

**WALTHER**

**P-38**

**9MM Auto Pistol**

**OWNER'S  
MANUAL**



CARL WALTHER • WORKS FOR SPORTS-AND HUNTING WEAPONS. ULM DONAU . GERMANY

**WALTHER**

The WALTHER Police Pistol Models PP and PPK have, by virtue of their unique construction, proved themselves to be the World's safest and most dependable handguns.

The absolute faith in these two products induced specialists both at home and abroad to demand a pistol of a similarly recognized and approved construction which would retain the principle of a very light weight and at the same time fire the more powerful cartridge Cal. 9 mm Parabellum.

The outcome of the appropriate considerations was the new WALTHER Model P 38 Cal. 9 mm Parabellum, which combines a phantastically low weight of only a little over 27 ounces with all the desirable advantages of a modern handgun — absolute safety, instantaneous readiness, and easy handling — and which allows the use of a considerably more potent cartridge. This pistol stands without rival.

All the component parts are interchangeable. They are made by means of the most up-to-date production methods involving the use of modern machinery under strictest supervision. As in the manufacture of any other of the several WALTHER products, only the very best materials are used in the production of the Model P 38.

The pages of this little brochure will give a most detailed and therefore very useful description of the various data relating to the pistol Model P 38.



Auto Pistol Model P 38 Cal. 9 mm Parabellum

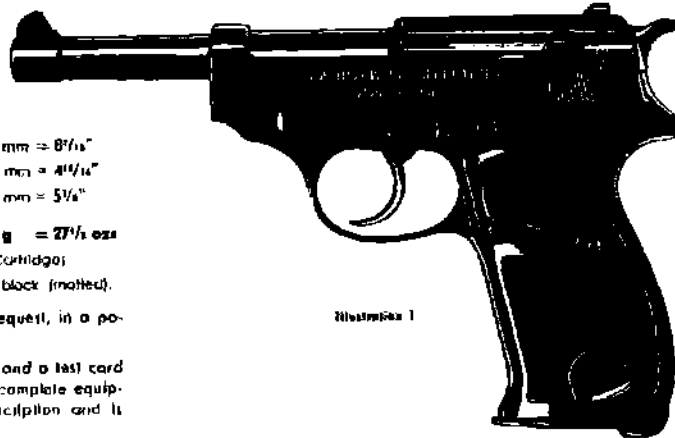


Illustration 1

General Data:

Overall Length . . . . . 214 mm = 8 7/16"  
 Length of Barrel . . . . . 125 mm = 4 11/16"  
 Height of Pistol . . . . . 136 mm = 5 1/8"  
 Total Weight . . . . . 780 g = 27 1/2 ozs  
 Magazine capacity . . . . . 8 Cartridges  
 Standard Finish . . . . . set black (matted).

The pistol can be supplied, upon request, in a polished and blued finish.

A spare magazine, a cleaning rod, and a test card are supplied with every pistol. The complete equipment also includes a technical description and is delivered in a stout carton.

The pistol P 38 has an external hammer, the combination of a perfect action design, made evident in the WALTHER self-loading pistol having an external hammer, and the constant readiness of a revolver makes the enormous advantages of these weapons abundantly manifest.

The P 38 is a double-action, locked-breech, semi-automatic pistol. It is fitted with an external hammer which is connected to a tension trigger and which has a distinctive pressure point. The P 38, like the models PP and PPK, may be fired by merely pulling the trigger. It may, moreover, readily be cocked, loaded and uncocked.

Cartridges with faulty primer caps can be fired by pulling the trigger repeatedly. A bulge in the barrel - caused by some irregular agency - will not impede the functioning of the P 38, since the barrel is mounted in an open and unencumbered manner. The pistol is thus always ready for instant use.

An entirely new method has been adopted in the construction of the safety device of the P 38.

As may be well known, there is always a certain amount of danger inherent in any loaded and cocked firearm, even though the latter may be rendered 'safe' by means of the safety lever. Any sudden mechanical shock or a fracture of an action component can cause an accidental discharge.

