

Type-14 .22 KAL

By
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Recently, I was able to examine and fire a Type-14 that has been converted to .22 KAL. Over the years, I have heard of this conversion taking place but had never before seen an example.

From the right side, there are no indications that this Showa 7.2 Tokyo Factory Type-14 would be different from any other Type 14 pistol.

However, when viewing the left side of the frame just above the UCHI (兪) inspection mark in the "C" position, it is very prominently stamped ".22 KAL". From the double strikes of the die stamps, one can tell that it took some effort to get the stampings to take hold.



I have no idea who did the modification to this pistol. But, with the use of KAL vice Cal to show the new caliber, the gunsmith may have been of European origin.



Another external indicator that this pistol has been modified is when viewing the barrel from the muzzle. The sleeve that has been placed in the barrel is very evident and clearly indicates that the barrel is no longer chambered for the 8mm round.

Upon disassembly, several other modifications can be seen. The first of these is that the original locking block is not present. A new block has been fabricated and pinned in place. Additionally, this new block has a spring inserted into it to act as an additional recoil spring (the original recoil springs are still in the pistol and function normally).





The sleeve that was inserted to make the conversion to the new caliber can be seen when viewing the chamber from inside the barrel housing.

Lastly, when viewing the bolt, one can tell that both the original striker and bolt have been modified to shoot the .22 cartridge. This was accomplished by first plugging the original firing pin hole in the bolt face and then drilling a new hole at the 9 o'clock position to allow for the insertion of a rim fire striker. The new striker is held in place by a pin that has been inserted through the bolt body. Both the new striker and pin are cut to allow them to marry-up and hold the striker in place yet allow for it to move forward when struck by the shortened original striker. The original striker has been cut at an angle that allows for it to drive the new striker forward with enough force to set-off the rim primer of the round.



The only parts that are not original to the pistol are the magazine, cocking knob, and the striker guide.

The pistol retains a standard 8mm Nambu magazine. It can only be fired in the single shot mode. The bolt does extract and eject the empty casing upon firing.

After talking with a number of collectors who have heard of this modification, most had not heard of a successful modified mag that would allow for semi-auto firing of the pistol. However, one collector remembered being told of a successful modification to a magazine to allow for semi-auto firing vice single shot. This was accomplished by using a slim .22cal magazine and then having it inserted inside a standard Type-14 magazine. He was told that the modified magazine performed well.

Overall, the pistol is in good shape and does fire the .22 Long Rifle cartridges (Standard Velocity, 1070fps) with no problems. I have tried both the .22 Short or .22 Long cartridges, and

they do fire. However, they tend not to have sufficient power to cycle the bolt back far enough to allow the casing to be ejected from the pistol.



As for performance on the range, one has to remember that the Type-14 pistol was designed to be a combat arm and not a target pistol. With that in mind, I shot it a number of times and determined the point of aim at close range. I was able to shoot a couple decent groups with the target out at 10 yards by holding my point of aim approximately 6 inches below the center of the target.



After speaking with collectors who have inspected other Type 14 pistols converted to .22 caliber it seems that a variety of designs have been tried. This pistol shows how the knowledge and craftsmanship of one individual allowed for this pistol be modified from its original caliber to one that is a lot cheaper to shoot even if only in the single shot mode. If a magazine could be modified or made that would allow for the pistol to function in the semi-auto mode, functionality would be more realistic and accuracy would probably be improved.

Throughout the 20th century and even today, many Military and Police forces around the world have used a vary of methods to reduce the cost of marksmanship training. Conversion kits for military small arms and models of the firearms that allow for the use of .22 caliber ammunition are a couple of those methods which allow a cheaper yet effective way to teach marksmanship training.

During the period leading up to WWII and during the war itself, the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy limited handgun marksmanship training due to the high cost of ammunition and the thought that a pistol was only used as a self-defense weapon. From what has been learned from those prewar years, it appears that Japan made no attempt to use the .22 caliber in any of its military small arms to teach marksmanship. This pistol is just one example of how that could have been done had that decision been made.

