

Browning Hi-Power Magazine FAQ for Hi-Power users by anonymous



Prior to the 1994 Crime Bill, magazines were never an issue that anyone cared about. Most magazines were priced about the same and if it didn't work you could buy another easily. Thanks to this asinine piece of legislation that is no longer the case. Supplies of pre-ban magazines are limited and many manufacturers skimped on quality in order to manufacture as many magazines as possible before the ban went into effect. The purpose of this FAQ is to help Hi-Power owners learn to identify different brands and types of Hi-Power magazines and for Hi-Power owners to share their experiences with these magazines so that we can spend our money wisely. It will also help to prevent people from paying a premium price for poor quality pre-bans. This FAQ relates only to Hi-Power magazines.

In an attempt to make this FAQ as accurate as possible, numerous manufacturers were contacted and asked to provide information. To date, only Browning and Mec-Gar have responded and Browning's response was to ask me to put it in writing and mail it. Naturally, the sections that have both manufacturer and user input should be the most accurate. The rest of the sections are based on user input only and since the cataloging for magazines is a relatively recent effort, these sections will change and possibly even contradict previous information as we learn more by sharing

information. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this FAQ a success, with particular notice to the forum members of www.fnhipower.com and Steve Camp.

While several of these are recommended for self-defense use, it is ALWAYS wise to test the magazines you plan to use for self-defense before carrying them, regardless of the brand. Even the best manufacturer occasionally produces a lemon. To help simplify things for those who just want to know "Should I buy this or not?" I've highlighted the manufacturer's name according to the following system: **Strong buy**, **Buy**, **Buy at your own risk**, **Avoid**. I have also included a "confidence" rating. This indicates the number of reports I have received on each type of magazine. A user reporting 4 good Pro-Mags and 1 problem Pro-Mag would be counted as 5 reports. If I have a sample magazine of the type available for my personal testing, I have indicated that as well. The most accurate ratings will be those with a high number of reports and a sample available.

1. Browning
2. Canadian Military
3. CDNN "European Military" magazines
4. D&E
5. Federal Ordnance Inc.
6. FEG Factory Magazines
7. FN Military Contract
8. Inglis
9. Indian Inglis R-type
10. KRD/South African 17rd
11. Mec-Gar
12. Pachmayr
13. Pro-Mag
14. Ramline
15. Triple K
16. USA
17. Western
18. Unidentified
19. Tips & Hints on pre-ban magazines

Browning

All Browning 10rd magazines (image 1) and many 13rd magazines (image 2) were manufactured for Browning by Mec-Gar. Pre Mec-Gar manufacture magazines are excellent and reliable magazines but may occasionally have some difficulties feeding, particularly with modern defense ammunition. This picture compares a 1970s factory Browning magazine with an early 90s Mec-Gar magazine (image 3). The Mec-Gar is

on the left and has witness holes. The factory mag is on the right. Note the olive-grey parkerizing on the factory mag. This is pretty typical of Browning factory mags from the 70s and 80s.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3

Markings:

Original T-series Magazines - The T-series Hi-Powers are considered collectable by some and so there is considerable interest in original mags for them. The following description describes a circa 1965 magazine. There were several magazine variations during the T-series and not all will look like this; but this is a good description of an original 13rd magazine that came with a T-series. This magazine has no witness holes. It has the traditional Browning mag body and a two-post aluminum follower in the white. Thanks to Sean for the pics of a hard to find part!



Image 4

Mag seam is only visible from the inside of the mag. The mag is marked with a number 2 inside a letter L on the back of the mag. With the mag upside down the mark is in the extreme upper right corner next to the floor plate. Many thanks to Mike for the description.

10rd - Current release Browning mags are manufactured by Mec-Gar. They are marked "Patent 5,353, 537 Caliber 9mm Luger" on the left side, "Made in Italy" on the front and have two witness holes in an alternating left/right pattern marked 5 and 10. They have a small plastic boot to reduce capacity to ten rounds and a "mousetrap" spring to eject the magazine cleanly from the gun. The baseplate is integrated into the plastic boot, which has three grooves on each side and is held to the magazine by a long Philips head screw. Followers for 10rd. are black plastic with no blade and an oval recess for a spring (image 5). Thanks to Ryan Snedegar for the 10rd factory magazine photos.



