

The Ultim

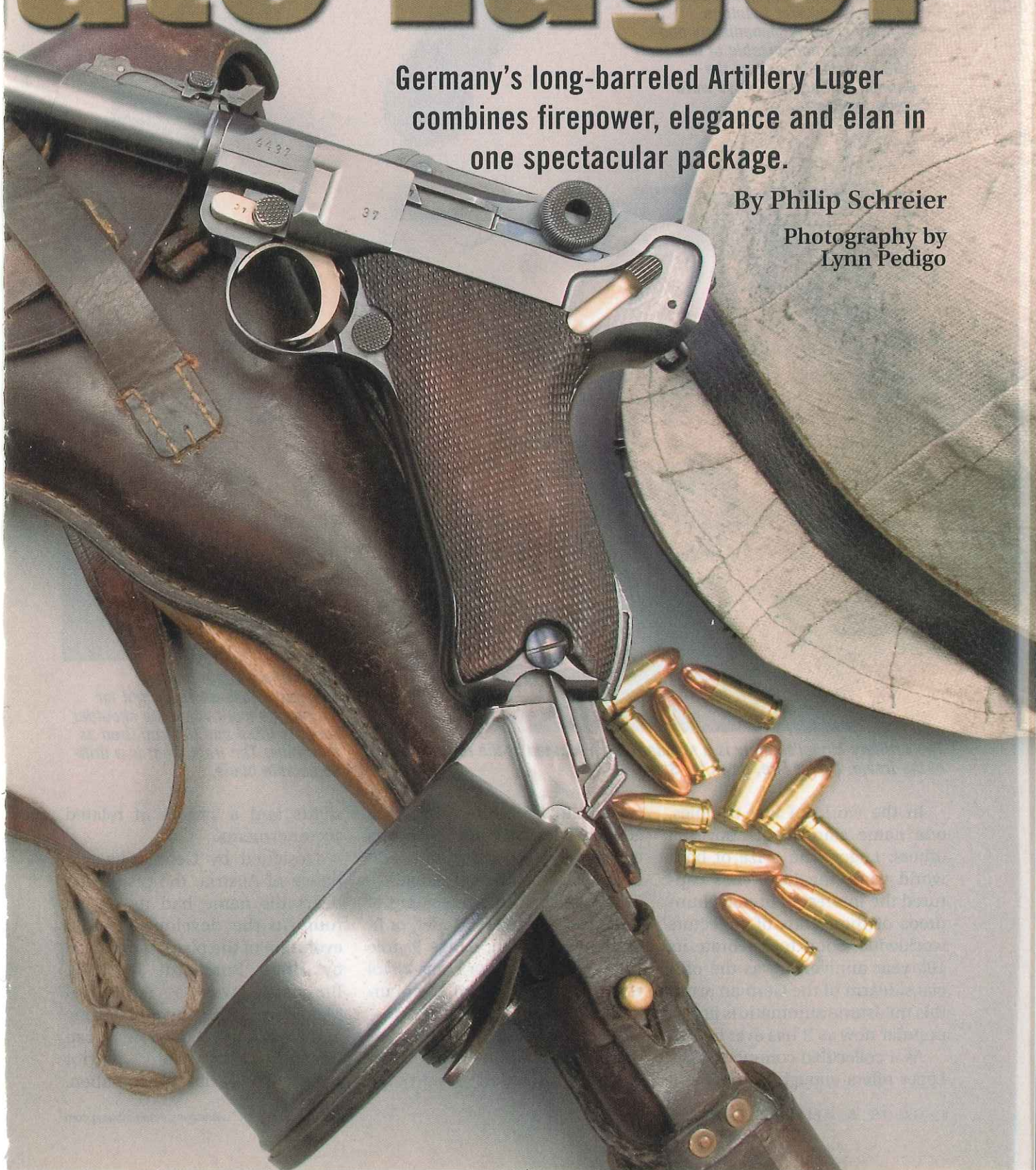


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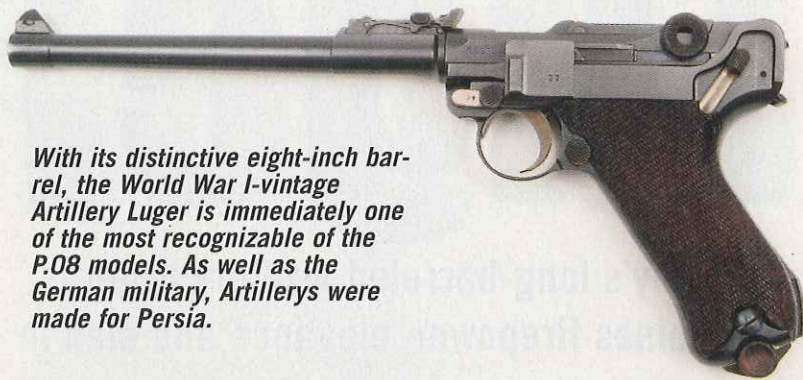
Germany's long-barreled Artillery Luger combines firepower, elegance and élan in one spectacular package.

By Philip Schreier

Photography by
Lynn Pedigo



The Ultimate Luger



With its distinctive eight-inch barrel, the World War I-vintage Artillery Luger is immediately one of the most recognizable of the P.08 models. As well as the German military, Artillerys were made for Persia.



The Artillery Model's safety is a standard latch located at the rear left side of the frame. Up for Fire, down for Safe.

In the world of war trophies, one name stands out above all others: Luger. The prize of both world wars, the Luger has captured the interest of literally hundreds of thousands of collectors worldwide. Soon to celebrate its 100-year anniversary as the official sidearm of the German army, this milestone automatic is just as popular now as it has ever been.

As a collectible commodity, the Luger offers enough variants and

models to keep even the most advanced and wealthy of collectors engaged in a lifelong quest to add unique pieces to the collection.

