

The Lorenz Extracorps Carbine

By Bill Adams

Large numbers of Model 1854 Lorenz rifle-muskets were imported by both the Union and the Confederacy; yet few collectors are aware of the Lorenz extracorps carbine. The extracorps had a 26" long rifle-musket style barrel retained by two bands, and was issued to Austrian sanitary corps troops, land transport troops, pioneers/sappers, and military police. Sixteen extracorps carbines were issued to each artillery battery for guard duty, and were normally carried in one of the battery wagons when the battery was on the march.

The extracorps carbines were produced with the same two rear sight configurations as the Number I block sighted and Number II flip-up sighted M54 rifle muskets. The sling swivels on extracorps are mounted on the lower barrel band, and on a plate inletted into the lower butt stock. The lower sling swivel assembly is identical to that used on the Jaeger rifles. The extracorps trigger guards are not set up to mount a sling swivel. Some of the extracorps carbines made it to America, but later variants and alterations confuse attempts to identify the arms used in the Civil War. To further complicate matters, Jaeger rifles and extracorps carbines were part of the armament of the 6,800 man Austrian Legion that served under Maximilian in Mexico. In 1862, a variant extracorps was produced that replaced the lower sling swivel with a stud or button such as had been traditionally used on Austrian sporting rifles since the wheellock era. On those arms, the rifle sling "buttons" onto the stock stud in much the same way as the latch tab on a cartridge box. Like the true Model 1862 series of Lorenz rifle muskets, none of the M62 extracorps carbines or the M64 Jägerstutzen extracorps appear to have been exported to America. The Federals did receive a large quantity of "faux" M62 Nr. I & Nr. II arms, many of which were made up using reprofiled M49 "Garibaldi" locks. The true M62 arms have an Enfield profile lock that mounts flush in the stock, whereas the M54 arms and false M62 arms have locks with beveled edges that rise above the stock flat similar to US arms.

The extracorps is arguably the scarcest of the American used variants of the Lorenz. Although a few extracorps carbines have been excavated from CS cavalry sites (and usually misidentified as shortened rifle muskets), no example is known to have been recovered from a Federal site or positively identified to a Federal user. Federal references to Austrian carbines usually mean the short .71 cal rifled "Fruwirth" (named after one of the makers) carbines that were issued to a number of Western cavalry units. The author believes that the Confederate extracorps carbines arrived in limited numbers as part of the equipment furnished with the complete batteries of Austrian artillery that were purchased by Caleb Huse.

A substantial number of the Lorenz Jaeger rifles were imported by the Federals, and a smaller quantity was issued by the Confederates. As first issued in Austria, the Jaeger ramrod was not carried in the gun, but was hung from the soldier's bayonet shoulder belt. Subsequent issues of the M54 short rifle (known as Variants A & B) were set up for ramrods, as was the M62 Jaeger and two special lightweight variants. The lightweight M62 variants utilized extracorps style barrels with Jaeger long range rear sights. Those lightweight Jaegers also utilized sling buttons instead of lower sling swivels. A special 1864 extracorps version of the Jaeger (Extra-Korps-Gewehr oder Jägerstutzen) utilized a single barrel band, an Enfield style nose cap, and a sabre bayonet lug as found on the P60 Enfield rifle. The stock had no cheek rest, and the trigger guard extended into a semi pistol-grip configuration. The sabre bayonet for those arms is identical to the bayonet for the P60 Enfield rifle.

The rifle-musket and extracorps carbine stocks did not incorporate a ramrod retaining "spoon" and the ramrod had a short retaining swell that rested behind the guide ferrule in the long nose cap. The Jaeger rifles had a straight shank ramrod. All of the Lorenz rods had a hole through the ramrod head for the torque arm or "peg" on the combination tool to be inserted to twist the ball screw. Jaegers purchased by the Americans were early models not set up for carrying ramrods. Several different contractors altered Federal-purchased Jaegers to carry ramrods. Most alterations consisted of drilling a ramrod channel and adding a thimble. The alteration attributed to Tuska was particularly ungainly, and utilized a brass lower half-band and a long brass forward entry guide mounted on the stock. The Tuska is a contender for the "ugliest Austrian."

The extracorps carbine and the Nr. I and Nr. II arms utilized a socket bayonet with a locking clasp and a typical Austrian quadrangular blade. The sockets of the Lorenz bayonets had a single angled slot for sliding over the front sight, rather than having compound right angle slots like most socket bayonets of the era. The front sight base of the Lorenz was angled to match the slot in the bayonet, thus allowing the bayonet to be fixed in one rapid motion. Some bayonets for the Lorenz rifle muskets were produced under contract in America. Those bayonets resemble the

US Model 1855 socket bayonet, yet have wider sight slots to fit the larger Lorenz sight. Some of the US made Lorenz bayonets resemble the Model 1861 US bayonet made for the converted 1816 muskets in that they do not have locking clasps.

In *The Report of the Military Commission to Europe, 1855-56*, Major Mordecai included the following comments about the Austrian arms:

"... new models have been recently adopted for the arms of both infantry and riflemen, which are now in the course of fabrication for the use of all the troops.... The bore of the new arm is 0.55 inch in diameter, being somewhat smaller than the new calibers adopted in England and the United States. The musket barrel is thirty-seven and a half inches long; it is rifled with four grooves which make half a turn in the length of the barrel; the width of the grooves is the same as that of the lands; they are cut by machinery to a uniform depth, 0.025 inch, but the depth of the grooves and diameter of the bore are slightly increased, by hand work, in a length of six inches at the breech end." (The arms are relieved at the breech, and the length of the relieved area sometimes exceeds six inches.)