Image 5

.40 factory magazines will have a similar follower with a small skirt around the spring to aid feeding. .40 users should note that the Browning factory magazines and MecGar aftermarket magazines have several differences and some have noted problems with the aftermarket MecGars. See the Mec-Gar description for details.

13rd - This will vary widely depending on the age of the Hi-Power. The sample photo (image 6 - Thanks Bompa!) is a factory magazine from a 1990 Practical Hi-Power.



Image 6

Most magazines will not have the Pachmayr bumper pads attached; but pre-ban factory mags from this era will show the zig-zag pattern of three witness holes on back and the "Italy CAL. 9mm NATO/Luger" stamp on the left side of the magazine. Factory magazines from this era may show blued or parkerized mag bodies but will usually have a blued baseplate. Followers are the traditional two-legged black plastic follower. Factory mags will usually have the follower and floorplate attached to the mag spring instead of just sitting loosely in it.

This magazine is a late 1980s sample of a Mec-Gar manufactured Browning factory magazine (image 7).



Image 7

It originally came boxed with a 1989 MkIII Hi-Power. It shows many traits of 1980s era factory magazines including the "Italy CAL. 9mm NATO/Luger" logo and a zig-zag pattern of witness holes (image 8).



Image 8

It also shows a unique four-legged metal follower. Browning factory mags used the traditional two-legged factory follower until sometime around 1985 (unsure of exact date - this is basically a SWAG) and then switched to a four-legged plastic follower. At some point, production had changed to a four-legged metal follower by 1989 (possibly because the plastic legs were subject to breakage) and then back to the original two-legged plastic follower by 1990 (although 4-legged plastic followers have been reported with factory magazines as late as 1992). All versions of the factory mags are solid with no reported problems in reliability and three reports of a leg breaking on the four-legged plastic follower.

Known Problems: Three reports of front legs breaking on mags with 4-legged plastic followers - none of the broken followers appear to have affected reliability. Thanks to Gary for testing this issue for us.

Confidence: Over 100 Reports + sample mags available

Recommendation: Recommended for self-defense use only after testing with type of ammo you intend to carry

Canadian Military Magazines

About once a month I get inquiries from someone who is ready to purchase some "Canadian Military magazines" for the Hi-Power from some auction site or dealer and wants to check their authenticity. I finally contacted someone who works closely with the Canadian military, including groups like JTF, and is immensely familiar with

firearms and asked him for a picture of an authentic Canadian military Hi-Power magazine. He responded that all Canadian military Hi-Power magazines are Inglis or 21rd factory magazines. He went on to state that there were so many Inglis mags available for the Hi-Power that you can still get them new and in the wrapper. Anyone wishing to verify the authenticity of Canadian military magazines for sale needs only to compare them to the above two sections to see if they match either of those magazines - if they don't, they are not legitimate Canadian military mags.

Known Problems: Anybody representing non-Inglis or non-21rd mags as Canadian is misrepresenting their product. Why do you think they would do something like that?

Confidence: 99.9% - My source knows his stuff; but he is human.

Recommendation: If they are advertising them as Canadian military and they aren't Inglis or 21rd mags, avoid them like the plague.

CDNN/European Military Magazines/Mystery Mags

Currently, several distributors are selling Pro-Mag magazines for the Hi-Power marked as "European Military" surplus. These magazines are mystery mags and come in several varieties.



Image 9 mystery mags

Externally, all mags are parkerized or blued with a black baseplate and Pachmayr bumper pad. The magazines come in at least two different lots. The lot that is unmarked is no longer available from distributors and also represents the better magazine (we'll call it **Lot 1**). The second lot (**Lot 2** is marked "Made in USA") has had several problems reported. Many thanks to Walt and Sam who took a considerable amount of time to answer my questions in an attempt to solve this mystery.