One of the more intriguing of these is the Artillery Model, or in its native German, Lange Pistole M1908. The Lange, or Long, Pistol was a modification of the standard P.08 with a longer barrel—200mm (eight-inch) vs. the standard 100mm (four-inch). Other changes included long-range



The Artillery Luger has an adjustable tangent rear sight for long-range work when the shoulder stock is fitted and the gun fired as a carbine. The front sight is a drift-adjustable blade.

sights and a variety of related accouterments.

Designed by Georg Luger, a native of Austria, the pistol that bears his name had its design roots in the development and evolution of the pistol introduced by Hugo Borchardt in 1893. Borchardt was a native of Magdeburg, the capital of Saxony and the home of famed American Revolutionary War patriot Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben.

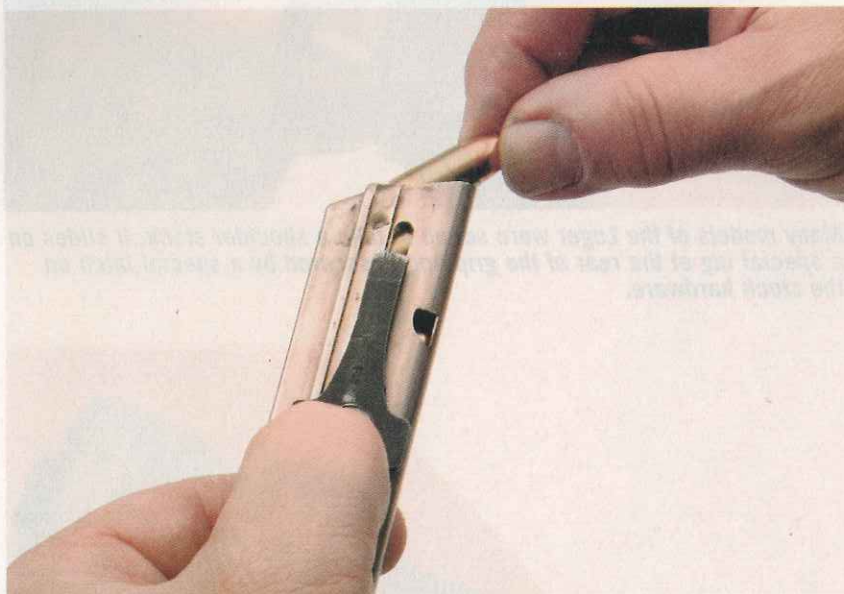


All set up with its drum magazine and shoulder-stock arrangement, the Artillery Luger makes a formidable-looking package. It actually worked quite well as a light carbine.

