

This article was originally published in the **KCN** in their August 1990 newsletter as:

THE GUSTLOFF K98k

By Bob Jensen and was edited by Peter Kuck 06/11/2002

Gustloff began making K98k's in 1939 using code "337". These rifles had laminate stocks and handguards, used all milled metal parts and with the exception of the receiver code and the siderail marking were identical to the 1939 "BSW" k98k rifle. The use of eagle "4", eagle "1", the small letter "i", and the number "1" as proofs on the Gustloff k98k rifle also appear to be a continuation of the "BSW" proofing standard.



In 1940 the Nazi type eagles entirely replaced the earlier Weimar types (fig. 1), and waffenamt "749" (fig. 2) and waffenamt "221" appear together. The small eagle "1" and "i" proofs appear on small parts, such as front and rear sight bases, floorplates, and bayonet lugs. Stocks and handguards are laminated. There is a difference in the style used for the numeral "3" between the 1939 and 1940 rifles. Again in 1940 no MOD.98 appears on the receiver side rail. Large numbers of contract barrels were used to the point that it is unusual to find a "337" coded rifle with a bcd coded barrel. (Gustloff used far more contract barrels than any other

K98k maker). The known serial number range for 1940 is from 9170 to 157n with an estimated production run of 145,000 rifles. All apparently went to the German Army (Heer).



figure 1.



figure 2.

In 1941 the code used to designate Gustloff was changed from "337" to the letter code "bcd". Laminated stocks and handguards continued to be exclusively used. The date code was changed from a four-digit date to a two-digit date. Other changes included the use of a "cupped" buttplate, and a front sight hood that had been authorized in December of 1939 by OKH. (Bob Jensen has K98k serial number 3407a with a flat buttplate and K98k serial number 9099f with a cupped buttplate making it appear that the change was made between the "a" and the "f" number block). Branch of service stamps, external serial numbers and waffenamt "749" proofs on the bottom spine of the stock remain standard. Waffenamt "221" and the small letter "i" and eagle "1" proofs are used on all small parts. The 12.5" cleaning rod that had been made standard on March 10th, 1939 is now used. The known serial number range for 1941 production is from 176 to 3685q with an estimated production run of 155,000 rifles.

In 1942 the "bcd" coded K98k rifle continued to follow 1941 production standards. The waffenamt "749", and "eagle 1" proofs, along with the "i" mark appear throughout the year. Contract barrels continued to be the rule with "Geco", "bys", "avk", "ch", and the rare "guo" codes found on the barrels. It appears that all production went to the German Army (Heer). Stocks and handguards were laminate and all metal parts are milled. The quality of the blue becomes noticeably thinner as the year progressed. Gustloff rifles can be found in 1942 which utilized Mauser Oberndorf trigger-guards, followers, floorplates, rear sight components, and, perhaps, bolt parts-all are waffenamt "135" proofed but numbered to the "bcd" guns. Waffenamt "37" proofed barrel bands and front sight bases are also found. In this year Gustloff became more an assembler of rifles using subcontracted and other Manufacturers parts. The known serial number range is from 3999 to 8203p, with an estimated production run of 170,000 rifles.

1943 was a very interesting year for the collector of Gustloff made K98k's. Waffenamts remained the same as those used in 1942. Stocks and handguards continued to be made of laminate and all production seems to have gone to the Army. Gustloff continues to use contract barrels. Phosphate parts appeared in 1943. The known serial number range is from 1187 to 5183ff with an estimated production run of 325,000 rifles.

Among the variations of 1943 are the Mauser Oberndorf assembled rifles using a "bcd" receivers (all waffenamt "135" proofs on a "bcd" rifle), and the commercially proofed eagle "N" K98k rifles (made by "bcd" for use by unknown government agencies with No Waffenamts). The commercially marked versions have eagle "N" proofed receivers and barrels, their stocks are numbered externally on the bottom rear spine, and the rifles are found with many small parts either mismatched or unnumbered.

A single phosphated rifle (serial 4 33590) dated 1943 is known to exist. The parts may be replacement parts since they are stamped rather than milled. It is more than likely a 1945 assembly with five digit serial number using either a battle damaged receiver from a rifle that had been returned to the factory or a 43 dated receiver that had been misplaced or rejected earlier.