"The carbine for sappers and special corps is similar to the rifle; the barrel is twenty-six inches long. A rifle pistol is on trial, but has not yet been definitively adopted. The barrel is ten and a quarter inches long, and we were told that the twist of the grooves is three quarters of a turn in the length of the barrel. It was proposed to make this pistol serve also as a carbine for cavalry. For this purpose a detached stock was arranged to be connected with the pistol stock proper, by means of a hook and catch, in the manner that has been adopted for our pistol. By this arrangement the pistol would be habitually carried in the holster, and the detached stock or but-piece alone suspended to the shoulder belts by a ring and swivel.

The same projectile is used for all these new arms, either with or without the "tige." It is the ball proposed by Mr. Wilkinson, of London, and tried, among others, by an English commission, at Enfield, in 1852. The form is cylindro-ogival, with two deep grooves in the cylindrical part, and no cavity in the base, (Plate 21, Fig. 6;) weight 450 grains. The charge of powder (musket grain) is sixty-two grains for the musket or rifle-the cartridge being the same for both-and forty grains for the pistol. The ball is enveloped with thin paper forming the outer covering of the cartridge, which is greased in the part round the ball) and is inserted with the ball in loading. The case for the powder is made of a cylinder of stiff paper (thin pasteboard) enveloped with a covering of thin cartridge paper, which is folded over one end of the case. The point of the ball is inserted into the lower end of this cylinder, and the whole is enveloped again in thin paper. A new ball of this form is also used for the altered musket of the former caliber; weight of ball 680 grains; charge of powder fifty-five grains."

Potential Lorenz shooters should understand that the Lorenz arms are not .54 calibre, they are 13.9mm, which is .556 calibre. Lorenz arms imported during the War vary in calibre as well as quality. The bore sizes range from "approximately" .54 to over .59. The typical .535" hollow based bullet used in US .54 arms like the Mississippi rifle will seldom shoot well in a Lorenz. A .542" Gardner style hollow based bullet is too large to fit into my DGW reproduction Jaeger rifle, that is marked 13.9mm, whereas the same bullet drops freely to the bottom of an original Jaeger barrel. Sized down, or paper patched up, that bullet delivers tight groups in both arms (after a major rework of the repro rifle similar to that explained by Mr. Dixon). A .548" hollow based bullet works well in some original Lorenz arms, and the Thompson Center style "maxi-ball" also delivers fine accuracy in some original arms.

CAVEAT: Today's shooter must be wary when firing an original M54 Lorenz. Many M54 arms that were converted to Wanzel and Lindner breechloaders were later reconverted to muzzleloaders by welding sections into the barrels. Reconverted breechloaders often have smaller than normal hammers (as did some of the poorer quality percussion arms), and by visible lines in the sides and tops of the octagonal portions of their breeches. Made up for the African trade, those arms are potential bombs. Some reconversions were done by cutting off the breechloading assemblies and replacing them with cast iron breech sections. Those sections may be as long as a third of the total barrel length! Standard percussion M54s converted to flintlock for the colonial trade are frequently encountered, as are reconversions to percussion. *Before firing any Lorenz, have it examined by someone who can verify that it is safe to shoot!*

Sources:

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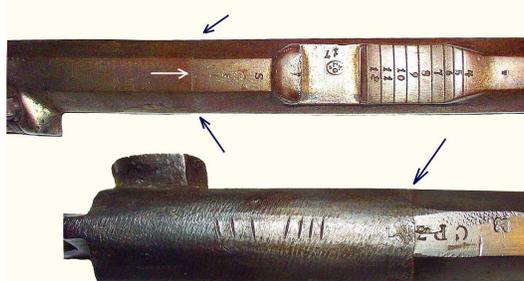
Tuska alteration of US M54 Jaeger rifle. CS issue M54 extracorps carbine recovered after Gettysburg. M62 Lorenz pistol - Note flush mounted Enfield style lock. The safety bar was used only on pistols.



Lorenz ramrod and screwdriver/nipple wrench combination tools. Torque "peg" on tool went through hole in ramrod head. Note retaining swell in rod. The Jaeger rifle rods had straight shafts. The brass guide centered the ball screw. The worm screwed into the cleaning jag. Sometimes a US style worm that stored on the torque arm was issued.



Extracorps with fixed bayonet. Although there is a 2" difference in barrel length, the extracorps has a slightly longer pull length, thus making the Jaeger and the extracorps almost the same length overall.



LORENZ JAEGER RECONVERTED TO MUZZLE LOADER

POTENTIAL BOMB: Barrel from a Lorenz Jaeger rifle that was converted to a Wanzel breechloader, then reconverted to a muzzleloader by cutting off the barrel and screwing on a cast breech section. The joint is barely visible on the top of the barrel, but the bottom wasn't finished. There is a seam in the bore. On some reconversions, filler sections were simply welded into the former breech openings. These dangerous reconversions were done on all Lorenz models.