Markings: (Lot 1) Parkerized magazine body with black baseplate. Two holes in the front face of the mag, 1 centered at the top 1/2" from the lip of the mag and one

centered at the bottom 5/16" from the base plate (similar to USA and ProMag). They all have two witness holes on the back face of the mag offset to the right, at the 5 and 10 round position. The bottom piece (plastic) has two nipples that position it within the spring and is a figure 8 shaped. The follower is a plastic blade type rather than the two legged type. The follower may have "HI P" or "GI" in very small letters on the underside of the molding. The side indentation at the top goes all the way to the front face of the mag. Seam is barely visible - may be small pits along seam line.

(Lot 2) Same except for an elongated hole on the rear left side of the mag near the bottom (1/8" w X 3/4" l). Above the slit running vertically is "MADE IN U.S.A." This diagram (image 10) shows the position of all markings for lots 1 and 2



Image 10

Known Problems: Multiple problems reported with Lot 2 mags, including failure to feed and failure to accept more than 6 rounds. The Lot 1 mags are much preferred and make good range use mags if they can be found. One report of Lot 1 mags - may show dipping on first round when loaded with more than 13 rounds.

Confidence: 39 Reports

Recommendation: Steer clear of the Lot 2 magazines. Most of the distributors no longer have the Lot 1 magazines available but they are still plentiful at gun shows and gun stores. The Lot 1 magazines are good for range use and individual mags may be reliable enough for self-defense use.

D&E

Another recent appearance, these mags were unknown in 1994 but have recently appeared on the market as pre-ban mags. These mags almost certainly fit into one of

two categories:

- 1) Pre-ban mags exported or manufactured exclusively to Europe that are now being re-imported into the U.S. some 8-10 years later.
- 2) Pre-ban mags that couldn't be sold in the U.S. due to quality/reputation issues that are being marketed under another name in an attempt to avoid those issues.

Markings: No description or pictures available yet

Known Problems: Three reports of magazines not fitting into the mag well or fitting very tightly. Two reports of unreliable feeding.

Confidence: 10 reports

Recommendation: No formal recommendation yet; but I'd limit them to range use until more reports come in.

Federal Ordnance

Federal Ordnance (image 11) is a California-based company that imported Italian magazines during the mid-1980s.



Image 11 Federal Ordnance

Both 20rd and 13rd magazines were imported. These magazines were marked GP35 (image 12).



Image 12

There is also a 13 round version (image 13). It has a olive-grey parkerized finish identical to that used on mid-80s Hi-Powers. Many of the Federal Ordnance mags were sold through Natchez Shooters Supplies. Fellow shooter Nolan reports he used these mags frequently during IPSC competition and was pleased with the performance.



Image 13

He was also fortunate enough to still have some in the bag (image 14) and solve the origin of these mags. As Italian made mags, chances are good they are yet another a SILE or Mec-Gar derivative and performance reported so far has been on par with OEM mags.



Image 14

Markings: Marked "GP35Cal.9MM" of lower left side. Small hump on spine of magazine to seat against mag well on 20rd versions. The mag body is parkerized the usual smooth olive grey with only the floor plate and the internal floor plate retainer being actually blued. The follower is the usual two post black plastic and there are no witness holes. The floor plate retainer is not crimped to the magazine spring. The rear of the mag body is "brushed" and the seam is only visible from the inside and very smooth. The spring is parkerized also.

Known Problems: None reported

Confidence: 14 reports

Recommendations: Few reports on this magazine but all 100% reliability so far.

FEG factory magazines

FEG of Hungary produces a Hi-Power clone (PJK-9HP). The magazines produced for the single-action clone (image 15) will work in other Hi-Powers as well. Many FEGs are sold at gun shows without original packaging and more than a few are sold with aftermarket magazines.



Image 15

This complicated the information for FEG magazine markings quite a bit. However, the two FEG magazines I have been able to positively identify as factory-issue have all been outstanding magazines. They are tightly made and well-finished and for the most part indistinguishable from factory Browning mags. All FEG mags identified to date have held 14 rounds with no problems. Remember though, just because it comes with an FEG doesn't mean it is an FEG factory magazine. Pictures are from a 1992 PJK-9HP era magazine. A big thanks to Gary for the work!