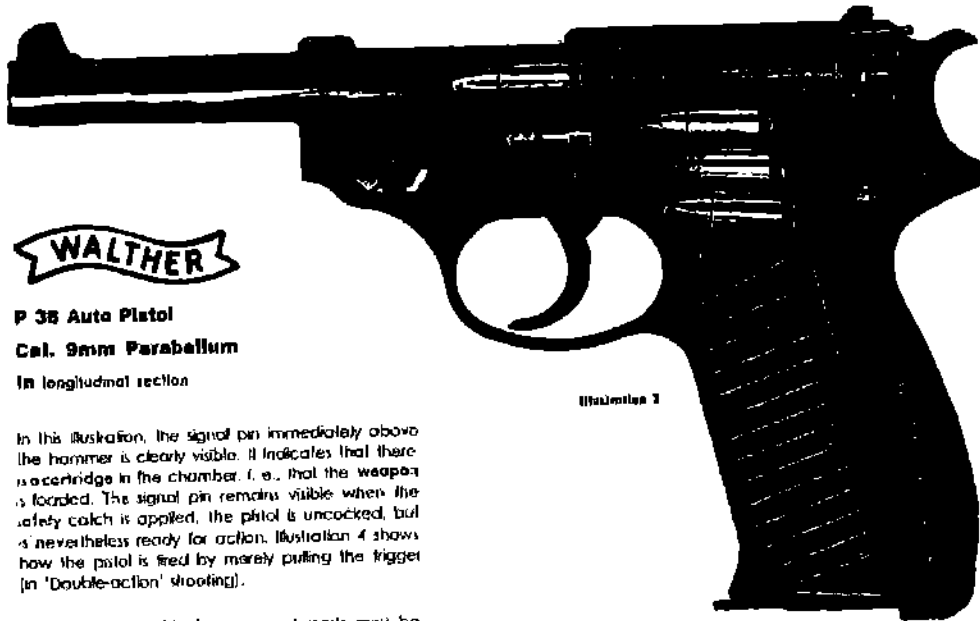
In the P 38, this basic evil has been remedied: the rotary safety catch does not make the action mechanism safe in the cocked stage. Instead, - application of the safety catch causes the hammer to become uncocked, - and that without any danger to the user. When the safety catch is moved to the 'Safe' position, the firing pin becomes locked first. Immediately following this, the action mechanism is automatically blocked and the hammer drops harmlessly - and the pistol is completely uncocked.

Un-cocking of the hammer by means of applying the safety catch, preceded by the locking of the firing pin and the connection with the tension trigger, make the P 38 a truly ideal service pistol.

Since the pistol is thus always uncocked but nevertheless always ready for immediate use, the hammer spring is therefore not subject to fatigue and weakening.

The P 38 can be dismantled within a few seconds and without using any tools. Component parts cannot drop out. Any unnecessary operating of the trigger mechanism should be duly avoided, and the hammer should not be allowed to drop while the chamber is empty. In any instance of 'dry' shooting practice, a dummy cartridge should be introduced into the chamber first.

It is an essential rule for every shooter that despite the fully guaranteed safety of the weapon, the pistol should always be held so that the muzzle points downwards while the weapon is not being actually used.



**P 38 Auto Pistol**  
**Cal. 9mm Parabellum**  
 In longitudinal section

Illustration 3

In this illustration, the signal pin immediately above the hammer is clearly visible. It indicates that there is a cartridge in the chamber, i. e., that the weapon is loaded. The signal pin remains visible when the safety catch is applied, the pistol is uncocked, but is nevertheless ready for action. Illustration 4 shows how the pistol is fired by merely pulling the trigger (in 'Double-action' shooting).

A list of the individual component parts may be found on pages 17 and 18 of this technical description.