Like von Steuben, Borchardt emigrated to the United States during his teenage years and became an American citizen. He eventually worked at Colt, Sharps and Winchester before he moved back to Germany to work for Ludwig Lowe & Co. It was during his tenure at Winchester that he began to develop an interest in pistol design and even produced a number of revolver models that intimidated his former employers at Colt to stay out of the lever-action-rifle manufacturing business in 1885.

He is credited with the design of the first successful semiautomatic pistol, the Borchardt, in 1893. Certainly, Bergmann, Bittner, Mannlicher, Schwarzlose and others developed semiautos prior to Borchardt, but his was the system that survived and evolved into the toggle-bolt Luger that remains so sought-after today.

It is said that Borchardt was the visionary who, as a mechanical engineer, developed the system that Luger, as a former military man, transformed into a practical



Loading a standard P.08 magazine is made much easier by the use of its loading tool, which clips over the magazine-follower button and allows the follower to be compressed more easily against its stout spring.

weapon capable of withstanding the rigors of field service.

Luger was also a very successful salesman—almost as creative as Samuel Colt in securing contracts for his product. And just like Colt, he found that it was still difficult to be a prophet in one's own land. Prior to Germany's

adoption of the Parabellum 08, the countries of Sweden, Denmark, Brazil, Bulgaria, Portugal and Bolivia adopted the gun for their militaries. Even the United States gave it serious consideration during the trials of 1907 with a rare model in .45 ACP. Once it was adopted by the

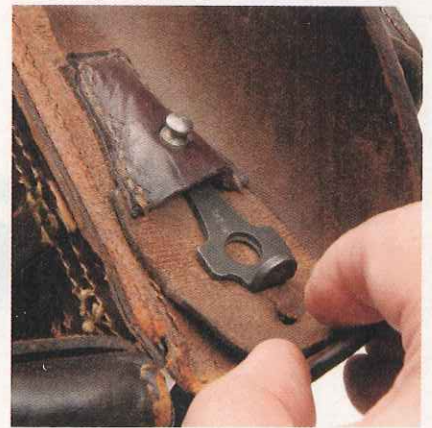
The Ultimate Luger



Many models of the Luger were set up to take a shoulder stock. It slides on a special lug at the rear of the grip and is secured by a special latch on the stock hardware.



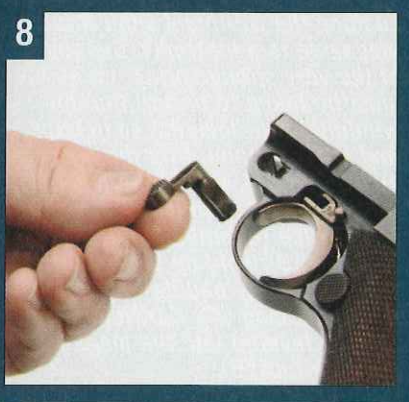
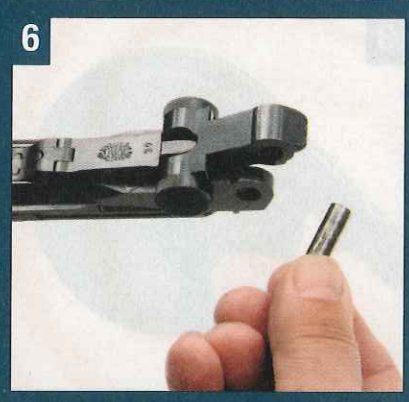
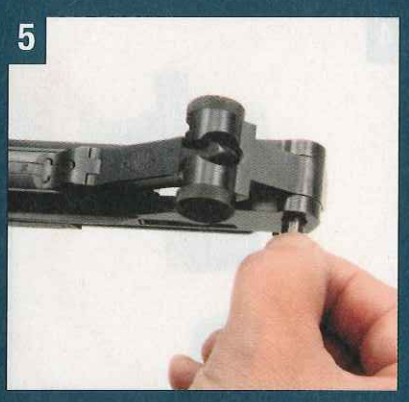
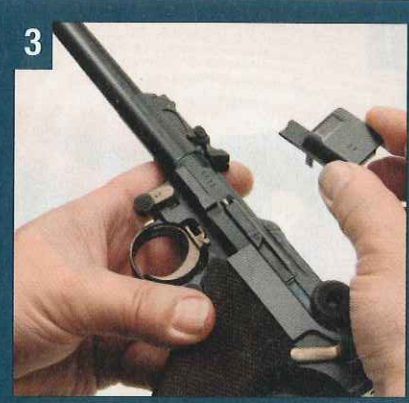
As indicated by this gun's toggle and receiver markings, it was manufactured by Deutsche Waffen und Munitionsfabrik in 1917. Some Artillery Models were also manufactured at the Erfurt Royal Arsenal.



