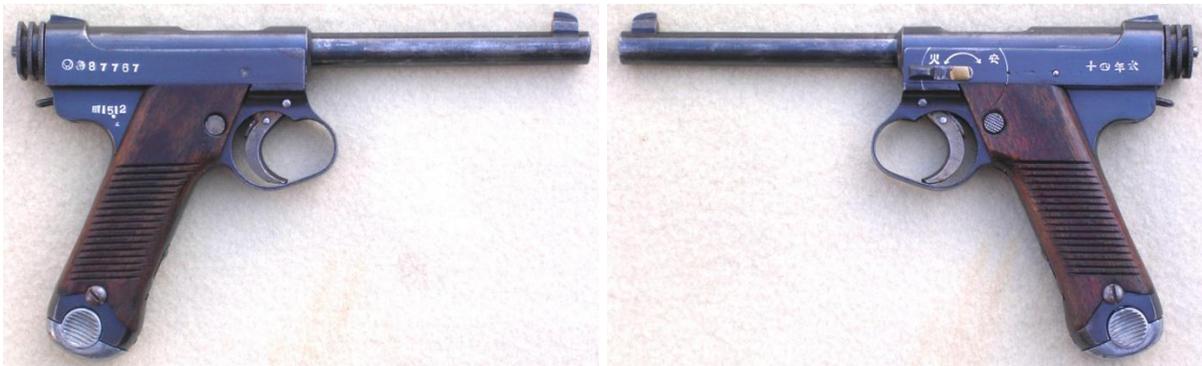


Type 14 Nambu Rebarreled to .30 Luger

By Dan Larkin

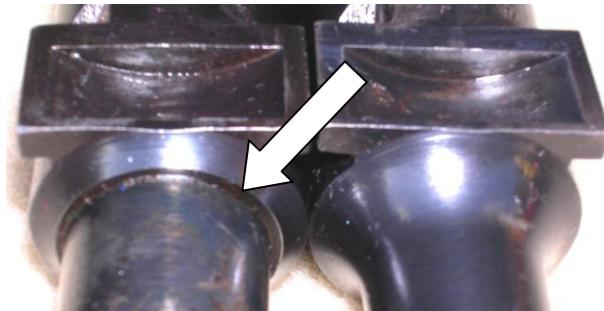
Many years ago, my Dad (Mike Larkin) was contacted by a gun shop in another state about a Type 14 Nambu with “a larger barrel.” After receiving a thorough description of the barrel modification and condition (which is very good), we purchased the gun at a fair price. We had no idea of the gun’s caliber other than the shop’s comment that “an 8mm Nambu round is too large and will not fit.”

After receiving the gun, Kokubunji Arsenal 15.12-date #87767, we determined that, except for a new barrel being fitted to the existing barrel housing, the gun retained all of its original numbered parts including the magazine. No parts other than the barrel housing had been modified. The magazine grip spring is broken, and the safety arm is also broken but has been repaired by brazing. There are no non-original markings on the gun, so, it is not possible to determine the origin of the modifications.

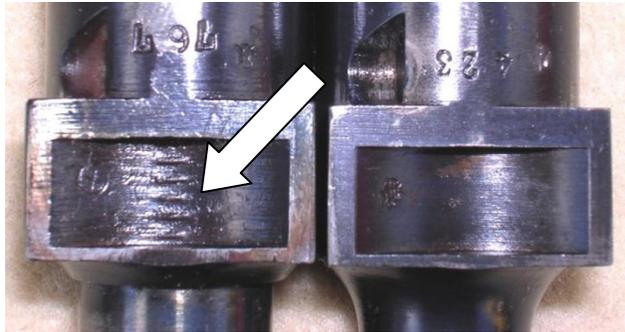


Dad determined that the gun’s caliber is .30 Luger (7.65 Parabellum) through rudimentary measurements and the trial-and-error fitting of various size loose rounds. After efforts to avoid personal injury, Dad fired the first .30 Luger round with trepidation. It worked. He then loaded the magazine and fired the gun in a normal manner – it functioned flawlessly. Dad made no effort to determine the gun’s accuracy.

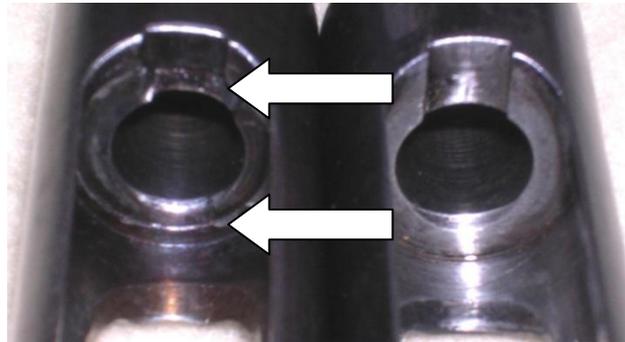
The barrel modification workmanship on this Nambu is very good as is evidenced in the series of images. The original barrel was cut-off just forward of the front slide boss. The barrel housing was reamed-out and threaded to accept the new threaded barrel.