**Graphic Description**

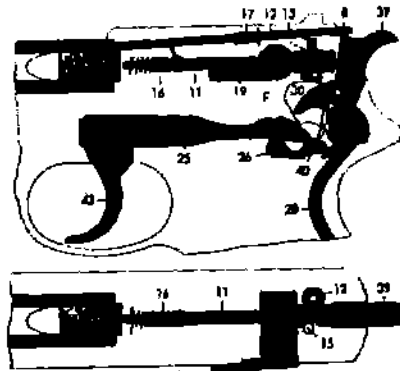


Illustration 3

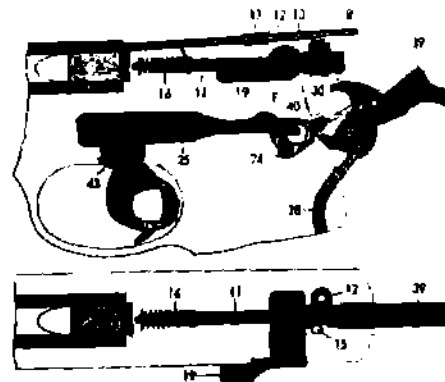


Illustration 4

The pistol is loaded and uncocked. The safety lever is 'off'. The pistol is thus ready for instant use ('Double-Action').

**Automatic Safety**  
 The pistol, though uncocked and loaded, may thus be fired. The safety lever (19) is in the 'Fire' position. The weapon is, as shown in Illustration 3, entirely free from tension.

The firing pin (11) is blocked by the firing pin arrester (12). The live round in the chamber cannot be discharged if the pistol should accidentally be dropped and fall hammer first on the floor. The signal pin (8) can both be felt and seen, and indicates that there is a cartridge in the chamber (Illustration 3).

The pistol is loaded, safety lever 'off', and cocked by 'pulling through' (Double-Action trigger motion, shown here in the moment in which the tumbler is about to be released by the sear).

**Operating the Trigger**

The trigger (43) has been pulled back until the tumbler edge (4) of the hammer (38) barely rests on the sear edge (40) of the tensioning piece (26), as shown in Illustration 4. Until then, the firing pin (11) is blocked by the firing pin arrester (12).

If the trigger (43) is now pulled back a little further, the sear (40) of the hammer slides off the edge of the cocking piece (26). The firing pin arrester (12) releases the firing pin (11), and the hammer (38) strikes the rear end of the firing pin (11).

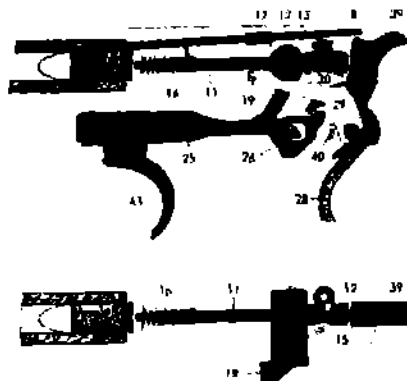


Illustration 7

**Pistol loaded, safety lever 'Off'**

Operating the safety lever when the hammer is cocked. The hammer (39) has been drawn back, and the arm is thus ready. The protruding signal pin (8) indicates that there is a cartridge in the chamber. If for some reason it is not intended to fire the round, the safety lever (19) should in such case be moved downwards until the letter "S" becomes clearly exposed. This application of the safety lever (19) causes the firing pin (11) to be blocked (see arrows). Moreover, during the last third of the lever travel the hammer (39) becomes disengaged by the lifting of the cocking piece (26) and drops forward. (See also page 10 - 'Handling' ... and Illustration 14.) The trigger moves backwards and remains in the rearmost limit of its travel.

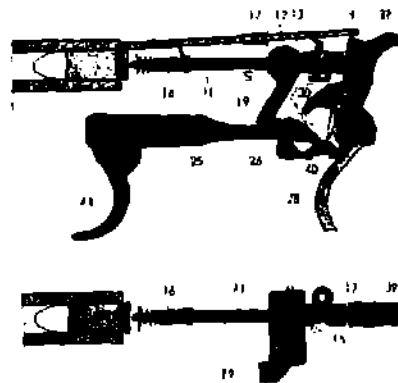


Illustration 8

**Pistol loaded, safety lever 'Off'**

Operating the safety lever when the hammer is uncocked. The firing pin (11) remains blocked by the automatic safety effect of the firing pin arrester (12) when the hammer is in an uncocked state. By moving the safety lever (19) downwards, thereby exposing the letter "S" fully, an additional lock is applied to the firing pin (11), as shown by the arrows in Illustration 8. The trigger remains in its normal forward position.

