

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

Here's a couple of questions for the group.

I recently purchased what appeared to be an 1894 Swedish Carbine, s/n 886\_ \_\_, Carl Gustafs, 1901. All numbers match (metal & wood) except for bolt, nose cap and lower barrel band (no #'s). Top grip has been shortened to 9", but rifle has shorter rear sight as it appears in Olsen's and of course, front sight has been moved. Stock has been shortened by some amount, nose cap keeper has obviously been moved and there is no lower band keeper. Finger groves in stock are same length as the M38. All wood work has been neatly done. OAL is 38" and barrel is prox 17.5" with a step at prox 13.25" (very similar to my M38). Stock has hole through for sling to buckle (buckle has four brass Phillips head screws attaching it), but it is where (again per Olsen pict's) the brass disc shows to be and there is evidence of sighting decal between buckle and butt. There is no brass disc. Hope I've drawn a good enough word picture. Does anyone know exactly what this is?

Thanks,  
Bob Arthur

PS

Back in the 60's, my dad, an agriculture teacher acquired an 1891 Argentine Carbine. The Progressive Farmer magazine gave prizes of rifles, knives and such for the FFA kids who sold subscriptions and my dad bought this from one of the students. Sometime in the 70's, I had a "sporterized" black walnut stock made for it by an old German farmer in central Texas. He'd had a tree sawn into lumber and he made this stock from a 2 X 6. Still looks nice. I think I added a piece of dowel for a barrel, to the original stock for one of my boys to use as his "rifle". Anyway, its long gone and I'm wondering where I might get an original stock for this carbine.

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Another Take on Pre-98 Strength  
reproduced from "Rifle" magazine

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.

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I have two 96s, one converted to sporter in the original 6.5x55mm. It's an Oberndorf 1900 vintage. The other is a Gustaf 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

{Rifle'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 pre-64 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 heartily disagree with this evaluation. I reproduced it here solely for any value it may have as an addition to the strength debate. -W

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Complications: An Iranian Mauser Sporter  
by Chris Watt {wattcj@aol.com}

Last year, while trying to sell something or other at one of the local gun shows, I spotted an older gent walking by with what appeared to be a nicely done Mauser sporter over his shoulder. I couldn't break away at that point but after I was done, I went looking for him. It turned out to be a really nice looking, sporterized Iranian Mauser in 8X57. After a bit of haggling, I hesitantly bought it. I say hesitantly because I wasn't able to check the bore or function. That particular gun show uses cable ties on guns brought in by individuals and the action was cable tied shut. If the cosmetics weren't so good, I probably wouldn't have bought it. The stock was a Fajen Mannlicher stock, nicely hand checkered and well inletted and finished. The original barrel was cut to 20" and both it and the receiver were nicely polished and blued. High mounted sporter sights were mounted on the barrel and a Weaver 4X scope was mounted in pivot mounts that allow you to instantly flip the scope to the side to use the iron sights. The bolt handle had been replaced with a butterknife type which curved out and back and was checkered on the underside. Both the bolt and handle were polished and the extractor was polished and jeweled. The trigger guard was aftermarket, with a hinged floorplate with an antelope figure cast into it. All in all, this was a really sharp looking gun. Whoever did the cosmetic work had definite talent. I brought the rifle home and the bore looked good. I noticed that the bolt was a bit hard to open and close but when I checked the headspace, it was within specs. I checked the safety and it was not functioning. It seems that the safety was installed incorrectly and I'm doubtful that it ever worked. Not a big problem, I had a Bold trigger with a safety on it laying around just waiting for the right project. I later purchased a new bolt shroud without the safety hole. It took about 30 minutes of fitting with a Dremel tool and everything fit back into the stock. Now that I had a safety installed, I wanted to try it out at the range. I must say that I was a bit disappointed at the range. The first round didn't want to slide under the extractor and subsequent rounds nosedived into the magazine. The nosedive problem, I believe is occurring because the magazine is too long. I'm going to try putting a block in the front to shorten it up. As near as I can figure out, it is the extractor which is giving me problems with closing the bolt and feeding. I'm guessing that it is not the original extractor and is not correct dimensionally. I'm going to try some extractors from my other Mausers to see if I can find one that functions properly. Then I can try to find one to match