Markings: Parkerized gray/green body (image 15) with a black metal baseplate (image 16). Black plastic or grey cast metal follower (image 17). No visible seam in

back (image 18). Baseplate fit VERY tightly to mag body. Traditional two-post follower. No distinguishing markings beyond these.



Image 16



Image 17



Image 18

Known Problems: No problems reported with original OEM magazine. Several have reported problems with rough follower molding that causes feed problems associated with FEG magazines. The follower and internal mag body must be deburred before the mag will feed reliably. However, due to the large number of FEGs sold with aftermarket magazines, there is no way to be sure that these malfunctions occurred with OEM mags.

Confidence: 6 Reports

Recommendation: The original factory mags identified to date have been top-of-the-line Hi-Power magazines and great buys perfectly suitable for defensive use. However, this is based on a small number of reports and there are a lot of FEGs sold with aftermarket mags from various brands. Don't assume that because it came with an FEG, it is factory.

FN Military Contract

These magazines were manufactured for FN in order to fulfill military contracts. There are many military contract magazines that will fit the Hi-Power manufactured in various countries. Naturally, these magazines vary in quality as well but the FN magazines are top notch and extremely reliable.

Markings: Since markings for military contract magazines vary widely, we don't yet have a good list of the various markings for FN magazines. One marking known to represent a FN military contract magazine (image 19) is the legend "BELGIUM - 9mm NATO/LUGER" (image 20) on the side of the magazine body (These are the markings present on magazines used by the Israeli military and police forces).

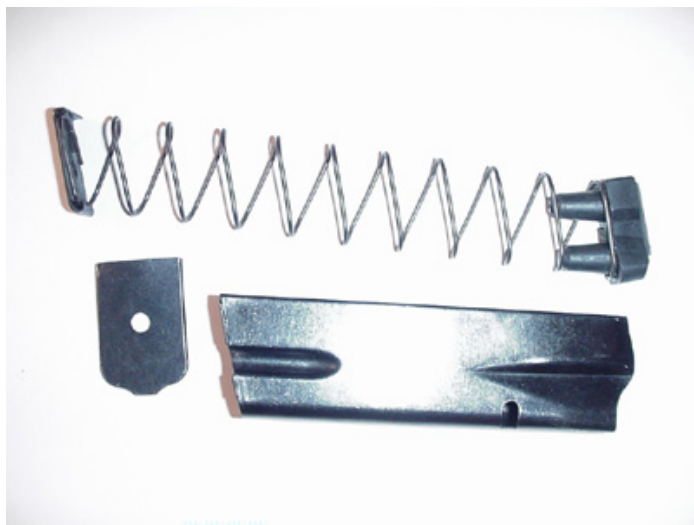


Image 19



Image 20

Finishes are usually parkerized or blued. The Belgium marked mags are very similar to Mec-Gars in manufacture details with the only notable difference being that the follower and floor-plate containing the stud are attached firmly to the magazine spring. Belgium-marked mags may have the black plastic two-legged follower common to Mec-Gars, at least one report shows a Belgium mag with an old T-style two-post aluminum white follower (image 21).



Image 21

Some Belgium marked magazines have also been reported with the pi marking. Brian sends us this picture of a stainless steel FN factory magazine (image 22). Note the attached spring assembly and the markings (image 23).



Image 22



Image 23

These mags are marked with BELGIUM on the back spine of the magazine and a fancy "H" that Brian informs me stands for "Herstal". The "H" resembles an inverted pi sign and is the same symbol I have referred to as a pi sign elsewhere in the FAQ. NATO issue Hi-Power magazines will often be marked with the NATO stock number (1005-13-010-0319) on the baseplate and may have markings indicating manufacturer and date as well. Thanks to abninftr and DerRottweiler for the help.

Here is a similar contract variation of the FN magazine. This magazine was made by SILE (an Italian company, image 24). Thanks to Georgia & Dee for the picture.