**Directions for the Use and Handling of the Pistol P 38**



Illustration 9

**Loading**

Hold the pistol with the right hand and render it safe by turning the safety lever downwards to the fullest extent of its travel, thus fully exposing the letter "S". Remove the magazine by releasing the magazine catch with the left thumb. The left index finger withdraws the magazine from the grip, as shown in the above illustration 9.

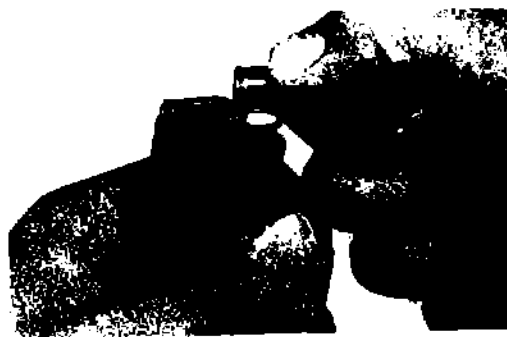


Illustration 10

**Filling the magazine**

Hold the magazine with the left hand and push the cartridges - base first - under the magazine lips by carefully depressing the feeder platform with the cartridge rim. The magazine holds 8 cartridges. When emptying the magazine, push the cartridges gently forward until they are finally expelled by the upward thrust of the magazine spring. The 7 holes in the side of the magazine serve to facilitate checking the contents of the magazine.

Any forceful jamming-in or tearing-out during either of these two respective operations would cause damage to the magazine and consequently lead to functional disorders of the pistol.



Illustration 11

**Introducing the first cartridge into the chamber**

After inserting the full magazine into the pistol grip, hold the pistol with the right hand. The pistol must still be 'safe'. Next, grip the slide by the ribbed rear end with the left hand and pull fully backwards - then let go. This operation causes the first cartridge to slip into the chamber. The hammer, however, does not become cocked by this process, as the safety lever is still applied and the hammer of the P 38 therefore cannot be cocked either by hand or else by pulling the trigger through. To make the pistol ready for immediate use, push the safety lever upwards to cover the letter "S" completely and the letter "F" (Fire) becomes visible. The weapon will still remain uncocked, since the firing pin is still blocked. The pistol is nevertheless ready for firing.

9



Illustration 12

**'Single-Action' shooting**

In target shooting, it is recommended to cock the hammer with the right thumb as shown in Illustration 12. With a little practice, this operation should become fairly easy. It offers the advantage of having only a comparatively slight amount of resistance (trigger pressure) to overcome. This in its turn increases the accuracy in shooting quite considerably.



Illustration 13

**'Double-Action' shooting**

Firing the first shot by means of the 'single-action' method is, of course, chiefly enacted in practice and competition shooting at targets, while 'double-action' shooting occurs mainly under active service conditions. In the latter event, the hammer is cocked by simply pulling the trigger through its entire length of travel for the first shot. Should for reasons of faulty ammunition the pistol fail to fire in such exceptional cases, the trigger should be pulled again. A second impact of the firing pin on the primer cup will as a rule cause even a defective round to detonate.



Illustration 14

**Operating the safety lever**

Hold the weapon with the right hand, and place the right index finger along the side of the trigger guard. The right thumb grips the hammer, while the left thumb pushes the safety lever downwards. The hammer can now slowly return to its resting position, as shown in Illustration 14. Care should be taken that the muzzle of the pistol points downwards.



Illustration 15

#### The emptied magazine

When the last round in the magazine has been fired, the slide stays open. If shooting is to be continued, remove the empty magazine and insert the next full magazine. Pull the slide back lightly and then let it slide forward. This process will cause the first round to be introduced into the chamber.

