

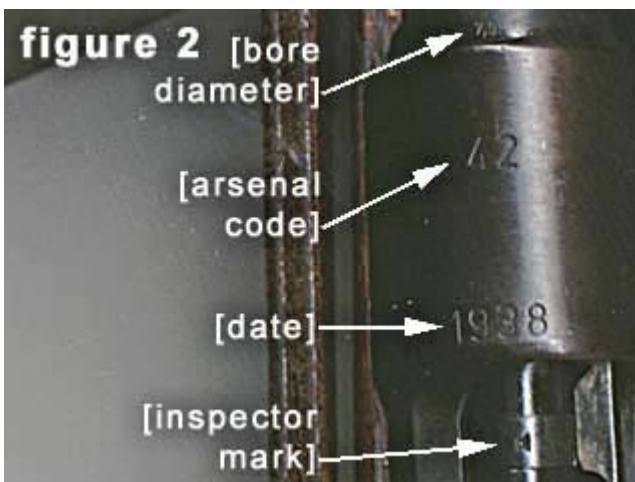


We are fascinated with the history surrounding WWII and the Nazis. You will find that **anything** with a swastika stamp or marking on it brings a premium price and interest. The military weapons of the Reich are no exception. I am always amazed (*appalled*) at the evil man is capable of perpetrating. I find myself curious as to how this evil can happen or even exist. To touch history is important. To understand history is even more important.

I have several **Der Karabiner 98k** and am surprised with myself that I have not written much about them. Recently I had the fortune to pick up one of the Russian capture 98k rifles that we have all seen advertised on the internet and throughout ads in Shotgun News. These rifles are usually adorned with all of the original Nazi stamps and markings. The other 98ks in my collection are Yugo reworks that have had all the markings ground off and replaced with Yugoslavian communist markings. One specimen does have some SS markings underneath the barrel and receiver that I describe in [another article](#) about markings on German rifles.

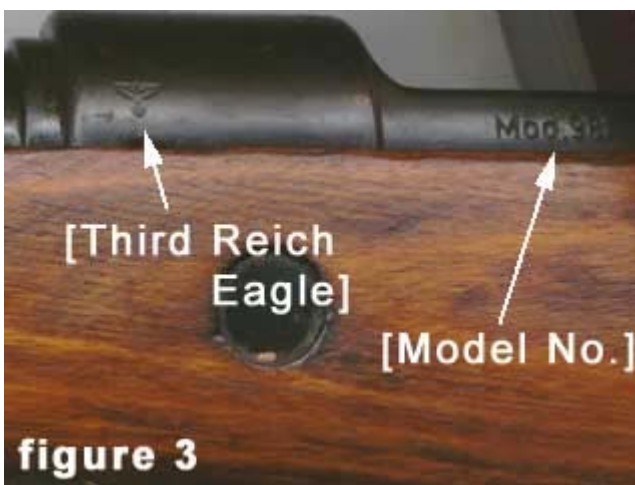


My Russian capture 98k was built in **1938** at the **Mauser-Werke, AG, Oberndorf am Neckar**. Using Terence W. Lapin's book - [Mauser Military Rifle Markings](#) I was able to decipher most of the markings on my rifle. I have found Mr. Lapin's book to be an excellent resource that I use extensively while answering the questions I get in email from readers asking "when and where" was my Mauser made?



In **figure 2** you can see four distinct marks:

1. Bore diameter = **7,9** (*meaning 7.92x57mm*);
2. Early arsenal marking of = **42** (variations on **42** include: **S/42K**, **S/42G**, **S/42**, **BYF**, and **SVW**);
3. Date of manufacture = **1938**;
4. The small **eagle and swastika** markings found on the 98k during WWII are called **Waffenamt** markings (*Weapons Administration or Ordnance Department*).



These Waffnamt markings usually have a **WaA** (*beneath the eagle and swastika*) followed by a two or three digit code noting the inspector. This rifle has the number **63** which corresponds to Mauser Werke A.G., Oberndorf-am-Neckar (*for the years: 1936-39*). This at least tells me that the Waffnamt marks are most likely original and correct as they match the arsenal code of **42** and the year **1938** stamped on the top of the receiver.



