

CHINESE 7.62x39 CONVERSIONS

Kevin Carney

As a result to update vast quantities of captured Japanese rifles to a more modern round for internal use and for export the Chinese Army or Peoples Militia converted many of these rifles. These rifles were converted to 7.62x39mm, a more modern round. This round being more compact, shorter than the original Japanese 6.5 round and also being the first line round for the SKS and AK series rifles, the first line weapons for the Chinese and Soviet Armies. Now with the current imports, imported from China, many variations are available to Chinese collectors at reasonable prices. Many of these rifles have a wide history as to various markings in their lives. These are a few variations I have been able to examine:

The first is a Type 30 carbine, this seems to be a genuine carbine. The stock seems to be original with various stock markings burnt in (three or four different units), some being burnt out with an X. The stock had been finished in a brown paint, which is aged and does flake off in certain areas when lightly touched. The exterior bluing has been redone and now is worn, showing moderate pitting and scars from abuse. The front barrel band is correct and original with no bayonet lug provided, rear band also correct and original, with the sling swivel almost worn through. Front sight is an inverted V with guards and the rear sight is original, with no evidence of modification for the change in ballistics. Receiver markings, num and Type 30 have been neatly ground, being replaced by a hand stamped 7.62. The side of the receiver retains a faint stamping of the original serial number (336). A new serial number has been hand stamped (173), with the three being stamped over a 0. The magazine has been blocked to accommodate the shorter round, this was done by cutting the follower down and then blocking it with a formed-piece of sheet metal, follower spring is original type. The bolt has no visible sign of modification and does extract the 7.62 round. The bolt also seems to match the original serial number (336). Correct type cleaning rod was also supplied with the rifle. Type 30 carbines seem rare converted to 7.62, due to age of weapon and most weapons used were to convert seem to be Type 38 rifles.

The second is a Type 38 long rifle complete with dust cover. The stock is a high quality, coarse grained replacement with the metal finish being in excellent condition being reblued, showing little use or abuse. The receiver is void of num and Type 38, this being neatly ground off. The original serial number is intact (1827705), no series, and the Kolshikova Arsenal stamp intact. There is stamped a character (see Fig. 1) translating into modified, and the 5 proofs. Bolt is stamped 762, with no modification to the extractor. Magazine and follower are cut off for shorter round, magazine is blocked by a cut piece of steel. Follower spring is a wire type (as the Type 30), floor plate is a remanufactured piece with no markings or stampings. The throat of the barrel is rasped smoother than most carbine or short models I have seen. This weapon also feeds easier than any of the other conversions I have examined.

Long rifles seem rare, for out of hundreds of conversions I have examined, I have only seen one. The overall condition seems better than its shorter counterparts. This could be due to later trends in shorter length infantry weapons for modern warfare. Many of these conversions (mostly short rifles) wound up in places like Vietnam and Indonesia, used in jungle warfare where a long rifle would be awkward. This could explain why the long rifle is in such good shape with no markings on the wood.

The third type of rifle is the most common type available. This is a short rifle configuration like the Japanese Type 38 Cavalry Rifle. These rifles are modified from Type 38 long rifles, for all have long rifle front and rear barrel bands. Front sights are inverted V type with no guards and are either pinned or welded to the barrels. Ends of barrels are recrowned, some neatly and some rather crudely. Barrel lengths vary from 19.5 inches to 21 inches, barrels have been stepped to compensate fitting of front barrel band. Stocks are long rifle stocks cut at the buttstock, these vary in length from 34.25 inches to 35.5 inches to accommodate the short rifle configuration. Finish of wood varies from a natural finish to a brown stain to brown brushed or painted to a red stain similar to a redwood deck stain. All metal finish is reblued or black parkerized.

Four examples of the short rifles are as follows: The first is a Mukden Arsenal manufacture. The num and Type 38 is not ground, num is over stamped with the Mukden Arsenal stamp. Original serial number is intact (85237), with Mukden stamp. Front sight is welded to the barrel and crown is neatly done. Rear sight is adjustable peep style. Most major components restamped 97, including wood. Original stock markings stained over with a dark brown stain. Stock is two piece buttstock with an added recoil lug over the trigger guard. Overall metal finish is black parkerized, which seems relatively new. Metal seems free of pitting but had minor surface rust which cleaned off easily. Magazine is not blocked and no modification made to the follower. Follower spring is a standard Type 38 band steel spring. Extractor is not modified but does function normally. Barrel is crudely recrowned.