Image 24

Known Problems: None reported

Confidence: 52 reports + sample mag available

Recommendation: Good for self-defense use where reliability is a must.

Inglis

Inglis magazines (image 25) were manufactured by this Canadian company for Hi-Powers built during WWII and Canadian Hi-Powers used in service afterwards.

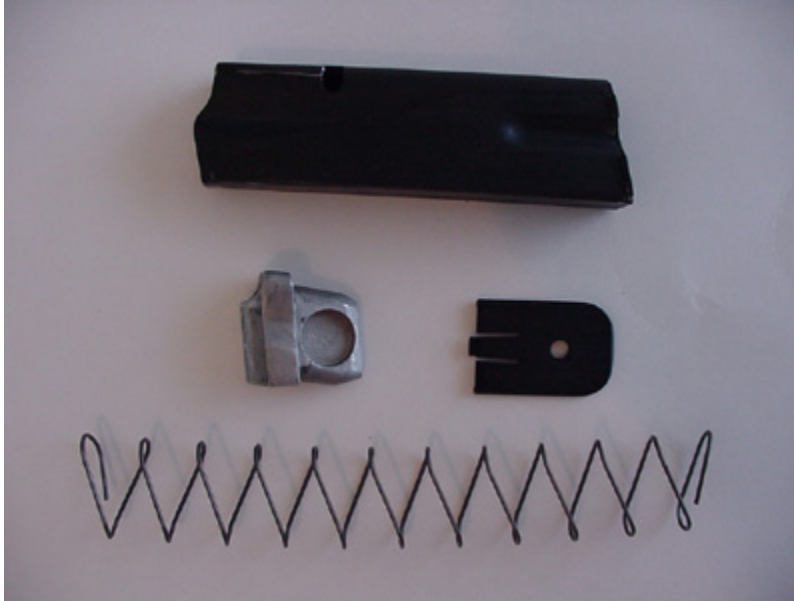


Image 25

While supposedly 13rd magazines, most Inglis magazines (image 26) will hold 14 rounds with no difficulty. They are reliable and a good value. They are also easy to spot at gun shows thanks to their aluminum follower and unusual baseplate (image 27).



Image 26



Image 27

Markings: On the lower front of the magazine are the letters "JI." The Inglis mag has an aluminum follower (image 28) that's in the white. Baseplate has a hole in it and some baseplates may also have "JI" behind it (see image 27).



Image 28

Baseplate appears to have been milled rather than pressed. Held on with a hook arrangement near the rear of the plate formed by two parallel cuts in the baseplate from the rear. Parkerized finish. Seam is polished down, but visible on the back of the magazine body. Look carefully for the JI, (image 29) it sits right in the path of the magazine disconnect and can be worn down or rubbed off on some Inglis mags.



Image 29

There has also been an Inglis style mag marked "Mexico" on the body with no JI markings. It is NOT an Inglis mag but appears to work well enough. The "Mexican Inglis" were manufactured in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

Known Problems: Odd baseplate arrangement sometimes pops off at inconvenient times on older mags.

Confidence: 41 reports + sample mag available

Recommendations: Good for self-defense use where reliability is a must.

Indian Inglis "R"-type

The Indian military at one point produced its own clone version of the Inglis Mk1 Hi-Powers. It also produced magazines (image 30) for the pistol that are very similar to the Inglis pattern. These magazines have been marketed by various import companies as Australian, Portuguese, and Asian military magazines. They are not Australian or Portuguese; but for once there is a little truth to the marketing hype as these are Indian magazines. Unlike many other Inglis mags, these appear to hold 13 rounds but not 14, as is common with many Inglis variants.



Image 30

Markings: Uniform olive green parkerizing over entire magazine. Very similar to Inglis mags in construction to include unique baseplate and in-the-white single blade

aluminum follower. Markings are the letter "R", stamped into the right rear side of the mag body, the bottom of the floor-plate and the side of the follower.

Known Problems: Magazines appear to be slightly larger front-to-back and there are some mixed reports that they will not drop free from forged-frame Hi-Powers (though they appear to work fine in cast-frame and Inglis models).