There is not much room in the barrel housing for the new barrel. The barrel threads are very close to the surface and have distended the metal which can be seen on the underside of the barrel housing in the front slide boss recess.



The only other location where a modification is visible is around the chamber where the separate housing and new barrel can be seen. The end of the new barrel above the chamber is slightly modified to provide room for the bolt extractor to engage a cartridge.



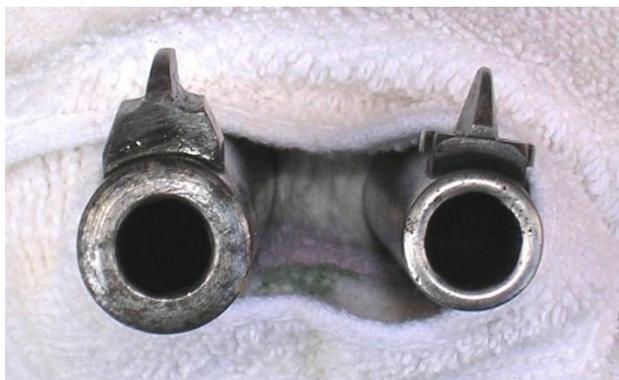
The new tapered barrel is larger in diameter at both ends and almost an inch longer than a normal Type 14 barrel. It is also much heavier, and the weight difference is very noticeable when pointing the gun (for me, the new barrel has better balance). The new barrel rifling is in the same direction but has less twist than normal Type 14 barrel rifling.



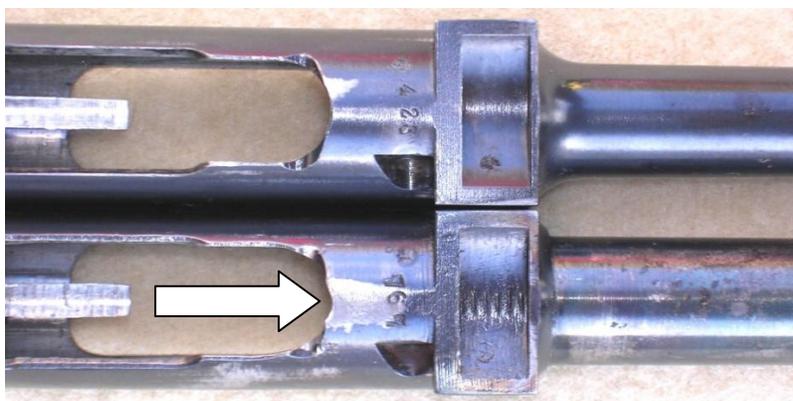
Some basic measurements show the difference in barrel sizes. The new tapered barrel is just less than one inch longer at 0.980" difference. The rear barrel diameters (measured 1/2" forward of the front slide boss) are 0.550" for the 8mm barrel and 0.625" for the new barrel. The front barrel diameters are 0.475" for the 8mm and 0.585" for the new barrel. From bore centerlines, the new barrel sight top is 0.030" higher.

It is unknown if the new barrel is taken from a production gun or if it is a made-up item. The integral front sight is not symmetrical – each side’s various metal cuts are either of a different angle, length, or bevel. These differences can be seen in the below image. The asymmetrical sight differences lead me to believe the barrel is not mass-produced.

The new barrel integral front sight is quite large when compared to a normal Type 14 sight. The front sight placement is also slightly off-vertical due to the barrel threads not seating exactly plumb in the barrel housing. The slight barrel off-set can also be seen in a previous chamber image where the housing and barrel extractor slot cuts are not aligned.



The only other location on the barrel housing where some metal work is evidenced is on the underside just in front of the magazine feed hole. It appears as if a very small amount of metal was removed from the surface for an unknown reason.



A skilled machinist did a good job on this caliber conversion. Using the arguably better .30 Luger cartridge is an improvement over the 8mm Nambu. Keeping the modification simple, the only change is the insertion of a different barrel into the barrel housing. The .30 Luger cartridges both fit and feed from the magazine normally, and the existing extractor works well. The recoil of the higher-powered .30 Luger is felt more than a normal 8mm Nambu load. But, with its heavier barrel, it is a very pleasant gun to shoot.

This conversion proves that improvement to the Type 14 Nambu can be accomplished by only changing one component. The conversion also begs the question of the Japanese experimenting with other calibers. If the Japanese didn’t experiment, they should have, as the Type 14 could have been made into a better military handgun.

(Thank you to Frank Allan, Russ Cipolla, Dale Crabtree, and Takehito Jimbo for their comments in the preparation of this article.)