

This article was originally published in the KCN in their August 1990 newsletter as:

THE GUSTLOFF K98k

THIS IS AN EDITED EXTRACT FROM THAT ARTICLE ON THE BSW K98k

By Bob Jensen and was edited by Peter Kuck 6/11/2002 (updated 2/2/2005)

Berlin-Suhler Waffen und Fahrzuegerke was the only K98k manufacturer permitted to use their company logo on the rifles they produced. They used the company's initials "BSW" as a receiver code

"BSW" production has been included in the Gustloff K98k totals due to the use of the same Waffenamt numbers as were used on Gustloff k98k rifles (code "337" and "bcd"). It is presumed that Gustloff either merged with or acquired Berlin-Suhler Waffen sometime in 1939 or that Gustloff purchased "BSW's" rifle making machinery, jigs, tools, and gages. It is known that BSW continued to exist after 1939 since their logo can be found on other items of German WWII small arms production including MG13, MG15, and MG34 BI-Pods, as well as MG34/42 belts and bolts. It is assumed that "BSW" concentrated on the manufacture of these types of items after halting K98k production.



"BSW" started production of the K98k rifle in 1937. The K98k rifle they produced followed the standards that had been set by the Heerswaffenamt authorities in 1934. These rifles had solid one-piece Walnut stocks and handguards. All Stocks were branch of service marked, had Waffenamt proofs, and were numbered both externally



and internally. Weimar type eagles were used with the "WaA1" and "WaA4" proofs.

Nazi type eagles are also seen on the stock above the branch of service stamps and on various small parts of the rear sight and bolt. They are always used in conjunction with the earlier type eagles. All metal parts were milled and blued. All production appears to have gone to the German Army with an "H" for Heer on the right side of the stock. The known serial number range is from 2492 to 1165b, with an estimated production run of 25,000 rifles.

1938 "BSW" K98k rifles are identical to 1937 "BSW" production with solid stocks and handguards, a blue finish, milled metal parts, externally numbered and proofed, "H" marked stocks. 1938 changes include the use of Waffenamt "749" and the appearance of a capital letter "B" on the right side of the receiver ring. Contract barrels appear and the small letter "i" in conjunction with the eagle "4" also appear on small parts. Some Laminate stocks are used. The known serial number range is from 48 to 9363d, with an estimated production run of 50,000 rifles.



In 1939 "BSW" supplied rifles to the Luftwaffe as well as the Army. Laminate stocks and handguards were the norm. All milled metal parts and external stock markings were retained. Waffenamt eagle "4" and Waffenamt "749" are used along with the letter "i" and "1" proof on the floorplates, and rear sight parts. The capital letter "C" replaced the "B" on the right side of the receiver ring. It is presumed that this "C" and the earlier "B" have some connection with the production date of that rifle. Too few examples have been observed to prove this contention. "BSW" made rifles for only part of 1939. The known serial number range is from 1257 to 3822e, with an estimated production run of 60,000 rifles.

It is not known when “BSW” ceased production of K98k's in 1939, but we do know that Gustloff Werke, began producing code “337” K98k's in 1939 which were identical to the 1939 “BSW” rifles in proofing. These rifles also use both the eagle “4” and eagle “1” proofs along with the small letter “i” and the number “1” marks. Except for the manufacturing code and a serial number range that started over with the number 1, it appears that the code “337” rifles were a continuation of “BSW” rifles. The “MOD.98” marking is not on the 1939 code “337” rifle. With an estimated production run of approximately 135,000 rifles over a three-year time span the question has been asked, why BSW coded rifles are so rare. The only plausible answer is that most of them went with their owners to Russia in June of 1941 and were either destroyed or captured there.

Unverified information

As an aside, I have examined and have data on BSW's with E/H, E/L as well as E/M (and O and N sea group marked disks) branch markings. The certainty with which the author of the subject article makes sweeping conclusions based on extremely limited information and observations is intellectually dishonest.

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Edited by - Scott B on 01/31/2005 10:01:23 AM