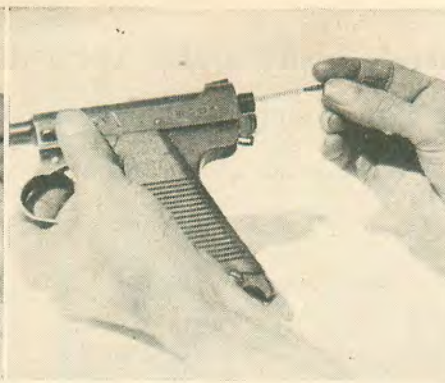


Removing the cocking piece. Note machine marks on outside surfaces



Firing pin extension and spring comes out. Thumb is on the safety



Removing trigger unit. Arrow shows safety is off in forward position

THE JAPANESE SERVICE PISTOL

Comparing the Nambu Model of '25 with our Colt leaves much to be desired—by the Japanese

By CHARLES T. HAVEN

WITH the increasingly prominent part played by the war in the Pacific in our military efforts, interest in the weapons being used against our Armed Forces by the Japanese is becoming more and more widespread.

From the point of view of the average sportsman who is, in general, familiar with American weapons, the most common Japanese service pistol now met with, the "Model of 1925," is of particular interest. Unlike most of the Japanese rifles and machine guns, it is not a very close copy of any common European arm familiar to us in this country.

The Japanese Service Pistol, Model of 1925, is a distinct Japanese development. The original model, the Nambu, Model of 1914, was developed by Colonel Nambu of the Japanese Army. While in appearance it looks like a German Luger, the action is, in so far as it can be compared with any European weapon, more similar to the German Mauser.

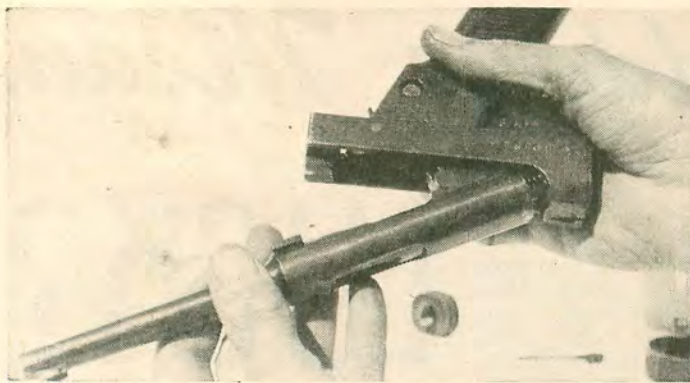
The Model 1925 pistol is a simplified and streamlined version of the original Nambu Model 1914 for mass production. It presents a number of interesting features both from the point of view of the shooter and the gun designer.

In the standard version it is nine inches in length overall, with a 4½-inch barrel and a total weight of two pounds. The caliber is 8 mm. or .315 inch. It looks even more like the Luger than the Nambu but has no resemblance to the Luger whatsoever in its action.

In common with most service pistols, including our own .45 Colt, it is basically a short-recoil, locked-breech action.

The Model of 1925 uses a variation of the system which was originated by Paul Von Mauser in the German Mauser Military Pistol, Model of 1898. The lock which is attached to the barrel extension, being of the "prop up" type.

The Model 1925 pistol is chambered for the 8 mm. Nambu



Barrel extension and bolt unit of the M 25 drop easily out of the receiver



Lifting out the lock. The inner surfaces of the arm are well machined and finished

pistol cartridge. This is a bottle-necked, rimless, or slightly semi-rimmed, cartridge that looks very similar to the 7.65 Luger cartridge so common in this country. We would consider it a relatively poor military cartridge because the bullet is small in diameter and weighs only 102 grains, although it has a muzzle velocity of 950 ft. per sec. The capacity of the magazine is eight cartridges and a ninth can be loaded in the chamber.

In operation, the pistol has two very peculiar features from our American point of view. The more prominent of these is the position and action of the safety. As the photos show, it is placed just above the trigger guard in the illustrations and much farther forward than any other military pistol safety. It is in a most awkward position as it cannot be reached by the thumb of the pistol hand, but must be deliberately turned on and off by the use of the left hand. It also has a very dangerous feature. The safety can be set to where it locks the action from sliding back and forth, but it will not at this point lock the trigger and sear from releasing the firing pin. Therefore, the cartridge in the pistol can be fired when the recoil action cannot function. This, of course, would cause a malfunction if nothing else. It might also very well break the parts inside the pistol—two extremely bad features in any military weapon.



8 mm Nambu actual size

Another unusual feature, from a military point of view, is the trigger pull. The curious combination of a trigger bearing upwards by means of an intermediate trigger-sear connector on the front of an unusually long sear and a straight-drive firing pin gives a very smooth trigger pull, almost like a target pistol, but altogether too light for military purposes. The sear lies the whole length of the pistol frame and is acted upon by an upward movement of the trigger-sear connector, which appears in the disassembled view of the pistol as the rear one of the two projections upwards from the trigger guard.

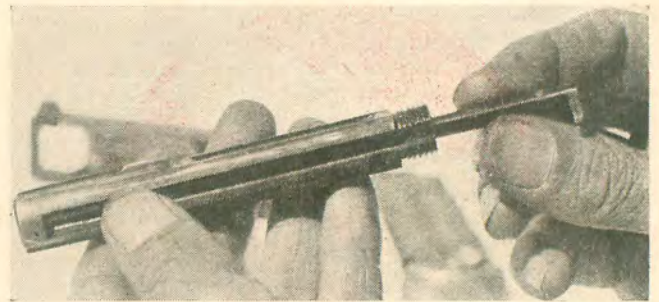
With the awkward safety, which might well be left off on account of its inconvenience, and the light trigger pull, I should personally hate to be in front of anyone armed with such a weapon under battle conditions, even if he didn't have murder in his heart.