The Artillery Luger holster has a compartment for a magazine loading-tool/screwdriver in its lid. Alongside is a special pouch for a cleaning rod.

German army in 1908, changes to the design features came rapidly. The standard military pattern 08 with a 100mm barrel was quickly adopted by the German navy but with a 150mm (six-inch) barrel and special rear sights graduated out to 100 meters.

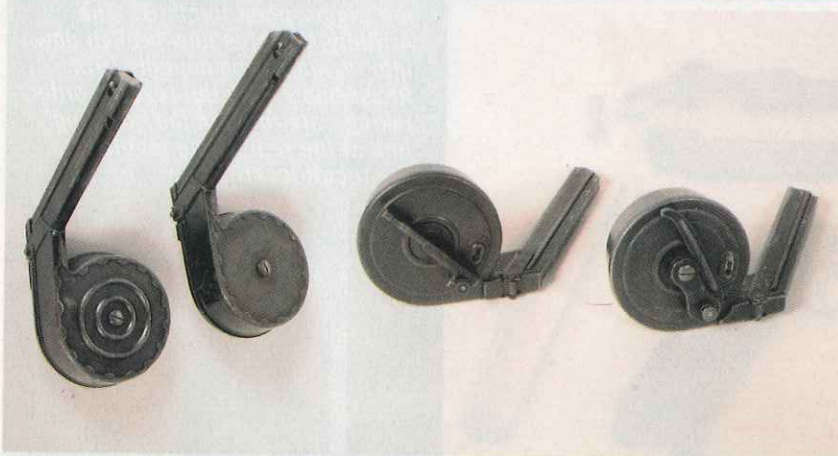
Long-barreled Lugers had been experimented with and produced very early in the history of the gun. There were long-barreled carbines introduced in 1900 and 1902 for commercial sales. It was said that Kaiser Wilhelm II favored the Luger carbine because he could use it as a hunting weapon. With his withered left arm nearly useless and unable to



Artillery Model Lugers fieldstrip in the same manner as the standard P.08. First remove the magazine and ensure the gun is unloaded (1). Next, placing the gun's muzzle on a solid surface, press down and rotate the triggerplate latch forward (2). Release the tension, and remove the triggerplate (3). Slide the barrel assembly forward off the receiver (4). Lift up on the toggle and remove the toggle pin from the rear of the frame (5, 6). Slide the toggle and breechblock from the rear of the receiver (7). Remove the trigger-plate latch (8). The Artillery Model is now broken down into its major components (9). Reassembly is in the reverse order, taking care to hook the coupling link at the rear of the toggle into the recoil lever.

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The early version of the drum magazine employed a pull-out lever rather than a folding one. These magazines were also used with the M1918 Bergmann submachine gun. Photo by the author

support the weight of a full rifle, he enjoyed the one-handed ease of the long-barreled semiauto that gave him a greater sense of freedom while hunting in the famed Black Forest.

