I had asked what he had to trade and he pointed at a Mauser. This is one way to get my attention, as I like the Mauser over just about any gun. I looked at the gun on a quick glance and saw that it had double set triggers that were not operational. The person that owned the gun had buffed off all the markings. I told him that I would think it over and see him after I looked around. Well as the day went on I could not find a better offer and I talked to the man on my way out and he still wanted to old shotgun I had & since I only had about \$100.00 in the gun I was ready to trade when he said that since I would have to do some work on the triggers he would through in a Russian Mosin-Nagant model 1891 which was a early model. The deal was set and I came home with my (new) Mauser.

Since all markings were off the gun and the serial number was re stamped I set out to see if I could get some info on it. Since the set triggers did not work I tore it apart and cleaned and polished the triggers reassembled and they worked like a champ, all that was wrong was the years of oil had caked. Starting there I found that the trigger design was early Oberndorf M98 used in the sporter. Next is the staggered magazine that is like the one on page 261 of Ludwig Olsons book Mauser bolt action rifles. Next is the butt plate it has the shield of the Mauser on it but they had removed the

interlocking "WM" in the center.
It has a sporter stock and a tapered 30-06 barrel. I head spaced it and is good with good rifling. I may not have made a bad deal since I was planing to make me another 30-06 for hunting.

Keep Your Powder Dry
Richard Cleverger (DIXIE7796)
Richards Smoking Guns

Have any of the readers of Mauser Monthly examined or bought one of the Steyr 98s currently available from SOG or at retail from Big 5 (?) in Calif.? I am interested to know if the .308 version of this short rifle appears to be a replacement bbl., or a re-rifled and re-chambered 7x57 bbl. I have been unable to find one of these to examine locally. My only correspondence on the subject has been with a fellow in Calif. who found them at Big 5. He says they have vg+ all matching 7x57s and mis-match vg .308s. He was unable to tell me if the .308s had new or original bbls. All appear to be Steyr 1929 contract to Columbia short rifles. Any information on this subject would be much appreciated

Mike Berney (berneym@pilot.msu.edu)

Hi Ward,
Just thought that you may want to know that Century has some 1891 and 1909 Argentines in the one hundred dollar range. Andy called me today and I ordered 2 in the 1909 version, 2 in the 1891 version and one in 1891 antique. Steve Ashe (steven@universe.digex.net)

Another Opinion on Pre-98 Mausers
Reproduced from "Rifle Sporting Firearms Journal", March 1997.
Submitted by: James F. Van Valkenburg (jimvanv@postoffice.worldnet.att.net)

(Reader's query)
For years I have been reading about the Mauser 96 not being as strong as the Model 98. I have always blindly accepted this. Now I see Kimber offering the rebarreled 96 in .22-250. I have two 96s, one converted to sporter in the original 6.5x55mm. It's an Oberndorf 1900 vintage. The other is a Gustav made in 1913. I am impressed with these actions. Is there any high-speed .22 I can convert to? Is it only the lack of a third locking lug that causes concern? How does Kimber do it?
B.McG., Lake Havasu City AZ

(RSFJ's response)
The strength - or lack of it - in pre-98 Mausers is full of myths. One common misstatement is that the 96 is only designed to withstand around 45,000 copper units of pressure (CUP). No. The Model 96 was designed to withstand proof loads of much higher pressure, but the original service ammunition was only loaded to approximately 45,000 CUP, mostly because of the limitations of early smokeless powders. In fact, all of the pre-98 Mausers with staggered-round magazines, from the Model 93 to 96, are capable of handling higher-pressure cartridges such as the .308 Winchester and 8x57 Mauser, and have often been rebarreled to those cartridges for military use. (Most other countries load the 8x57 to 50,000+ CUP, unlike the anemic factory stuff produced in North America.)

The absolute strength of any 93-98 Mauser is mostly decided by the steel and heat treatment. A good

pre-World War 1 96 action from Germany or Sweden is made with the best metallurgy of the time and is just as capable of withstanding pressure as a German 98 from the same era. The same could be said of a good 93, 94 or 95 action.