From a manufacturer's point of view, there are a lot of good design features about the Model '25. As can be seen from the illustrations, the barrel, barrel extension, bolt and most of the other parts are largely made up from round pieces reduced to their present form by relatively simple machine cuts. Everything about this pistol is crudely done, but the results work fairly satisfactorily. The long wooden grips, reminiscent of a Match Target Woodsman in shape, but certainly not in finish, are merely crudely scored across rather than checkered, but such scoring gives a satisfactory hold for military purposes. The inside parts are well finished for proper functioning. (Continued on page 39)

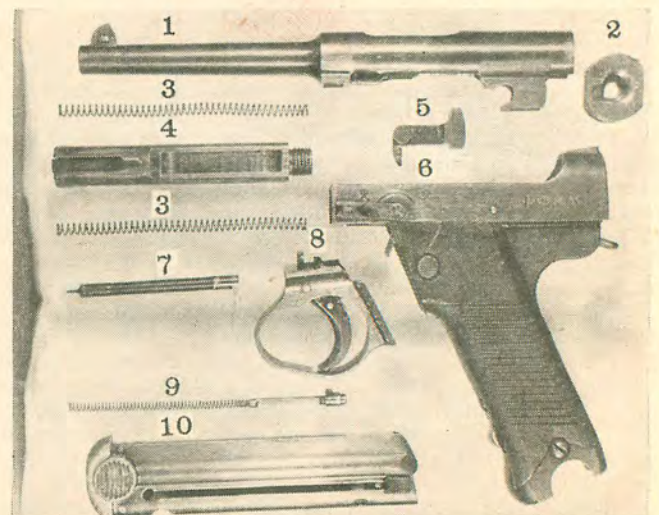


Above, removing bolt and return springs

Below, the firing pin slides from bolt



Disassembled: 1, barrel; 2, cocking piece; 3, return springs; 4, bolt; 5, lock; 6, receiver; 7, firing pin; 8, trigger unit; 9, pin extension; 10, magazine



THE JAPANESE

Service Pistol



(Continued from page 13)

but the outside of the pistol is very roughly smoothed up for blueing and many machine marks still show on the surface.

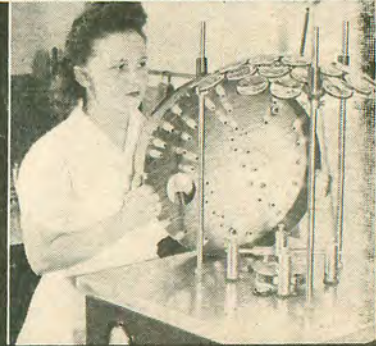
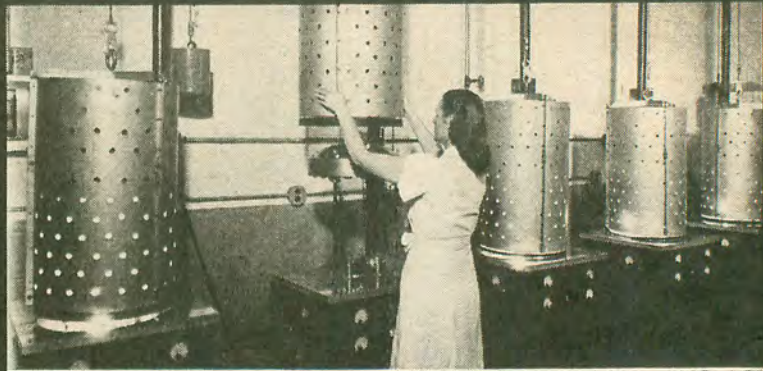
In handling and firing its features are typical of all automatics. The clip is loaded like that of a .45 Colt, inserted in the butt and locked into place by a magazine catch in the usual position. Pulling back on the cocking piece retracts the bolt and when released it flies forward, picking up a cartridge and chambering it. The "Model 1925" is, like most military pistols, semi-automatic, firing one shot for each pull of the trigger. When the last shot has been fired the bolt is held open by the magazine follower as an indication that the pistol is empty, but unlike the Colt .45 the bolt closes again as soon as the magazine is withdrawn. The feel in the hand is very similar to the Luger.

Taken as a whole, the Model 1925 is not what we would call a very satisfactory weapon. The combination of the awkward safety and the light trigger pull makes it a really dangerous arm in the hands of anyone not

THERE'S A LOT of helpful dope for the woodchuck hunter in the May issue. Look for "The 'Chuck, He's Smart" by Richard F. Trump. It's written by a guy who has crawled on his belly the necessary number of miles of pastureland to qualify as an authority on the subject of groundhogs. Don't miss what he has to say.

thoroughly familiar with it. To us it is also very muzzle light in comparison with the .45 Colt, but this fault is also common to the German Luger, Walther and Mauser pistols and seems to be satisfactory in European as well as Japanese practice. Our American standards for hand guns call for about three times the stopping power that the 8 mm. Nambu pistol cartridge delivers. Our .45 Colt Automatic Pistol cartridge with its 220-grain bullet of nearly 1/2-inch diameter is almost beyond comparison to the Nambu load.

Its good features are extreme ease and cheapness of manufacture and relative simplicity of disassembly and assembly. The breech-lock type is an old standby and one of the first ever applied to automatic military pistols. In this feature it is satisfactory, but certainly from our point of view its bad features outweigh its good ones by a generous margin. I think most Americans would stick to the Colt .45 if given a choice.



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