This cartridge may also be fed into the chamber without using the left hand: by simply depressing the catch lever with the right thumb. If it is not intended to continue shooting, apply the safety lever (see page 10, Illustration 14).



Illustration 16

#### Unloading

If the pistol P 38 is to be unloaded after a live round has been lodged in the chamber, put the safety lever into the 'Safe' position (see page 10, Illustration 14), withdraw the magazine, and remove the cartridges from the latter. Now pull the slide fully back (as shown in Illustration 15). The cartridge will be extracted from the chamber by the operation and drop out.



Illustration 17

#### Dismantling

Insert an empty magazine. Hold the pistol with the right hand and move the safety lever to 'Safe' (see page 10, Illustration 14). Next, pull the slide back until it stays open, and remove the magazine. Then turn the barrel catch lever downwards with the left thumb until it engages with an audible 'click'.

If an empty magazine is not available, the retracted slide may be made to stay open by pushing the catch lever upwards.

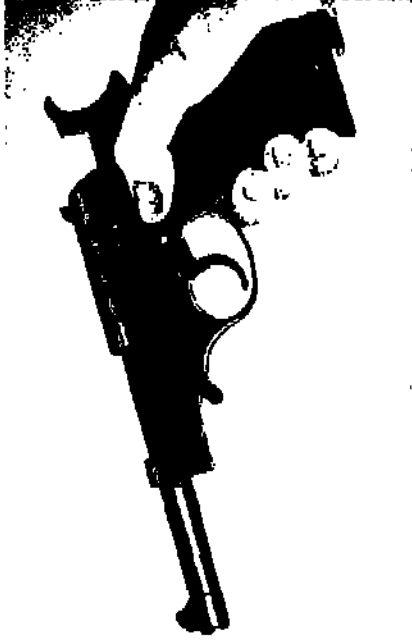


Illustration 18

#### Dismantling

The barrel catch lever having been pushed down, the slide should now be pulled back slightly and then be allowed to move forward so as to be separated from the frame.

Alternatively, the slide may be drawn back with the left hand while the right thumb depresses the breech catch lever. Following this, the slide may be allowed to glide forward and off the frame unit.



Illustration 19

**Separating the barrel from the slide**

Hold the slide upside-down in the left hand as shown in Illustration 19. Press the small internal locking bolt towards the muzzle end with your right index finger. The barrel can then be readily taken out of the slide unit.



Illustration 20

**Cleaning the component parts**

The pistol has now been partly stripped and split up into its four main units: barrel, slide, frame (grip), and magazine, as shown in Illustration 20. These components can now be cleaned and oiled.

The barrel, the grooves of the slide, and the grip unit should be lubricated with a good, acid-free, and non-resinous oil, and the barrel should then be wiped dry again.

Any further dismantling should be carried out only if there is an uncommonly great amount of dirt present in these parts. Any such work, however, should be entrusted to skilled craftsmen.





Illustration 21

#### Assembling

The re-assembly of the weapon is appropriate in order to avoid damage during this process. It is important that the following explanations and illustrations be observed:

It is particularly important to realize that re-assembly can be carried out only while the pistol is in a 'safe' state, i. e., the hammer must be 'down'. First, re-fit the barrel to the slide. When attaching this re-assembled unit to the grip unit, ensure that the loading bolt below the chamber is pressed upwards with the left thumb in the manner shown in Illustration 21. The slide unit can now be freely pushed back over the frame top without any fear of damage to the recoil springs, the slide, or the frame.



Illustration 22

The three protruding parts - ejector, release lever, and trip lever - must be pushed downwards so as to permit the slide to run freely back over the top of the frame (the three components in question are indicated by arrows in Illustration 22).



Illustration 24

Finally, push the breech locking lever downwards with the right thumb and at the same time pull the slide back with the left hand, then let the slide move forward.

The P 38 is now once again in its complete original state, - safe, and ready for further service.