The pre-98 actions weren't designed to handle escaping gas as well as the 98, however, and early ammunition often came apart at the seams, one reason Paul Mauser kept improving his designs. But such highly revered actions as the 1903 Springfield and pre64 Model 70 don't handle escaping gas any better than the 93-96 Mausers (certainly not nearly as well as the 98), and nobody complains about them. The third locking lug on the 98 is designed as back-up in case the front lugs give way, not as additional strength, and some of the earlier actions (notably the Chilean version of the 95) also have a third lug.

A lot of the bad reputation of pre-98 Mausers arose from soft Latin American-made rifles; many developed excess headspace from locking-lug setback, even with standard military ammunition. Some of these stories rubbed off on the Model 96, even though all 96s are of uniformly high quality, both in workmanship and materials. With today's high-quality ammunition and brass, I'd be happy to rebarrel a German or Swedish action in good condition to any factory cartridge that fits the magazine and bolt face. In fact, my own 6.5x55 is a rebarreled German 95 (a Chilean made by Loewe of Berlin). I had the action checked for hardness before rebarreling - it's just as tough as any 98 from the same period - and I regularly use modern, higher-pressure hand loading data and have never had a problem. Headspace is exactly the same as before I fired the first shot, and accuracy is superlative. Any good 96 should be capable of holding the .22250 - or any other suitable modern cartridge - quite handily.

***Editor's note - I think I've stated before that I don't agree with this position... I do find it interesting, though, the disparity of opinion on Mausers. I thought this was a good representation of the other viewpoint... - Ward

Receiver Failure, My Example.

By: Michael F Berney (berneym@pilot.msu.edu)

Recent article about receiver failure prompts this contribution. Three years ago I was interested in assembling a "Scout" rifle as per Jeff Cooper. Century Arms was importing Mexican small ring 98 Mauser rifles in 7x57. Cooper had mentioned these actions in his writings.

I had a dealer / gunsmith friend order 2 for me. I ordered 2 large ring .308 98 bbls from RSI. When the rifles arrived, I cleaned and checked them. No external corrosion to speak of, and no blue either. Bores were badly corroded and terrible respectively. I test fired them and then shot for group at 50 yds. Both were erratic at best, so I shipped the barreled actions and the new bbls to my gunsmith friend. He pulled the barrels off, and re-barreled one with one of the .308 bbls, after re-threading it. He also faced the action and bbl for a good fit, as the RSI bbls had no shoulder to fit against the front of the receiver ring. Headspace was good so my gunsmith friend and his 14 year old son went out to test fire the barreled action, now temporarily set in a cut down military stock. Testing revealed no problems of extraction, and case

examination revealed no problems. They decided to shoot a few rounds of .308 factory ammo to see if they could hit anything without benefit of sights (The Burris Scout Mount was not yet installed on the bbl). They fired about 20 rounds total, and without incident. They did manage to perforate an old appliance at about 25 feet. Returning to the shop, they dismounted the barreled action from the stock and examined it prior to further work. The son found a "crack" running about « the circumference of the front ring, on the bottom of the action, in line with the bolt barrel junction. He told his dad, showed him and then said "I bet I can break it over my knee!" Then he did!!!

The entire threaded portion of the front ring remained on the bbl. The remainder of the front ring stayed with the rest of the action. Subsequent testing revealed that the receiver ring on the failed action had an external hardness of R/c 26, and the other action was R/c 7. Of course external hardness means little. The failed action was stripped for parts, with the receiver floating around somewhere for display purposes. I gave the other action to my friend, advising him to strip it for parts and destroy the receiver.

So what were the results? I lost \$120 in actions, a few friends got free parts they needed, and most important, No One Was Hurt!!!! This part was just pure luck.

What caused the failure? My friend says that the lack of a barrel shoulder to fit against the front of the receiver ring contributed to the problem. Another gunsmith friend with 40 years of experience will not hazard a guess, but says he never saw such a thing before. I believe that the failure was caused by poor heat treating at time of manufacture in Mexico, continued through the service life of the rifle, and my 7x57 firing, and came to a climax with a box of commercial .308 and their higher pressures.