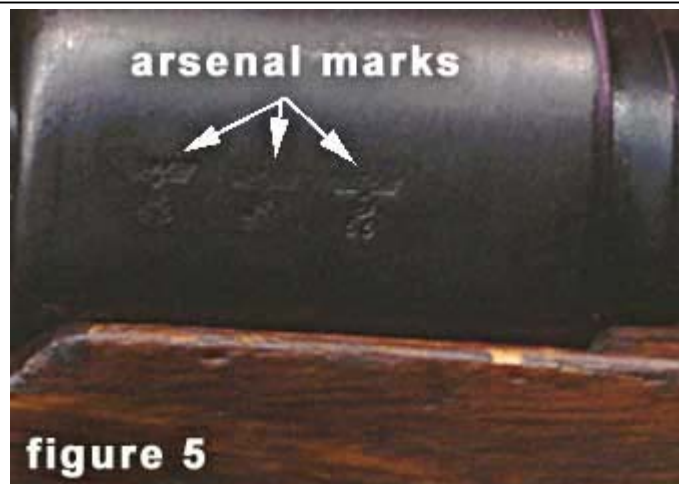
Per Lapin's book the German's had a slang term for the eagle stamp: **Plattgeier**, which translates to "**Flat Vulture**".

Kind of appropriate in my opinion.

Reader Submission

The Nazi eagle was not called in slang "Plattgeier" it was actually called "Pleitegeier". "Pleite" was yiddish for being broke (many words used in German are of yiddish origin). When you were broke in the worst case the court sued someone to secure your effects for an auction in benefit of your creditors. When the court marked a thing for an auction they put a paper ribbon on it with the state symbol being in case of Austria and Germany the eagle.

That kind of eagle was called "Pleitegeier" in slang. The word was later used to describe the danger of bankruptcy circling like a vulture over a person or company and it was used very often for the omnipresent Reichsadler of the Nazis. There you have the true story of the "Pleitegeier". - Dessimlaw Pajakoff



Note of Interest

*The metal disk in the stock of the 98k rifle pictured above in **figure 6** was used in the field to disassemble and reassemble the rifle's bolt.*

My 98k was most likely restocked with a late production laminate stock with a stamped cup butt plate. The original stock would not have been laminate and would have not had a cupped butt plate. I have found some hairline cracks, in the pistol grip running from the receiver, that someone has attempted to repair.



The metal's finish is very dark and shows no wear due to being arsenal refinished. When I got the rifle home its bore looked worse for the wear but after several hours of cleaning it moved into the realm of being serviceable.



For the range test I used late 40's production corrosive 8mm ammo that came on stripper clips in a bandolier. The stripper clips were pretty much worthless as they were so flimsy that I could barely keep them from bending in-half while I attempted to push the cartridges down into the magazine.

I used to be apprehensive that I would damage the bore with the use of corrosive ammo. Now I feel much more at ease since I have developed a good [corrosive ammo cleaning regimen](#). After shooting and before I clean with a good bore solvent I strip down the bolt and wipe it down with a rag dampened with Windex w/ Ammonia. I then pass a couple patches down the bore dampened with the same. Afterwards I proceed with my [normal cleaning process for a bolt action rifle](#). The ammonia helps break down the corrosive salts that most petroleum based bore cleaners will not. Soap and water will also do the job. This is what has been used for centuries in black

powder firearms. You might want to skip the bear grease though!



I am not a big fan of Mauser 98 sights. They are easy enough to use but the sight picture (as shown in **figure 10**) is for a younger man's eyes. With 98k sights I really have a problem shooting out at 100 yards and beyond. Although I know the Mauser is an exceptionally accurate rifle - when I am behind the sights lets just say that the 98k is not shooting at peek performance.



In **figure 10** you see what I mean about the sight picture. In the far right you can see two NRA standard SR-1 100 Yard Military targets. Lining up the 98k's open sights on the small center of the target is difficult at best for me. I guess the one thing I can say is the 98k's rear sight is much more refined than the **Yugo m48** or **Czech vz24** sights. Still not enough to make a difference for me.



For the most part **figure 11** shows my average groupings at 100 yards. At least once I was able to pull in a reasonable grouping shown in **figure 12**.



I love the chase of playing detective on the trail of the history of a military firearm. As I have said before to hold such history in my hands is a real thrill indeed. It is nice when the trail is still marked so well and easy to follow.

jlm ;)

Copyright 2003, 2004 © Jamie Mangrum