In 1944 Gustloff used the single digit "4" to denote the year of production. The "4" is slightly off center to the left of the receiver. Waffenamt "749", the small "i", "1", a lower case "e" and "a" appear on small parts as proofs. All production went to the Army. Look on "bcd" made stocks for the little eagle big "H" acceptance proof. A large letter "C" on the bottom rear spine of the stock is proof of Gustloff manufacture (This proof may also appear on other K98ks, which used Gustloff, supplied stocks). The Gustloff manufactured stock is noticeably thicker at the wrist, and will have a recoil lug, marked with the letter "f". Magazine followers are often found with the code "lrx". Gustloff produced a mix of all blued, dual-tone, and all phosphate rifles in 1944. The dual tone guns are usually blued rifles with any combination of phosphate bolts, triggerguards, floorplates, or bands. Stamped bands, floorplates, triggerguards, and followers were phased in during the year, even though combinations of milled triggerguards and stamped floorplates are a characteristic of "bcd" rifles in 1944 and 1945. The known serial number range for the blued rifles is from 5228 to 8206y and the serial number range for the phosphate rifles is from 4242 to 99,326, for an estimated production run for both types in 1944 of 360,000 rifles.



Among the interesting variations in 1944 are the "machine-gun" barrel rifles. The Gustloff MG barrel rifle is more common than the Sauer variant but is still rare. There may also be a thick barrel collar where the barrel screws into the receiver. Another variation exists in both 1944 and 1945 in which stocks alternate thick and thin layers of laminate. There exists a number of "bcd" rifles assembled in 1944 by Sauer. These will have the "bcd" code mated with waffenamt "37" assembly proofs and "ce" coded barrels. The odd commercial "bcd" rifle was again produced in 1944. A real prize is one of the very rare "bcd 4" long siderail receivers which were issued as standard K98k's. They were never assembled into snipers. They have the bigger special left receiver wall drilled and tapped for the scope base screws but with no pin holes drilled and stocks which were not notched for the base. So often through the years when found those rifles were assembled into snipers in this country for financial gain and thus a very rare variation became just another long siderail sniper, and was lost.



The 1945 dated "bcd" K98k is a difficult rifle to find. The known serial number range is from 13,819 to 14,117 but there are an unknown number of rifles that were assembled in the very last days of the war and are not serial numbered so that one cannot make a valid estimate of 1945 production. All of these rifles still had cleaning rods and band springs (even un-serial numbered rifles). Mauser made stamped triggerguards and floorplates were used in 1945 along with those coded "qnw" and "lu". At least one example of a "bcd 45" long siderail receiver issued as a standard K98k is known. A "bcd 45" K98k in a Louisiana museum has a long siderail receiver but a "ZF/41" rear sight base and a scope is mounted. The stock is not inlaid for a long siderail base. The late 1944 rifles the bolt-takedown washer was deleted in favor of the simple hole drilled through the toe of the buttplate. Stocks were still eagle "H" Army proofed but unnumbered--in fact on most of the late '44 and '45 rifles the only parts which were numbered were the barrel on the left side rear, the bolt body, and the bolt sleeve--no serial number on the receiver.



Serial Number Adenda Edited by - Pisgah on 06/29/2004 2:04:52 PM

NIM=non-import marked	UEL=uneven laminate stock
FP=floor plate	o/w=otherwise
MFP=machined floorplate	m/m=mismatched
SFP=stamped floorplate	MGB=machine gun barrel
TG=triggerguard	MLB=milled lower band
STG=stamped triggerguard	SMUB=speed milled upper band
MTG=machined triggerguard	SUB=stamped upper band
MTGWOLS=late variant machined	SLB=stamped lower band
triggerguard without provision for locking	OSR="oversized" variant receiver
screws	LSR=long side rail sniper
sKm=semi-Kriegsmodell stock	bbl=barrel