So what did I learn? 1. No more Mexican actions. 2. No third world actions (see April article on Brazilian 08-34). 3. Buy the best actions, then proceed with caution.

Proof Marks Explained

By: Kyrie Ellis (KYRIEELLS@aol.com)

I think we need to do a couple of things here first; one is to distinguish between "proof" and "acceptance" marks, and the other is to distinguish between Heereswaffenamt (Army Weapons Office) acceptance marks and Nationalsozialistisch Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (NSDAP, or Nazi Party) property marks.

A "proof" mark is an indication that a firearm and been fired with one or more deliberately over charged rounds of ammunition at a place and in the manner set by law or standard, and was undamaged ("proved" to be sound).

An "acceptance" mark is an indication that a part or piece of equipment has been examined by an authorized inspector, and found to be within the specifications set forth in the contract or purchase agreement.

A "property" mark indicates that a firearm was owned by, or the property of, a specific organization or unit.

While we speak of all the marks found on WWII German military equipment as "proof marks", this is just a convenient figure of speech. As an example, WWII Model 98 rifles will, as a rule, only have one proof mark - the other marks are all acceptance stamps.

The job of examining and accepting or rejecting German Army equipment was the responsibility of the Heereswaffenamt. This was a military office, similar in some ways to our own U. S. Army Ordnance branch of the U. S. Army. The Heereswaffenamt was not under control of the NSDAP.

The point to this is that the WaffenAmts and the people who applied them were not, in any meaningful way, under the control of the NSDAP. Referring to WaffenAmt as a Nazi marking is like referring to the U. S. Ordnance "flaming bomb" stamp as a "Democratic" or "Republican" (depending on who was in power at the time) marking.

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This is why it is incorrect to call WaffenAmts "Nazi Markings". If the NSDAP had fallen from power and another political party had assumed control of Germany the Heereswaffenamt would have continued to operate in the same manner.

What can complicate this issue is that there exist firearms which *are* "Nazi Marked". These firearms were purchased by the NSDAP for issue to Party members, and many will have identifying markings. From time to time you may see WWII era firearms advertised as "Party Leader", "NSDAP", or something similar, firearms. These are true Nazi marked firearms. They generally have a premium value, because true Nazi marked firearms are uncommon. But these markings are neither proof marks (the Party had no statutory obligation or right to proof firearms) nor acceptance markings - they are property marks.

As an aside, if you ever have occasion to deal with a German collector calling a WaffenAmt a Nazi marking may get you quite a lecture. This is a mistake I made some years ago, and he really set me straight <wry smile>. Part of the problem is that the word "Nazi" has some very powerful associations. It's a bit like referring to every one from south of the Mason/Dixon line as being a member of the KKK.

Publisher's comments

by: Ward M. Clark (WClark@aol.com)

First off, I thought you all would like to see a response I got back from Oberndorf, regarding new Model 98 sporters:

>Why is the Model 98 not available in the United States?

>Will it be made available in the near future?

>Please reply to WClark1046@aol.com

>

Hello,

The model 98 is not available in the US as we use military surplus receivers which are not allowed to be imported if they are used in hunting rifles. But for the next year we are preparing a new model 98 for the "100 Anniversary".

Sorry that we can't be of assistance to you.

Regards,

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A slight disappointment to be sure, but we do have the 100th anniversary M-98 sporter to look forward to!

I apologize to all for being a bit late with the May Monthly. I do try to get the newsletter out on the first of each month, but things got a way from me a little this time... I haven't been on the range for almost a month, either. I have a new .308 load to try out, too...

As always, my thanks to all who contributed to this month's issue. Everybody keep the articles coming!
I can use almost everything sent, if not that month than in a future month. There's a thousand great shooting stories and tech tips out there, so let's spread them around.
Until next month..

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Good Shooting!

Ward