

Type 14 Nambu Toriimatsu Factory Change Pointsⁱ

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The Toriimatsu Factory of the Nagoya Arsenal produced the Type 14 Nambu beginning in October 1941 (16.10) and continued production uninterrupted until the end of hostilities in August 1945 (20.8). Approximately 123,000 Type 14 pistols were produced by the Toriimatsu Factory in two serialized series. More Type 14 Nambus were produced by the Toriimatsu Factory than by any other arsenal/factory. With their higher numbers and later production, Toriimatsu Type 14s are the most commonly found Nambu pistols.

Several significant collector variations are found in the Toriimatsu Factory production. The most notable named variations are the very rare “Double Zero” (around 185 produced), the uncommon “Fine Knurl Solid Cocking Knob” (over 6,000 produced), the smooth unserrated “Slab Grip” (around 10,000 produced), and the scarce late production “Last Ditch” (at least 1,200 produced). All four of these named variations are noted due to their manufacturing changes – one as an experiment and the others for functionality improvements or for production simplicity.

Many Toriimatsu Factory production changes did not result in named collector variations. The additional modified parts include the firing pin (several different changes), the firing pin guide, the trigger pin, the bolt, the rear sight housing, the rear sight notch, and the grip screws. One very minor but visible marking change is all Toriimatsu triggers are serialized on the right side while the triggers produced for all other arsenals/factories are serialized on the left side. This article will identify the recognized changes in Toriimatsu Factory production to assist collectors in identifying loose parts to their period of manufacture and as a check for commonly-replaced parts in existing examples.ⁱⁱ A chart detailing the various changes is appended to the end of this article.

[Please note that detailed descriptions of the changes occurring in the Toriimatsu Factory Double Zero variation and in Toriimatsu Factory Type VIII magazines are not presented here. Double Zero specifics can be found in the article, “Type 14 Nambu ‘Double Zero’ Features,” published in the February 2011 issue of BANZAI. Toriimatsu Factory magazine changes can be found in the article, “Proper Type 14 Magazine Matching – Toriimatsu Arsenal,” published in the February 2009 issue.]

The most well-known and rarest Toriimatsu Factory variation is the Double Zero. This sought-after variation is identified by the pistol serial number having two zeros placed directly over the first two numbers (see image). Double Zero-marked pistols have many non-standard design parts – frame, sear, firing pin, guide, cocking knob, barrel, locking block, and bolt – which



will not fit in other Type 14 Nambu. Double Zero-marked pistols comprise the first 185 or so examples produced by the Toriimatsu Arsenal and are only dated 16.10 (1941.Oct) through 17.2 (1942.Feb). One other very minor anomaly noted during the Double Zero production period and slightly beyond is that some few pistols have one or both grips with 25 grooves instead of the standard 24 grooves.

The firing pin and firing pin guide subsequently went through several changes over the next two years of production. In February 1942 (17.2), standard configuration firing pins with offset tails and firing pin guides with small alignment lugs were introduced (see images – standard parts on right). Like the Double Zero parts, the firing pin is 73mm with the matching pistol numbers stamped on the tail, and the firing pin guide is 47mm with flat sides and the matching pistol numbers stamped on the flat.



The next major firing pin design change occurred in July 1942 (17.7) when the firing pin was shortened from 73mm to 65mm for a longer striker fall. The firing pin guide length was correspondingly changed to a longer 54mm, and, the guide shape was also changed from flat sides to round sides (see

image). Also, the firing pin numbering changed from the tail to the barrel. While the firing pin had subsequent



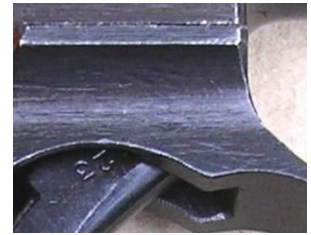
modifications, the firing pin guide did not change shape again with the round version lasting until the end of standard production. Both parts were number-matched to the individual pistol as before (pin numbered on the barrel; guide numbered on the side). Unnumbered firing pins and firing pin guides found in pistols during this period are replacements for the original parts. During March 1944 (19.3), the firing pin guide matching serialization was eliminated.