Confidence: 12 reports

Recommendations: Still early; but all users report 100% reliability so far.

KRD

Also known as "South African" magazines (image 31) or "Argentine military magazines", this company produced 15 and 17rd magazines for the Hi-Power. Unlike Mec-gar who used a thinner plastic follower or Ramline, who used a unique spring arrangement, KRD simply used a steel follower (image 32) and concealed the extension of the magazine beyond the magazine well with a plastic bumper pad (image 33).

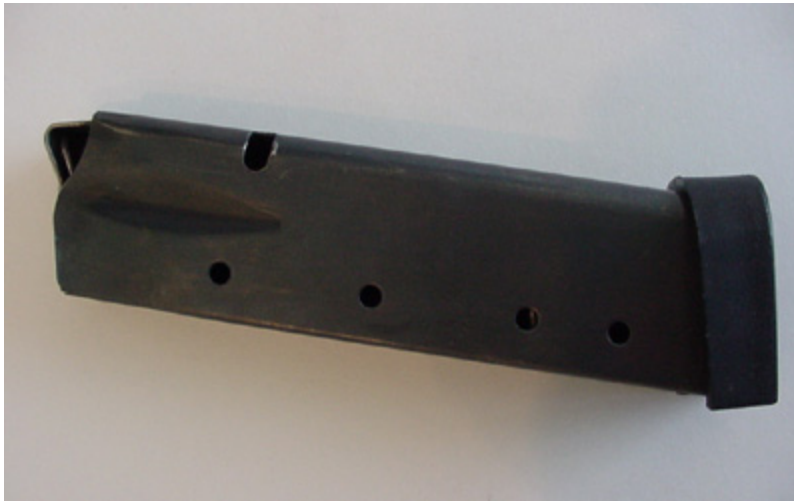


Image 31



Image 32



Image 33

KRD is an Argentina-based company that has produced magazines for the Argentine military's licensed Hi-Power copy made by FM and for the South African military and

police. The KRD magazines are very robust and durable and usually come with a 9mm mag loading tool that will prove useful. The smooth steel front provides a very nice finish for those pistols whose trigger is effected by the magazine disconnect. There are at least two variations of KRD mags (image 34).



Image 34

The version first introduced on the market around 2000 has a shallow notch in the back of the magazine and represents the version used in the majority of these reports. The current stock of these magazines show a much deeper U-shaped notch that may be an attempt to address issues with cracking of the feed-lips at this location. The picture (image 34) shows the older, more common variation on the right and the newer variation on the left. Thanks to detroitcasket for the sharp eye and pics!

Markings: There should be little chance of mistaking a KRD magazine with another brand. They are made with a thick steel magazine body, heavy-duty spring, and unusual steel follower. The plastic bumper pad/baseplate of the KRD 17rd mags sticks out a little more than 0.5 inches from the magazine well and is marked "KRD". The 15rd magazine has a smaller baseplate but is otherwise similar. Unmarked witness holes are present on the right side of the magazine at 5, 10, 15, and 17 rounds. Seam faintly visible on back of mag. These magazines are offered in nickel and blued finishes.

Known Problems: The KRD springs are extremely strong. New magazines will be difficult or even impossible to load to full capacity, even with the use of the mag-

loading tool. It will usually be necessary to allow the magazine to sit loaded for some time before you can load the magazine to full capacity. In some cases, the KRD magazines will put enough tension on the rounds loaded that the slide of the Hi-Power will be unable to strip the first round from the magazine without a slight tap on the rear of the slide to manually assist loading. This will eventually go away with continued use but can exist for up to a year after the purchase of new magazines, even with frequent use. An 18.5lb recoil spring in a Hi-Power will help to solve this problem. The large baseplate may aid printing (image 35) in concealed carry.