Four digit serial numbers:

bcd 4 1253 BBOTW
 bcd 4 1603 NIM, mostly phosphate, MGB, UEL, sKm, m/m bolt, blued qnw STG, MFP
 bcd 4 4242 BBOTW phosphate (or mixed?), machine gun barrel
 bcd 4 5228 blued
 bcd 4 7886 NIM, blued, matching, MFP, MTG, #d bands (MLB, SMUB)
 bcd 45 8357 BBOTW
 bcd 4 2682 D RC Cole
 bcd 4 2619 E RC Century
 bcd 4 5503 E RC Empire
 bcd 4 8565 G NIM, blued, matching
 bcd 4 896 H RC Empire
 bcd 4 4152 H RC Cole
 bcd 4 7723 K RC FAC
 bcd 4 8173 K MFP MTG UEL SUB SLB m/m bolt, blued, all markings intact, non-RC.
 bcd 4 8193 M NIM, blued, milled bands
 bcd 4 3339 n Century, blued, #d SUB/SLB, no# STG, #d MFP, m/m bolt, not sKm, foxo bbl
 bcd 4 5755 n RC Empire
 bcd 4 2596 o Israeli rebuild in 7.62, complete m/m
 bcd 4 3370 o double runes, not sKm, stamped bands, matching
 bcd 4 6715 o RC Empire
 bcd 4 9687 o RC Empire
 bcd 4 2851 P RC Cole
 bcd 4 8596 P RC Empire
 bcd 4 1328 q RC Empire
 bcd 4 2108 R non-import marked, matching
 bcd 4 2283 R RC FAC
 bcd 4 3211 R RC Cole
 bcd 4 1820 S RC Cole
 bcd 4 3815 S RC Cole
 bcd 4 8460 S RC Cole
 bcd 4 9597 S NIM, resto. project w/original #d MFP & un#ed MTG only
 bcd 4 5083 T NIM, milled except SUB & SLB, matching except factory m/m rear sight
 bcd 4 285 U NIM, blued, m/m bolt and stock (Gunbroker)
 bcd 4 5223 U NIM,blued,ce bbl,#ed SUB & SLB,qnw STG,m/m handguard,m/m SFP,not sKm
 bcd 4 9840 U NIM, blued, milled, not sKm, matching
 bcd 4 2098 v RC Empire
 bcd 4 1085 x RC Empire
 bcd 4 4351 X RC FAC
 bcd 4 6346 X RC Cole
 bcd 4 6915 X RC Empire
 bcd 4 4691 Y RC
 bcd 4 8206 Y blued
 bcd 4 8397 gg RC Century

bcd 4 4177 hh Zf 41
bcd 4 9790 hh NIM, blued, milled, matching

Five digit serial numbers:

bcd 45 11182 RC Cole, Russians attempted to blue w/o first removing original phosphate
bcd 45 13819
bcd 45 14065 KCN phosphate, stamped
bcd 45 14066 KCN stamped, semi-Kriegsmoell
bcd 45 14117
bcd 4 14155 BBOTW mixed phosphate, stamped, semi-Kriegsmoell
bcd 4 17805 NIM, mostly phosphate, MFP, o/w stamped, not sKm
bcd 45 18181 blued bbl & receiver, LSR
bcd 4 21191 NIM, matching
bcd 43 33590 not a typo, phosphate
bcd 4 34786 NIM, matching, stamped, phosphate receiver, bbl & FP o/w blued, sKm
bcd 4 37055 NIM, phosphate except bandspring, no# MTG/SFP/SUB/MLB, avk bbl, not sKm
bcd 4 44498 RC
bcd 4 45998 RC Empire
bcd 4 50794 NIM, matching, phosphate, unnumbered SUB & SLB, byf STG & SFP w/o #s
bcd 4 56304 RC Cole
bcd 4 58425 Import (Century), blued, m/m
bcd 4 58906 NIM, LSR. Blue: OSR, MLB, SUB. Phos: bolt, bbl, no# MFP, no# MTGWOLS. Not sKm
bcd 4 65087 RC Empire
bcd 4 68301 Interordnance import, phosphate barreled action, m/m
bcd 4 71693 RC Empire
bcd 45 73020 NIM, mixed phosphate, sKm
bcd 45 75263 RC FAC
bcd 45 75994 KCN mixed phosphate, stamped, not semi-Kriegsmoell
bcd 4 85320 Import (Century), blued, m/m
bcd 45 86617 KCN mixed phosphate, stamped
bcd 4 88901 machine gun barrel, MFP, MTG
blank receiver 89575 NIM, barreled action only ("1" marked), phosphate, OSR, LSR tapped
bcd 4 88904 NIM, MGB, matching, phosphate, STG, SFP
bcd 4 90396 machine gun barrel, oversized receiver, MTGWOLS, SFP
bcd 45 91679 BBOTW
bcd 45 93181 mixed phosphate, mismatched stock, LSR
bcd 4 93481 RC Empire
bcd 4 99326 phosphate
bcd 4 99899 BBOTW