Illustration 23

**Assembling**

Insert the empty magazine into the grip, then pull the slide back until the latter engages and stays open. Now push the barrel catch lever back into its normal locking position with the left thumb, as shown in illustration 23.

Test Target with test group of the **WALTHER** Self-loading Pistol P 38, Cal. 9 mm Parabellum.

Ranges and Performance:  
 Sighting range . . . . . 50 m = 54.683 yds.  
 Range of shot, approximately . . . 1,600 m = 1,750 yds.

Depth of penetration:

Material	Range		
	25 m 17.34 yds.	50 m 54.68 yds.	200 m 18.72 yds.
Loose soil	3 1/2 cm 14 ins.	35 cm 13 3/4 ins.	31 cm 12 ins.
Sand	2 1/2 cm 1 0 1/4 ins.	25 cm 9 3/4 ins.	21 cm 8 1/4 ins.
Pine wood	23 cm 9 ins.	23 cm 9 ins.	17 cm 6 3/4 ins.
Sheet iron, 2 mm (0.0787") thick, hit at an angle of 90 degrees	cut clean through	cut clean through	cut clean through

**Ammunition**  
 The ammunition for the P 38 is the pistol cartridge Calibre 9 mm Parabellum.

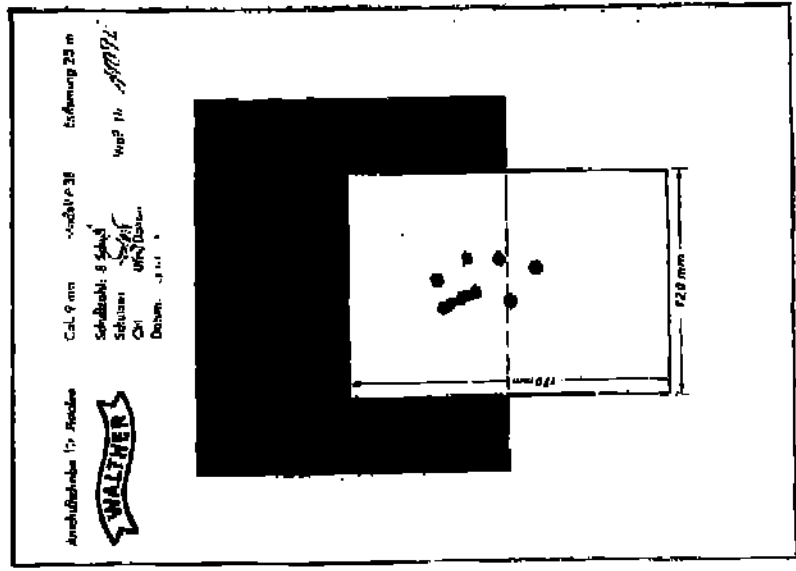


Illustration 25