The second example is a Koishikawa long rifle converted to short configuration. Receiver has num ground but Type 38 is intact. Original serial number is untouched (1500365), no series, S barrel proof. The front sight is inverted V, with no guards and is pinned. Rear sight is open V with standard graduations of 100 to 400 to 2400 meters. Front barrel band has barrel stepped to accommodate standard Type 38 long rifle barrel band. Major steel components are restamped 33. Finish is black parkerize which, again, is a recent refinish and is in excellent shape. Magazine and follower are not modified and are standard Type 38 components. Extractor has no modifications and again extracts the shorter round with ease. Wood is refinished in a redwood deck type stain. Chinese buttstock markings have been cut in half when stock was shortened at the butt plate. This weapon is in good overall condition, showing no major pitting, but light surface rust, again easily cleaned.

The third example is a Koishikawa long rifle converted. Receiver has the num neatly ground and is replaced by a .5 inch triangle, which is hand stamped and the Type 38 is still intact. Barrel is S proofed. Serial number is intact (1392763), with all major components being restamped 31. Front sight is inverted V without guards and is pinned. Rear sight is open V, graduated to 100 to 400 to 2400 meters. Front barrel band is standard Type 38 long rifle, and again the barrel is stepped to accommodate part. Magazine and follower are standard Type 38 parts not modified or blocked. Extractor shows no sign of being modified, but feeds normally. Wood is of original type finish and shows much scarring and is void of stock markings. This is a two piece buttstock, again a long rifle stock cut down at the butt plate. It should be noted that all short rifles have a half hand guard. Metal finish is an older reblue, again metal showing little pitting.

The fourth example is a Koishikawa long rifle converted to short configuration. Receiver has num coarsely ground with Type 38 intact. Receiver and barrel restamped 11 with a numeral on top of the 11 on the barrel. All other major steel components are not restamped. Barrel is S proofed, with barrel being stamped to accommodate the front barrel band. Front sight is nonstandard issue appearing to be a hooded sight from a Chicom Type 53 and attached by a large pin. Rear sight is standard open V, graduated from 100 to 400 to 2400 meters. Magazine and follower are standard Type 38 parts, with magazine being mounted with vertical sheet metal rails, which the follower is cut and rides on these rails almost like a pivot [see Fig. 2], which feeds ammo smoothly and also serves as a magazine block to accommodate the shorter round. Wood is a orange shellac finish, crudely cut with file marks still visible and was made as a replacement for the short configuration, not a long rifle cut down. Stock has no stampings or markings. Metal finish is black parkerized with minor pitting. This type of rifle was reported to be used by the Viet Minh against the French in Indochina.

The last type of Japanese rifle converted by the Chinese is the Type 38 carbine. This example is a standard carbine, Koishikawa Arsenal, with original serial number intact (184676). Receiver has num intact over stamped with Tokyo Arsenal stamp. Type 38 stampings are also intact. All major steel components are not restamped, with the exception of the floor plate which is hand stamped 57 (possible replacement). Barrel is S proofed stamped. Front sight is inverted V with guards. Rear sight is open V graduated from 100 to 400 to 2000 meters. Front and rear barrel bands are standard carbine hardware. Wood is the standard two piece buttstock, being refinished in a dark brown paint. Stock is marked with a painted red number 69, underneath number appears to be a neatly carved PF. Metal finish appears to be original blue, showing no pits, but showing genuine wear. Dust cover came intact with rifle and appears to match. Carbine appears to

be rare, for again out of all the conversions I have seen only one.

It should be noted that the Japanese rifles converted by the Chinese all appear to be early issue rifles. In theory these rifles were converted to 7.62x39mm for second line troops or militia but also, to standardize the supply of ammunition, for second line services. It is also in mind these are conversions for export to various areas that China could supply arms for influence.

