

TOKAREV TT-33

BY RICHARD LUTZ

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SELF-LOADING SERVICE PISTOL (7.62x25MM)



Zastava M57

Feodor Tokarev's TT-33 (c. 1933) is arguably the best service pistol of WW2 due to its reliability, robustness, simplicity, accuracy, penetration, low cost and ease of mass production.

It was used by Russian soldiers and partisans fighting Nazi troops during WW2, including the Bielski brothers.

The single-action mechanism is much like John Browning's M1911 but simplified by removing the grip safety and thumb safety, which is how Browning originally envisioned it, but the US Army thought these safeties would help prevent accidental discharges.

These safeties had the

opposite effect by giving users a false sense of security, all too many of whom shot themselves or others when they mistakenly thought the thumb safety was engaged.

The TT-33 should be carried loaded with the hammer lowered to the half-cock position and cocked with the firing hand's thumb once it clears the holster.

Carried in this manner it is inherently much safer than hammerless pistols like the Glock 19 that have no manual safety catch and cannot be decocked, with many Glock users having accidentally shot themselves when drawing or reholstering one because their finger was on the trigger.

The TT-33's hammer should be lowered to the half-cock position before being reholstered. In order to safety decock it the supporting hand's thumb must be placed firmly across the rear of the slide behind the rear sight in front of the hammer, in case it slips when the firing hand's thumb lowers it after pulling the trigger. Release the trigger immediately after the hammer is released.

Don't carry a TT-33 with the hammer fully down with a round in the chamber as the non-inertia firing pin rests against the primer, which could result in a discharge if it was dropped.

Some are fitted with a thumb operated safety catch, but these modifications should be avoided as they often comprise reliability.

Refurbished Model 54 pistols (TT-33 clones once used by soldiers and police) are available from Norinco, while Zastava Arms produce the Model 57 which is near identical to the TT-33 except for a longer grip frame and magazine that holds one extra round (9 vs. 8).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The TT-33 has an excellent reputation for reliability, durability, robustness, simplicity, accuracy and penetration; thus an excellent choice for militia use where 7.62x25mm ammunition is readily available.

ACCESSORIES

Handbook

The Official Soviet 7.62mm Handgun Manual. [Paladin Press]

Log Book

Firearm Usage & Maintenance Log Book. [Blackheart International]

Field Bore Brush

Hoppe's BoreSnake. [Hoppe's]

Cleaner/Lubricant

Slip 2000 725/Slip 2000 EWL. [Slip 2000]

Dry Fire Rounds

A-Zoom Snap Caps. [Lyman Products Corp.]

Ear Plugs

EarPro EP3 or EP4 Sonic Defenders. [SureFire]

Illuminated Sights

24/7 Standard Dot Tritium Front and adjustable Tritium White Stripe Rear. [XS Sight Systems]

MODIFICATIONS & ACCESSORIES

The smooth grip of the Tokarev results in it moving around markedly when fired, impeding rapid fire control. One can checker the plastic grips or use a slip-on grip rubber like those produced by Pachmayr (strips of bicycle tube will achieve the same).

Some people don't like the Tokarev's grip angle which

tends to cause it to point low (most people soon adapt). One could fit aftermarket wraparound wooden grips to change the grip angle but the trigger bar is supported by the grips so this could cause a problem. One can weld on a curved backstrap resembling the mainspring housing on the M1911-A1 pistol or place a

spacer under a slip-on grip.

I recommend high visibility sights like the 24/7 Tritium sights from XS Sight Systems (I prefer the Standard Dot). They are special order items which must be fitted by a gunsmith who can also reduce the very heavy trigger pull most such pistols are lumbered with to around five pounds.

HOT TIP

Download magazines by one round to help prevent metal fatigue to their springs.