

: Don't Ignore the "Nine" 21



Right profile of one version of the semiauto Sterling Sporter 9mm Semi-Automatic rifle, this with partially shrouded barrel. A fully shrouded version is now being offered. One of the 34-round magazines is shown with the Sterling.

was also very effective as a light machinegun, used with great success by the British and firing their popular .303 cartridge.

But, the Bergmann MP-18 machine pistol was another story altogether. With more or less the same cyclic rate as machineguns of the World War I period, the Bergmann used a 32-round magazine and fired the 9mm Parabellum pistol round. Banned for German military use by the Treaty of Versailles, the Bergmann could only be used by the Germans as a police weapon between the Wars. Submachineguns – meaning that a weapon fired a pistol-caliber cartridge, as opposed to machineguns, which fired a rifle cartridge – had appeared on the world's stage for the first time and would become very popular “players.”

The Bergmann was the first “subgun” to see anything close to widespread use in combat.

Until the end of World War II, the submachinegun was the high-firepower mobile battlefield weapon of choice. Although the fielding of the StG44 Sturmgewehr (assault rifle) came too late in the War to affect its outcome, assault rifles were on many drawing boards and/or in many heads at the close of World War II, but wouldn't really come into their own for years.

Keep in mind, with the exception of the M1 Garand, the mainstay infantry weapons of all the combatants in World War II were bolt actions and the closest thing the USA had to an assault rifle was the M2 Carbine. The Garand was an excellent weapon, of course, but eight-round capacity does not an assault rifle make.

Except for the Thompson and the “Greasegun,” the most common subgun caliber among the western nations during the War had been 9mm Parabellum – and it would remain so, even to this day.

The reader I referenced had a point well taken. Consider the fact that 9mm ammunition weighs comparatively little, as opposed to the typical rifle cartridge; therefore one can carry more ammunition. The German MP-38 and MP-40 subguns had 32-round magazines. The admittedly vastly more powerful Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) – in use from near the end of World War I, through World War II, Korea and into the Vietnam War by our forces – fired the .30-06 rifle cartridge. It usually had only a 20-round magazine and was both large and heavy for use in an

assault mode. Ideally, the BAR was to be used by advancing troops, the weapon shoulder slung and fired from the hip – a wonderful way to waste ammunition with an automatic weapon at anything more than a modest distance.

The submachinegun could be fired from the hip – were one so inclined or forced by necessity – but also could be fired from the shoulder, with the aid of a fixed or folding stock, even while the person so equipped was moving in an assault.

At great distances on the battlefield, the submachinegun is of little consequence. In urban warfare or in even closer quarters applications – laying down suppressive fire, for example – the 9mm submachinegun came into its own.

Unless one is “into” special paperwork and travel restrictions – not to mention spending large sums of money – a true submachinegun is not all that desirable. Yet, for urban law enforcement applications, home defense scenarios and the like, a semi-automatic only version of a submachinegun, in legal rifle length and form, can be a fine choice. Semi-automatic UZIs, Thompsons and – at one time – H&Ks have all been or are available. The Sterling Sporter 9mm Semi-Automatic Rifle is not only a great shooting firearm based on a time proven design, but it's also a lot of fun. With 34-round magazines – two come with each gun – the Sterling Sporter is ideal as a semi-auto. The problem with true submachineguns for regular civilian use is it is too easy to blow through too much ammunition, especially for those inexperienced with automatic weapons. Such a firearm as the Sterling Sporter gives you the firepower you can use, but without wasting ammunition.

Century builds the Sterling Sporters here in the USA, using US-made receivers and barrels in combination with original Sterling parts. The Sterling Sporter shot great for me and for my son-in-law, Danny Akers, both of us using SELLIER & BELLOT (sb-usa.com) 124-grain FMJ 9mm. Guns derived from military designs were made for FMJs, of course. The Sterling makes a great defender for an RV, a boat, a private aircraft or a home. It looks scary to the bad guys and it shoots reliably and well.

My reader made a good suggestion. Don't ignore the 9mm Parabellum – whatever the size of your gun!