The last physical firing pin modification took place during the September 1943 to October 1943 (18.9 to 18.10) time frame when the firing pin tip was enlarged from 0.06" diameter to 0.08" diameter. A corresponding bolt hole size change was also instituted (see images). With the larger tip diameter, later firing pins will not fit in earlier bolts having smaller holes. This issue is a common problem when finding replacement firing pins. The firing pin matching number location was again changed from the barrel to the tail. Beginning around October 1944 (19.10) and going through June 1945 (20.6), some reported examples have matching firing pins with the numbers stamped on the barrel as was the practice in the October 1941 (16.10) to October 1943 (18.10) period. A few



firing pin guides are also reported as serialized in this late production period. Any found loose 65mm firing pins with 0.08" tips and numbers on the barrel can be ascribed to late production.

Beginning in January 1943 (18.1), very near the February 1943 (18.2) date code change, the first change not related to the firing pin and guide occurred. The trigger pin was modified from an exposed peened-end installation to a flush-ground installation (see images). The pin end is almost invisible. The change happened quickly, as very few overlap examples have been reported.



The Toriimatsu First Series serialization comprised the last half of a 100,000 number serial block. That 50,000 example serial run was completed in November 1943 (18.11) where the Second Series immediately began. Arsenal guidelines prescribe that, after the initial series, a Kana symbol be added at each 100,000 serial numbers juncture to keep the serial digits to a maximum of five numbers. So, when the Toriimatsu First Series (denoted by the Kana mark ㊦) numbering reached 99999, the Kana mark ㊧ was added to denote the follow-on Second Series and serial sequencing started over (see images). The Second Series production ceased at the end of the war near the 73000 serial range.



In December 1943 (18.12), the rear frame design supporting the rear sight base decreased in length about 1/10" (see image). In 20-date production, a few frames with the longer rear sight base have been noted. These later-dated frames with the longer rear sight bases may be earlier production frames put into use as pistol part stocks were depleted.

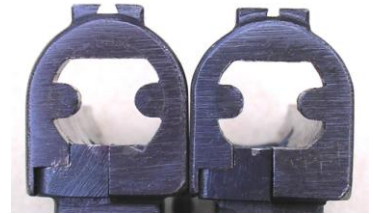


Three cocking knob variations are found within Toriimatsu Factory production (see image). The most recognized version is the Fine Knurl Solid Cocking Knob (center example). Beginning with original production, Toriimatsu cocking knobs were the standard design with two wide grooves. Then, in very late December 1943 (18.12), a solid knob without grooves was instituted. This initial solid knob had very fine knurling – hence, the Fine Knurl Solid Cocking Knob variation. In very late January 1944 (19.1), only one month later, the knurling was changed to a coarse style to facilitate a better grip. That coarse knurl style was phased-in throughout February 1944 (19.2) with some few fine knurl knobs even found in March 1944 (19.3). Except for the last few hundred pistols produced and a few initial overlap examples, all 19.1-dated Type 14s will have fine knurl cocking knobs. The Fine Knurl Solid Cocking Knob is



found on over 6,000 examples and is a basic collecting variant for Type 14 collectors. The coarse knurl solid cocking knob continued until the end of standard production in late June 1945 (20.6).

During mid-January 1944 (19.1), the rear sight notch was simplified. The standard undercut design was changed to a square-edge U-shaped design (see image). The undercut taper was also eliminated saving several machining steps. The change happened quickly as very few overlap examples have been reported.



A less-recognized Toriimatsu Factory change occurred in May 1944 (19.5) when the grip screw thread style was changed from coarse to fine pitch (see image). This change is important to note, as grip screws made after the change will not fit in earlier pistols without being forced (and vice-versa). Type 14s are often found with cross-threaded grip screws for this reason.



One of the most recognized Toriimatsu Factory production changes happened in November 1944 (19.11) with the replacement of the 24-groove or serrated grips, which are only found in Toriimatsu production, with grips that are flat-sided or smooth – Nambu collectors refer to them as “slab grips” (see image). Curiously, the phase-in of this grip changed happened in a series of stages/blocks.