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that. I was also, initially, quite disappointed in the accuracy of this piece. At 100 yards, I was getting about a 5-6" group using the scope. At the fourth shot, something small hit me in the nose. It turned out to be one of the screws from the scope mount. I looked around on the ground and finally found it among all the brass. Upon trying to put it back in, I found that the hole was stripped. I didn't even bother to try the iron sights. That was about the limit of my patience for the day and I switched over to my Swedes (now those are a pleasure to shoot.) I've since repaired the scope mounts and hope to get the other things done soon. I'm hoping to take this rifle out for Whittails this year. It still baffles me that someone would spend so much time and effort to make this gun look good and not get it functioning correctly. If anyone has any suggestions or comments, please feel free to E-mail me at wattcj@aol.com

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Celebrating Diversity: C96 Serial Numbers  
by: Larry Ellis (kyrieellis@aol.com)

Graeme Caselton (gcaselton@easynet.co.uk) kindly supplied the following rough breakdown of model variations, dates and serial numbers pertaining to the C96 Mauser.

I deeply regret to report that he did so at the time he was about to hand in his 1915 Std. Wartime Commercial for destruction under Britain's new and reprehensible ban on the private ownership of hand guns.

A moment of silence, ladies and gentlemen, for the senseless destruction of a piece of history. And moreover, for the passing of freedom in the very country which gave us the Magna Carta.

We live in a sad and frightening time, my friends.

#### YEARS/NCOMMENTS

18961-360Pre-production pistols marked with SYSTEM MAUSER above the chamber  
49Step-barrel 6-shot cone hammer  
52Step-barrel 20-shot cone hammer  
107Step-barrel 10-shot cone hammer  
1897360>Pistol design stabilised  
1897360SYSTEM MAUSER cone hammer  
1897Semi-perforated safety head revision  
1897Chamber markings changed to  
1897WAFFENFABRIK MAUSER OBERNDORF  
393Early production 6-shot cone hammer  
630Early production cutaway cone hammer  
743Early production 20-shot cone hammer  
985Early production cone hammer final version  
(1-1000)Turkish government order Serial numbers in Farsi  
658Turkish contract cone hammer  
1000Milled panels over grips and triggers phased out  
1958Standard cone hammer with rear sight stamped 1-10

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- 2534 Standard cone hammer with rear sight stamped 100-300
- 3693 Adjustable sight 6-shot cone hammer with rear sight stamped 50-500
- 62176-shot cone hammer with 4.75 barrel
- 7160 Fixed sight cone hammer
- 8441 Late 20-shot cone hammer
- 10128 Standard cone hammer with rear sight stamped 50-300
- 12000> Large ring hammer introduced
- 12281 Early transitional large ring hammer
- 189914999> Cone hammer phased out
- 15000-20000 Not issued (used for Italian navy) (1-5000) Model 1899 Italian Navy contract
- 300 Patent model flatside variation
- 20000> Firing pin retained by single lug to solid bolt
- Unmilling of centre of left rear panel stopped
- 20533 Late transitional large ring hammer
- 21000> Trigger fitting redesigned with integral pins
- 21024 Early flatside
- 1899170 Contract flatside for German government
- 221306-shot flatside, grip not slotted for stock
- 23000 Late flatside with rear sight stamped 1-10
- 23887 Late flatside with rear sight stamped 50-1000
- 29171 Adjustable sight 6-shot flatside
- 29178 Fixed sight flatside Bolo or Officer's model
- 29260 Early large ring hammer Bolo
- 29507 Early 6-shot large ring hammer
- 29561 Adjustable sight 6-shot large ring hammer
- 30302 Early shallow-milled panel large ring hammer
- Mauser company name and addresses starts to appear on side of frame
- 311869mm shallow panel large ring hammer
- 31234 Late shallow-milled panel large ring hammer
- 34090 Deep-milled panel large ring hammer
- 190235000> Firing pin retained by two opposed lugs to solid bolt. Small ring hammer introduced and large ring hammer phased out
- 35461 Early small hammer
- 38552 Step-barrel large grip Bolo
- 40000> Long narrow extractor changed to a shorter wider one
- 40058 Reinforced chamber 6-shot large ring hammer
- 40240 Early small hammer Bolo
- 40243 Late large ring hammer Bolo
- 40872 Late adjustable sight 6-shot
- 42604 Early Bolo
- 43164 Reinforced chamber small hammer 6-shot
- 43620 Late 6-shot small hammer
- 44000 Non-adjustable rear sights phased out
- 84672 Removable magazine model 1930 made from standard 1896 models
- 85000-95000 Mauser banner trademark stamped on top of the chamber
- 85549 Mauser banner over chamber
- 100000> Rifling changed from 4 to 6 grooves
- 191054000-155000 Persian order of 1000
- 154002 Persian contract
- 1913120000 Batch of assorted serial numbers supplied to western US distributor Pacific Arms