Gustloff receivers assembled by other manufacturers:

bcd 4 12329n E/135 final inspection WaA (Mauser Oberndorf)
bcd 4 8847 RC, Cole single rune marked, no final inspection WaA (Steyr)
bcd 4 8816h RC, Cole single rune marked (Steyr)
bcd 4 8292U NIM, blued, LSR, OSR (Sauer)

1940 337 by Gustloff

In 1940 the Gustloff works in Weimar manufactured 145,000 K98k rifles

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle 1940 337)

Receiver code **337 (1940)** receiver proofs **waf 749(3), waf 1, & 1 (on side)**

Side rail **blank**

Serial number 4 digits possible alpha suffix

Upper band s/n waf **1 & 1** milled **"H"**

Lower band s/n waf **1 & 1**

Trigger guard s/n **waf 221(1), waf 749(1) d** milled with lock screws

Floor plate **s/n waf 1 and 1**

Bolt ribbed & blued

Root rear firing proof top s/n underside **1, waf 1, waf 749**

Gas shield s/n **waf 18(1) & n**

Safety s/n waf **221 & e**

Cocking piece s/n **waf (unreadable), & e**

Extractor s/n

Extractor collar **waf 18**

Front sight no hood **waf 18**

Rear sight meter scale both sides s/n **waf 18 & a**

Rear sight base no s/n a and **waf 18(2)**

Rear sight ramp no s/n **waf 18 & a, i on spring**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side **waf and "H" (Heer)**

Pistol grip **waf (2)**

Spine **s/n & Waf S**

Bayonet lug s/n waf **1**

Magazine follower s/n waf **1**

Flat Butt plate s/n **Waf749**

1941 bcd by Gustloff

In 1941 the Gustloff works in Weimar manufactured 155,000 K98k rifles

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle 1941 bcd)

Receiver code **bcd 41** receiver proofs **waf 749(3), waf 1, & 1 (on side)**

Side rail **mod.98**

Serial number 4 digits possible alpha suffix (s/n **1215 g**)

Upper band s/n **mismatched**

Lower band s/n **mismatched**

Trigger guard s/n **waf 221(1), waf 749(1) d** milled with lock screws

Floor plate s/n **waf 1 and 1**

Bolt **mismatched**

Root

Gas shield

Safety

Cocking piece

Extractor

Extractor collar

Front sight hood **waf 18**

Rear sight meter scale both sides s/n **waf 18 & i**

Rear sight ramp no s/n **waf 1 & i, i on spring**

Rear sight base no s/n **i and waf 1(2)**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side **waf 749 (2) and "H" (Heer)**

Pistol grip

Spine

Bayonet lug s/n **waf 1 and 1**

Magazine follower s/n **waf 1**

Barrel band **avk 33 41 bys Waf 13 (3)**

Cupped Butt plate s/n **brg WaA407**

1943 bcd by Gustloff

The late 1943 variant

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle blued bcd 43)

Receiver code **bcd 43** receiver proofs **waf 1 (1)** (on side) **waf 749(1)** (on top)

Side rail **Mod.98**

Serial number 4 digits possible alpha suffix (**s/n 3603 y receiver only**)

Upper band s/n **waf 1** speed milled
Lower band s/n **waf 1** milled

Trigger guard **s/n (4 digits) d** speed milled with lock screws

Bolt ribbed & blued

Root rear firing proof top s/n

Gas shield s/n **waf n**

Safety s/n **waf e**

Cocking piece s/n **waf**

Extractor s/n **waf**

Extractor collar **no waf**

Front sight hood **no waf**

Rear sight meter scale one side s/n **waf i**

Rear sight ramp s/n **waf 1**

Rear sight base **a and waf 18**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side **no marks**

Pistol grip **no marks**

Spine **no marks**

Bayonet lug no s/n **waf e**

Magazine follower **no s/n waf 1**

Floor Plate **s/n (4) Waf 1**

Barrel band **avk 71 43** bys (verticle arrow 2 feathers with circle) and **Waf 13**