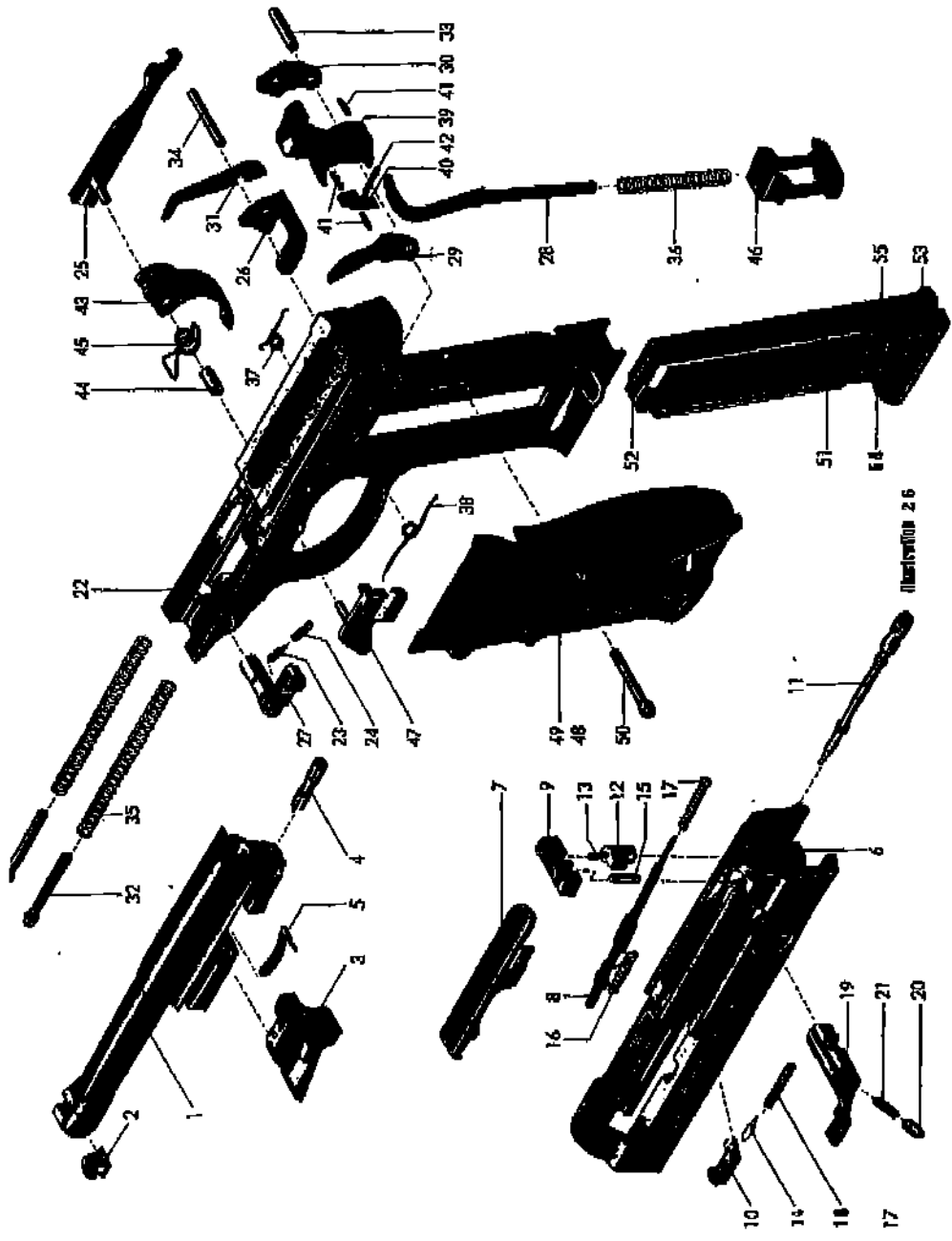


Illustration 26

## The Components of the Walther Pistol P 38

UNIT I: Barrel	Solely lever unit	19	Cocking piece spring	38
Barrel	Rest pin	20	Hammer	39
Front sight	Rest pin spring	21	Hammer trap	40
Locking-piece	UNIT III: Grip		Pins to Nos.39 & 40	41
Locking pin			Hammer trap spring	42
V-spring	Frame	22	Trigger	43
	Rest pin	23	Sleeve	44
UNIT II: Slide	Rest pin spring	24	Trigger spring	45
Slide body	Trigger connector	25	Magazine holder	46
Cover	Cocking-piece	26	Catch lever	47
Signal-pin	Barrel catch lever	27	Grip plate, right	48
Rear sight	Striker rod	28	Grip plate, left	49
Extractor	Relief piece	29	Grip plate screw	50
Firing pin	Release lever	30		
Firing pin lock	Ejector	31	UNIT IV: Magazine	
Spring to No. 12	Recall spring guide pins	32	Magazine casing	51
Extractor pin	Hammer pin	33	Feeder platform	52
Limit stop pin	Cocking piece pin	34	Magazine bottom lock	53
Firing pin spring	Recoil springs	35	Magazine bottom	54
Signal pin spring	Striker rod spring	36	Feeder spring	55
Extractor spring	Trigger rod spring	37		