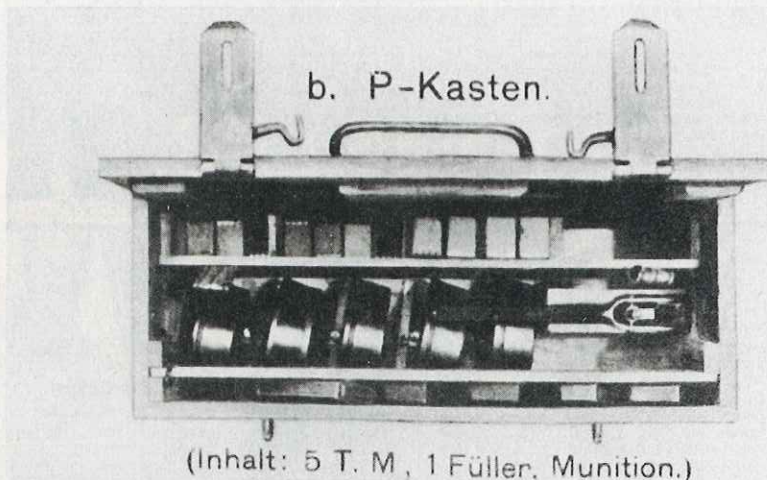
In July of 1913 the Kaiser personally approved the adoption of the *lange* (long) P08 for "the field artillery and the airmen." Thus the third and final distinctive variant of the gun was adopted. Like the standard P08, chambering was 9mm Parabellum.

The Artillery Luger was considered as a replacement for the cumbersome carbines that artillery units normally carried. The sights consisted of a nine-position V-notch configuration that was graduated out to 800 meters (nearly a half-mile). The entire artillery rig included a brown leather holster with an attached wooden "paddle" shoulder stock, a cross-chest strap and a twin magazine pouch worn on the cross strap or service belt. A wooden-handled cleaning rod and a loading tool were also incorporated into the holster setup.

The Royal Arms Factory at Erfurt was initially given an order to make 75,000 long models and began production in 1914. Only about 23,000 were produced before the wartime resources of the Erfurt factory were directed to rifle manufacture. Deutsche Waffen & Munitions Fabriken (DWM) of Berlin began making the Artillery Luger in 1914 and continued to manufacture them throughout the war until 1918, turning out approximately 175,000. A total of nearly 200,000 Artillery Lugers were built during its production run, 1914 to 1918.

During the war, the Artillery Luger was prized by the artillerists and airmen that used them but found that the seven-round magazine, even with an eighth round in the chamber, emptied relatively quickly. In

The Ultimate Luger



Snail-drum mags, ammunition and accessories were sent to the front packed in special chests.



Artillery Lugers were originally intended to be issued to German artillery and machine-gun crews, but ultimately they achieved a more widespread use.

1915 a new magazine developed by Friedrich Blum of Budapest, Austro-Hungary, increased the firepower of the Luger from eight rounds to 32.

Known as the Trommelmagazin 08, or T.M. 08, the new contrivance quickly became known as a "snail drum" for its resemblance to that creature. Manufactured by one of Germany's leading toy manufacturers, Gebruder Bing AG of Nuremberg, two distinctive types of the magazine were produced. The earliest had a telescoping winding arm, and the second had a more versatile winged-key wind apparatus. There were indicators every five rounds from 12 to 32 to indicate how many rounds were

left in the magazine.

The same magazine was used in the first successful German machine gun, the Bergmann Model of 1918, and with the adoption of a small collar was interchangeable. A special loading tool was also developed and issued with the drum magazines to facilitate loading. Nearly 1 million 32-round drum magazines were produced by as many as three manufacturers before the war's end in November 1918.

Many Artillery Lugers were reworked following the war and issued to the Weimar Republic troops and bear 1920 or 1923 overstamps on the breech. Two Mexican designers even adapted



As well as the shoulder-slung Artillery Model holster, soldiers could carry snail-drum magazines on their belts in special bottom-release cloth cases.

the Artillery Luger into a full-auto version, of which only a few are known and more than one was adapted to use a Maxim-style silencer.

Together with its full complement of accessories, holster, shoulder stock, magazine pouches and drum magazine, the Artillery Luger is an impressive firearm and a highly desirable addition to any collection of military memorabilia.

It's also a great gun to shoot either by itself as a pistol or with the stock attached in the carbine mode. Loading the snail-drum magazine can be a bit tricky, as the follower spring is quite stout and should one inadvertently release the compression lever, it can snap back smartly and give you a pretty good rap across the knuckles.

I've shot Artillery Lugers with both the standard and drum magazines from the shoulder and have discovered that the stock attachment and sophisticated sighting arrangement, teamed with the longer barrel, really provides the gun with impressive long-range accuracy.

But either as a shooter or collector's piece, the Artillery Luger is a real winner and a must for any Luger or World War I collection. ☺