Cupped Butt plate none

1944 bcd by Gustloff

The early 1944 variant

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle blued bcd 4)

Receiver code **bcd (4)** receiver proofs **waf 1 (1)** (on side) **waf 749(1)** (on top)

Side rail **Mod.98**

Serial number 4 digits possible alpha suffix (**s/n 7886 receiver only**)

Upper band s/n **waf 1** speed milled
Lower band s/n **waf 1** milled

Trigger guard **s/n (4 digits) d** speed milled with lock screws

Bolt ribbed & blued

Root rear firing proof top s/n **waf 1**
Gas shield s/n **waf n**
Safety s/n **waf e**
Cocking piece s/n **waf e**
Extractor s/n **waf i**
Extractor collar **no waf**

Front sight hood **waf**

Rear sight meter scale one side s/n **waf i**

Rear sight ramp s/n **waf 1**
Rear sight base **i**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side **no marks**
Pistol grip **no marks**
Spine **Waf WaA??? C**

Bayonet lug no s/n **waf e**

Magazine follower **no s/n waf 1**
Floor Plate **s/n (4) Waf 1**

Barrel band avk **142 43** bys (bys shield / 1) **WaA13**
Cupped Butt plate **brg**

1944 bcd by Gustloff

The late 1944 variant (standard issue)

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle phosphate bcd 4)

Receiver code **bcd (4)** receiver proofs **waf (1), 1 (1), waf 749(1)** (on side)
waf 749(1) (on top)

Side rail **Mod.98**

Serial number 5 digits possible alpha suffix (s/n **50794** barrel only)

Upper band **no s/n no waf** **stamped**
Lower band **no s/n no waf** **stamped**

Trigger guard **no s/n** byf & waf 135(2) stamped with **lock screws**

Bolt ribbed & **phosphated**
 Root rear firing proof top s/n **waf 1**
 Gas shield s/n (4) **waf e**
 Safety s/n (2) **waf m**
 Cocking piece s/n (2) **waf e (not relieved)**
 Extractor no s/n **no waf**
 Extractor collar **no waf**

Front sight hood **no waf**

Rear sight meter scale one side **no s/n waf i**

Rear sight ramp **waf 1 waf i**
Rear sight base **waf 1 waf i**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

 Side **no marks**
 Pistol grip **no marks**
 Spine **no marks**

Bayonet lug no s/n **waf e**

Magazine follower **no s/n waf 135**
Floor Plate **byf waf 135**

Barrel band **cxm44bys waf 26 (2)**
Cupped Butt plate none

1944 bcd by Gustloff

The late 1944 variant (standard issue)

Proofing & serial numbers (sample rifle phosphate bcd 4)

Receiver code **bcd (4)** receiver proofs **waf (1), 1 (1)**, (on side)
waf 749(1) (on top)

Side rail **Mod.98**

Serial number 5 digits possible alpha suffix (s/n **19648** barrel only)

Upper band **no s/n no waf** **stamped**
Lower band **no s/n no waf** **stamped**

Trigger guard **no s/n** qnw no waf blued stamped with **lock screws**

Bolt ribbed & **phosphated**

Root rear firing proof top s/n **waf 1**
Gas shield s/n (4) **waf n**
Safety s/n (2) **waf m**
Cocking piece s/n (2) **waf a e (not relieved)**
Extractor no s/n **no waf**
Extractor collar **no waf**

Front sight hood **no waf**

Rear sight meter scale one side **no s/n waf 1 waf i**

Rear sight ramp **waf 1 waf i**

Rear sight base **waf 1 waf i**

Stock Laminate

Stock Markings (external reported only)

Side **no marks**
Pistol grip **no marks**
Spine **no marks**

Bayonet lug no s/n **waf e**

Magazine follower **no s/n waf lxr**

Floor Plate **missing**

Barrel band **avk Bh waf 13 asterisk**

Cupped Butt plate none

Unverified information

I have examined and have data on BSW's with E/H, E/L as well as E/M (and O and N sea group marked disks) branch markings. The certainty with which the author of the subject article makes sweeping conclusions based on extremely limited information and observations is intellectually dishonest.

Scott B

Edited by - graf on 01/31/2005 1:55:16 PM