The first 300-400 pistols in 19.11 had grooved grips. They were followed with a block of 700-800 pistols with the new slab grips. Then, a block of 800-900 pistols using the old 24-groove grips reappeared. Finally, the slab grips returned a second time and were then used for the remainder of Toriimatsu Factory production. With around 10,000 examples available to find, the Type 14 with slab grips is another basic collector variant.

Standard Type 14 production practices and quality at the Toriimatsu Factory continued until very late in the war. Manufacturing changes were instituted as needed for functionality improvements or for production simplicity. By and large, interruptions in the access to materials did not have much effect on pistol production until the last few months of the war. Serialization and production quality were maintained. However, starting in very late June 1945 (20.6), all Type 14's suddenly became “parts guns.” Sequential serialization of the frames continued into August 1945 (20.8). But, all the other individual parts were cobbled-together from loose parts, from parts guns, and from surplus parts left over from other arsenals. Parts in these guns are both blued or in the white and incorrectly serialized or unserialized. From late June 1945 (20.6) forward, all Type 14 Nambus are assembled with mismatched or unnumbered parts of many different designs and comprise the scarce Last Ditch variation. At least 1,200 Last Ditch variation examples were produced. In addition, an unknown number of unserialized Type 14's were in various stages of arsenal production and acquired as souvenirs by returning U. S. servicemen.

More major and minor production changes occurred during the Toriimatsu Factory production period than in any other Type 14 arsenal. This is an important issue, as some parts can only be used in pistols produced during certain time frames – finding the correct parts for those pistols can be difficult. But, the many changes also make it easier to correlate specific parts to specific production periods. We are hopeful that this article and the accompanying chart of Toriimatsu Factory change points will assist Type 14 Nambu collectors to both identify loose parts and to help ensure the proper parts are used in their Toriimatsu Factory examples.

Sequential Toriimatsu Factory Production Changes Chart

Change Feature	Inclusive Dates	Feature Description	Approximate Production
“Double Zero”	16.10 – 17.2	“Two zeros” above first two serial numbers; has modified parts	185
Firing Pin	16.10 – 17.2	73mm center tail – numbers on tail	185
	17.2 – 17.7	73mm offset tail – numbers on tail	2,000
	17.7 – 18.10	65mm offset tail with 0.06” tip – numbers on barrel	39,000
	18.9 – 19.10	65mm offset tail with 0.08” tip – numbers on tail	71,000
	19.10 – Late 20.6	65mm offset tail with 0.08” tip – numbers on barrel or tail	11,000
Guide	16.10 – 17.2	47mm flat (with wide lug) – with numbers	185
	17.2 – 17.7	47mm flat – with numbers	3,000
	17.7 – 19.3	54mm round – with numbers	73,000
	19.3 – Late 20.6	54mm round – without numbers	47,000
Trigger Pin	16.10 – 18.1	Pin protruding with exposed peened ends	14,000
	18.2 – Late 20.6	Pin ends ground flush with trigger housing	109,000
Rear Sight Housing	16.10 – 18.12	Length 0.65”/0.69”	57,000
	18.12 – Late 20.6	Length 0.55”/0.59”	66,000
Cocking Knob	16.10 – 18.12	Two wide grooves	58,000
	18.12 – 19.1	“Fine Knurl Solid Cocking Knob”	6,000
	19.1 – Late 20.6	Solid with coarse knurl	59,000
Rear Sight	16.10 – 19.1	Undercut sight picture	62,000
	19.1 – Late 20.6	Square U-shaped sight picture	61,000
Grip Screw	16.10 – 19.5	Coarse threads	87,000
	19.5 – Late 20.6	Fine threads	36,000
Grips	16.10 – Mid 17	25 grooves (right, left, or both) interspersed in production	500
	16.10 – 19.11	24 grooves	113,000
	19.11 – Late 20.6	“Slab Grip”	10,000
“Last Ditch”	Late 20.6 – 20.8	Dated/numbered frames with any combination/style parts	1,200

ⁱ Source of all data and summarized production notes in article: Daniel M. Larkin, “The Larkin List #23”, Jan. 2010.

ⁱⁱ The authors conducted a detailed study of a large number of Toriimatsu Factory examples to identify and quantify the various change points presented in this article.