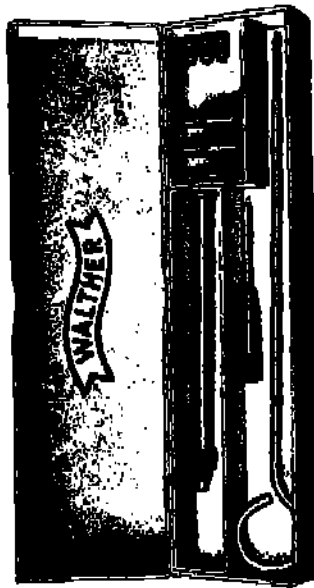


Illustration 27

Conversion Unit Cal. 4 mm (M 20)  
for the Pistol P 38  
with Steel Adaptor Cartridges

comprising:

Insertion barrel (liner) with spring washer and  
locking nut  
3 steel adaptor cartridges  
Ejector tool  
Cleaning rod

Additional steel adaptor cartridges supplied upon request and against payment of extra cost.



Illustration 28

Conversion Unit Cal. 4 mm (M 20),  
with loading tool, for the Pistol P 38  
comprising:

Insertion barrel (liner) with spring washer and  
lock nut  
Loading Tool  
Ejector Tool  
Cleaning Rod

## **Instructions for the use of the Conversion Units**

(as shown in illustrations 27 and 28)

Conversion units, developed for the world-renowned Walther pistol models PP and PPK and having proved a great success, are now also available for the pistol model P 38. These conversion units make it possible to use the small Cal. 4 mm (M 20) cartridges for all indoor practice shooting.

### **Fitting**

Remove the slide in the usual manner (see page 12). Insert the conversion barrel (liner) into the barrel of the P 38, apply the spring washer and the lock nut, and tighten up with the aid of the ejector tool by applying the latter to the groove.

### **Shooting practice by using the steel cartridge adaptor**

Insert a Cal. 4 mm cartridge into each steel adaptor, then feed the latter into the magazine in the normal manner, and insert the magazines into the grip of the P 38. Next, feed a round into the chamber as demonstrated in illustrations 10 and 11. The pistol is now ready for use. After firing the shot, pull the slide back with the left hand, thereby ejecting the steel adaptor containing the empty case from the chamber. The next 'live' adaptor may now be brought into the chamber by letting the slide move forward, thus closing the breech.

### **Shooting practice with the aid of the loading tool**

Remove the magazine from the P 38, pull the slide fully back, and push the barrel catch lever (breech lock) upwards. The slide will now stay open. Now insert a 4 mm cartridge into the chamber by using the loading tool, and release the slide by pulling the latter slightly back. Let the slide move forward and close the breech. The shot may now be fired. After discharging the round, open the breech and push the empty case out of the chamber by means of the ejector tool. The empty case will readily drop out through the magazine shell.



Illustration 29

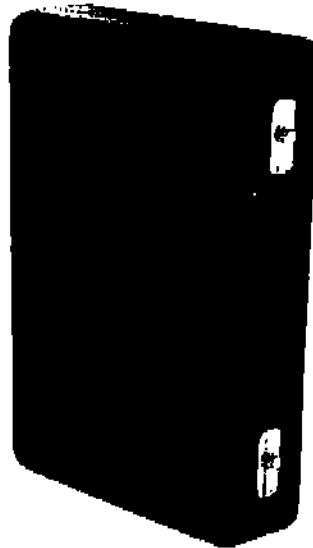
Upon request, the pistol P 38 can also be made available in a polished and engraved finish, complete with a De Luxe case. This case, shown in Illustration 29, is made of wood, covered with a good synthetic material, and lined with velvet. It is not lockable.

The case is particularly suitable as a present.



Illustration 30

Holster for the Pistol P 38 Cal. 9 mm. Parabellum. Made of harness leather, and dull black finish outside and smooth inside. External magazine pocket. Two loops for attachment to a belt.





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with this name.

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