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- 1914160735-161906Batch of assorted serial numbers supplied to western US distributor Pacific Arms
- 1914270000>Start of war production
  - 273339Standard prewar commercial
  - 280000>New Safety introduced
  - 290090Standard wartime commercial
- 1918430000End of war production
- 1919432087French Gendarme order of 1000 with Bolo barrel on large frame
  - 433900End of standard wartime commercial model
- 1920Treaty of Versailles modifications including cutting back of barrel length to four inches and fixed rear sight on existing stocks
  - 444476Early postwar Bolo
  - 474486Long-barrel Bolo
- 1921500000>Mauser banner trademark stamped on top of the chamber Bolo model production restarted
  - 515091Late postwar Bolo
  - 595864Late fixed sight Bolo
  - 650000>Deeper colour blueing introduced
  - 732110Model 1930 transitional
- 1930800000>Model 1930 introduced with a new Universal safety
  - 803115Early model 1930 with universal safety
  - 900302Late model 1930
  - 9133149mm model 1930
  - 9147518.15mm model 1930
- 1937950000End of 150000 produced and shipped mainly to China
  - 980000Last 30000 produced

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Publisher's comments

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

My thanks to Larry Ellis and Chris Watt for the contributions to this month's issue!

September marks the beginning of my favorite time of year... Hunting season. In fact I may be a bit slow answering e-mail this month, as I will spend a good part of the month hunting black bear down in the San Juan Mountains. Next month brings the antelope challenge I described last issue.

A recent gun show in Montrose, Colorado, brought the chance to view two interesting specimens. The first was an Oberndorf sporter, in 8X57 mm; an early 98-pattern gun with no bolt retainer stud. The gun had been a beauty at one point, when the owner brought it home from Europe at the end of World War II. It had a solid-ribbed semi-octagon barrel and some lovely engraving, but the stock had been damaged, clumsily patched in spots, and the whole piece showed the effects of 50 years of hard hunting on the nearby Uncompaghre Plateau. The old gentleman wanted to sell, but frankly I had no idea what to advise him on price; the gun itself was a rarity but the condition was only fair.

The second unusual find for the day came when another gentleman looked over my table of Mausers and asked if I could ID an old gun of his. He said he had been told it was a Mauser, but he had no idea

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what model. He thought, however, that it was a .45-70. I figured it was a Siamese conversion, and said I'd take a look.

When the owner removed the gun from it's case, I got a surprise. What he had was a fairly mint 71/84 rifle, according to Olson it was one made for the King of Prussia! He sadly wasn't interested in selling. I doubt I could have afforded a fair price in any case.

So I left the show with no new acquisitions, and a couple of my guns went to new homes. Such is the gun show game.

I'm sure many of you (like me) spent some time this summer on the range. Let's get those shooting stories in!

Until next month -

Good shooting!

Ward