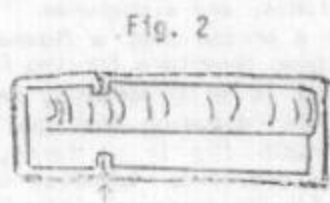
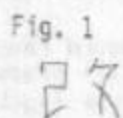
Two more types should be mentioned, they are not Japanese but Chinese copies of the Arisaka pattern. The first example is a Type 41 short rifle; this was made specifically as a short rifle with a barrel length of 24.5 inches. There are a few minor differences that distinguish this from the standard Japanese Type 38 short rifle. The first difference is the bayonet lug which is of Mauser type and will only accommodate a Mauser bayonet front barrel band (seems to be the same as Mukden Mauser band) with swing hook incorporated in band. Second barrel band seems to be the same as a Type 38 and retains the 3/4 hand guard. Receiver has no num, and is stamped with characters signifying Type 41 [see Fig. 3]. Both receiver and barrel restamped 45 and is the only major components restamped. Side of the receiver is marked with unknown arsenal mark [see Fig. 4]. The serial number is 8664 and is matching to the barrel. Receiver is out for dust cover and does retain cover. Top of barrel is marked with characters signifying modified [see Fig. 1]. Front sight is original and is inverted V, rear sight is open V, graduated from 100 to 400 to 2000. All metal components are blued metal, in good condition, showing no pitting and does not appear to be reblued. Stock is of one piece and refinished in a dark brown stain. Magazine and follower appear to be unmodified. The shorter round feeds and extracts normally.

The second example is a long rifle converted to short rifle configuration, and is a direct copy of a Type 38. This rifle is marked on the receiver with characters which roughly translate to 6.5 military type [see Fig. 5]. Side of the receiver is marked with serial number 9100485) and bears no arsenal or inspection marks. Front sight is inverted V, without guards. Rear sights are open V, graduated from 100 to 400 to 2400 meters. Barrel has been replaced and is quite visible for it is narrower than the inletting of the wood stock, just before the rear sight and does not smoothly fit up to the receiver. There is no restamping of major components or extra proofs on the barrel. Stock is a replacement one piece buttstock and 3/4 handguard. Finish of wood is dark brown stain painted on heavily. Metal finish is in excellent condition, with no sign of pitting. Metal is refinished in a black parkerized finish. Buttstock is void of markings. Magazine and follower are standard and are not modified for the shorter round and feeds properly. A note of caution must be noted, this weapon has no visible markings to indicate that it has been modified, receiver markings noting that it is 6.5, care should be taken to check the caliber before attempting to shoot.

The last example is not a recent import, but was purchased from the back room of a gun store with many other Type 38's. This is a short rifle that is not cut down and appears to be in new condition and not refinished. The receiver has no grind marks and is unmarked. The side of the receiver is marked with a hand stamped 277, as with the bolt and trigger housing. There is also a half stamped 4, stamped on the front of the side of the receiver. Front sights are inverted V, which is pinned and void of guards. Rear sights are open V, graduated from 100 to 400 to 2400 meters. The bolt is worth mentioning for it seems to be hand turned on a lathe, then slightly polished and has only one locking lug. The extractor is tongued into the side of the bolt. The bolt seems to be a hand copy of a Japanese trainer bolt, but is polished and not blued. The barrel has the character that states modified [see Fig. 1]. Another note is that the barrel has no barrel step and threads directly into the receiver with a coarse pipe like thread. This is then held below by a single machine screw, which is just pressed tightly to keep the barrel from rotating. Head spacing could be difficult to achieve on the filed. This weapon has never been fired, for the front sight is pinned and the pin runs 1/4 inch into the barrel. Wood is one piece buttstock with 3/4 hand guard, it should also be noted that the rear of the hand guard is nailed into the stock with brass brads. Wood finish is of natural type and shows no wear or scars. Metal finish is a high quality blue. This weapon could possibly be a trainer or a training aid due to the configuration of the bolt and the overall condition.

Any information available on any of these types to further enhance the information here, please let me know. Also, with the wealth of Chinese imports arriving into the country, different variations could be found. Anyone with further examples, please let me know for further articles in BANZAI, interest permitting.

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Inner magazine box railed to facilitate magazine to feed at a more acute angle



Type 41 Arsenal mark on receiver



6.5 Military Type Receiver Stamping

RESPONSE TO ARTICLE ON MANUFACTURING DATES FOR THE
TYPE 38 ARISAKA - KOISHIKAWA ARSENAL

BANZAI, SEPTEMBER 1989, Pages 245-246

George S. Winat

In response to Doss White's article on T-38 rifle production in the September issue of BANZAI, I would like to make the following comments. It is my belief that the great bulk of Tokyo Army Arsenal Type 38 production occurred before 1920, with peak production years possibly being 1917, 1918, due to World War I. By the early 1920's, due to government disarmament policies and treaties, I believe production was cut back to a bare minimum, with most arsenal capacity devoted to repair work. By the early 1930's, I believe production was picked up to cope with Japan's mounting involvement in China.

NAMBU NOTES: I observed S.T.G. T-14 factory cut-away, serial #5.
..... George Winat