

## WWII Mauser HSc pistol – a brief sketch

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The design and development of the Mauser pocket pistol began in 1934 at Mauser Werke in Oberndorf to be an improved successor to the Mauser Model 1934. It was also designed to compete with the very successful Walther PP and PPK in the Commercial market (civilian sales, export sales, and other non-military channels).

After two prototypes, HSa and HSb, the final version of this pistol, HSc, went into full production as a high-quality commercial pistol in December 1940. In fact, Mauser was fully prepared to commence production in 1938, but was held back by the Heereswaffenamt (Army Weapons Bureau) in order to maintain focus on then current production of other Mauser military small arms such as the Mauser 1934, Luger P08 pistol and the K98k rifle.

Serial numbering of the previous Mauser Model 1934 pistol ended in the high 600000 range, so the Mauser Werke began Mauser HSc production at 700000. All WWII produced Mauser HSc's were serial numbered at the factory with the complete six-digit number on the lower front grip strap. The bottom of the barrel breech was stamped with the last three digits of the serial number, with the same three digits hand electro-penciled under the muzzle of the slide. German WWII production of the HSc ended at almost 952000 at war's end in May 1945, representing roughly 252,000 HSc pistols manufactured by Nazi Germany.

*Every Mauser HSc pistol produced during the Third Reich will bear the factory firing proof (Beschusstempel) of an Eagle over N stamped on the right trigger guard and again at the front of the right slide.* Mauser HSc pistols stamped with only these two proofs on the right side are pistols not procured by any military branch or police and were available in the commercial market. These were often purchased by military personnel as a personal sidearm.

The first 1345 Mauser HSc's, beginning at 700000, have become known as the *low grip screw* variety (*LGS*) due to the low position of the grip screws. These pistols are today very rare. To this date, the lowest reported serial is 700067, and the highest is 701343. Due to numerous instances of grips cracking, the location of the grip screws was raised 20mm higher at approximately 701348 for the balance of Nazi wartime production, and beyond.

Some early references stated that all *low grip screw* pistols were procured by the Kriegsmarine. This is not correct. From observed serial numbers, the Kriegsmarine (KM) procured only approximately 500 of these early highly-polished, commercial pistols in the commercial market, beginning somewhere in the range of 700486. However, five pistols below this serial number reportedly bear the Kriegsmarine acceptance. These have yet to be verified. The remainder of the *LGS* pistols not procured and marked by the Kriegsmarine was sold in the commercial market. All *LGS* pistols are exceedingly scarce and considered the rarest of Mauser HSc's.

The Kriegsmarine pistols were pantographed at naval installations with a relatively large Eagle over M (Marine) on the front grip strap. A second variation of KM acceptance proofing included the addition of a second acceptance proof of a small Eagle over M111/3 on the left trigger guard. The final variation bore only the E/M111/3.

Of interest is the fact that many Kriegsmarine proofed *LGS* pistols have serial mismatched components. Reported examples indicate varying degrees of mismatches between receiver, slide and barrel. In some cases, the numbers are only several digits apart.

Experts theorize that this occurred during the pantographing process at the naval depots. Naval ordnance personnel were accustomed to pantographing the Eagle/M on the external sides of the previous Mauser Model 1934's procured by the Kriegsmarine which required no disassembly of the pistol. With the new HSc, strict attention was not paid to the two internal numbers when reassembling small groups of the new HSc pistols. However, as naval personnel were better instructed, later KM marked pistols will be found with matching numbers. Commercial low grip screw HSc pistols will almost always be found with matching numbers.

At approximately 701348, the German Army (Heer) began procurement of the high-quality HSc pistol to succeed the Mauser 1934. The grip screw location on these pistols, and all subsequent WWII HSc production, was raised 20mm higher on the grip to overcome grip cracking experienced on the previous low grip screw pistols. These Army procured pistols bear a small eagle over 655 on the left trigger guard and a small Nazi eagle on the left rear tang, identical proofs to those used on the Mauser M1934. It is highly probable that the final Army contract production of M1934 pistols was produced concurrently in early 1941 with the new Army contract for the HSc pistol, both of which exhibit the E/655 Army acceptance proof and the military test proof symbol. This continued for only two or three thousand initial HSc Army procured pistols interspersed among other pistols for the Kriegsmarine, Police and Commercial market.

At approx 713000, the stamping was changed to a larger eagle over 655 and the small Nazi eagle on the tang was discontinued. However, pistols do exist with the Nazi eagle on the rear tang with either the original smaller E/655 or the later, larger E/655. This could have resulted as a running change on the production lines. The Army acceptance proof evolved to E/135 and finally to Eagle/WaA135.

The first reported police procured pistol is 711619 and is identified by the police acceptance stamp of an Eagle with a small "L" at the rear of the trigger guard on the pistol's left side. This acceptance stamp was used during most of the war on police procured pistol lots until approximately serial 946000 when the "L" to the right of the Eagle was replaced by an "F". This police variation continued for only less than 3000 pistols, as the last reported serial is 948703. This variation is obviously scarce.

Nazi HSc production ended in mid-April 1945 at approx 952,000. According to reliable data, HSc police procurement totaled approx 28,300 pistols out of a total production of 252,000, or about 11%. Generally speaking, police issued HSc pistols will be accompanied by two matching magazines and a police holster.

With the exception of HSc pistols procured by the Kriegsmarine bearing the early E/M pantograph on the front grip strap, all HSc's without any proofing or acceptance stamps at the rear of the trigger guard on the left side of the pistol are commercial pistols.

The Luftwaffe, SS and other organizations procured their pistols through the Army Heereswaffenamt and do not bear Luftwaffe, SS or other markings. Therefore, pistols captured from members of these organizations will generally bear Army acceptance marks as described above.

Of the total 252,000 HSc pistols produced in Nazi Germany, 59,500 pistols (23.6%) were sold in the commercial market. Military personnel of all ranks not issued sidearms often purchased HSc pistols in the commercial marketplace and carried them into the field. Such commercial pistols often returned with veterans as WWII war souvenirs, often in military proofed HSc holsters.

Distribution of total Nazi WWII HSc pistol production (1940-1945):

Army (Heer)	137,121	54.4 %
Navy (Kriegsmarine)	27,100	10.8 %
Police (Polizei)	28,300	11.2 %
Commercial (Civil)	59,467	23.6 %
Total:	251,988	100.0 %

This information provided by [www.MauserGuns.com](http://www.MauserGuns.com) , as graciously provided by Mr. Peter Theodore, HSC collector.