Image 35

Several KRD owners report the magazine follower binding and becoming stuck. Dry lube or de-burring of the steel follower may help to correct this problem. Because we have received a good number of reports on KRD mags and many owners have 10 or more of these mags, we have been able to develop some very rough estimates on the probability of mis-feeds with KRDs. Serious mis-feeds (follower binds or sticks) seem to be occurring in about 5-10% of KRD mags. Self-correcting problems (first round failure to feed without manual assist) run much higher at about 20-30%. Two reports of KRD mags cracking (image 36) along the back of the magazine near the feed lips.



Image 36

The sample mag pictured also shows slight enlargement of the mag catch and battering of the mag body at the top of the magazine. Crack occurred around 2000 rounds and the mag in question may have had as many as 4000 rounds fired through it. So far the cracks have not affected reliability at all. Five reports of followers dipping or turning in the mag body and binding. In every case, the problem was correctable by reversing the orientation of the mag spring, trimming mag spring or swapping out the steel follower with another follower (this will reduce capacity by 2 rounds). Over 10 reports of nickel-plated KRD mags showing flaking as nickel peels off.

Update: The sample mag with the cracks at the feed lip has cracked enough that the feed lips have spread and no longer hold the ammo firmly. During fast reload where the mag is seated home firmly or slide lock reloads with jarring, the mag can eject the top rounds from the magazine or attempt to feed more than one round at a time. All of the other KRD mags show similar signs of wear while factory mags with comparable use do not. This convinces me that the KRDs, while decent, have a limited lifespan of between 5,000-7,000 rounds. Expect about 1,500 to 2,000 rounds of use after you see cracks developing before the feed lips start to spread.

Confidence: Over 100 Reports + sample mags available

Recommendations: Recommended for self-defense use after a break-in period. KRD magazines are generally well-thought of but problems have been reported with individual mags in a batch - probably a sign of spotty quality control during manufacture or refurbishing. The majority of KRD magazines will be suitable for self-defense use; but be sure and give them a thorough evaluation first. KRD mags have a limited lifespan and will begin to show serious wear around 5,000 rounds. For most shooters, this will not be an issue but heavy use shooters will notice mag degradation over time.

Mec-Gar

For more than ten years, Mec-Gar has not only manufactured magazines for the Browning Hi-Power under their own name; they have also manufactured the OEM mags sold by Browning with the Hi-Power. Mec-Gar has also produced military contract magazines for FN and special aftermarket magazines for Pachmayr. Mec-Gars are therefore generally considered to be the most reliable magazines available for the Hi-Power. The Mec-Gar 15rd flush fit magazines (image 37) for the Hi-Power use a thinner follower that is not as sturdy as the 13rd model.



Image 37

The 15rd mags (image 37) are rare and somewhat sought after. Mec-Gar also manufactured some extended 21rd magazines (image 38) for the Hi-Power (Shown below next to a 13rd mag, image 39).



Image 38



Image 39

The 21rd mags were actually manufactured and marketed as 20s but will routinely hold and reliably fire 21rds. .40 users should note that the Browning factory magazines and MecGar aftermarket magazines have several differences (Thanks to Alan for the description of differences in OEM and Mec-Gar .40 mags for the Hi-

Power). The Browning OEM mag followers have 4 legs about 1/2" long extending down from each corner of the follower, presumably to keep the follower better aligned in the magazine; the Mec-Gar follower lacks these. The OEM mags have about a 1" long rather slender, tapered post and a short (about 1/4") cylindrical post extending down from the bottom of the follower to engage the top-inside of the magazine spring; the short cylindrical post has a hole in it through which the top end of the magazine spring is permanently captive to the follower.

The Mec-Gar followers have two fatter, tapered posts (traditional two-post follower) about 1" long extending down from the bottom of the followers to engage the top-inside of the magazine spring; the magazine simply fits over these and is not captive to the follower. The shape of the top of the followers is also slightly different. In the OEM mags the small sheet-metal plate at the bottom of the magazine spring with the "tit" (identified as a "floorplate" throughout this FAQ) that you push in on through the hole in the magazine base plate to slide the base off is permanently attached to the bottom of the magazine spring; in the Mec-Gars it is not. (The plates are shaped the same but the OEM mags have the mousetrap spring permanently attached to the rear of the plate.) The base plates are exactly the same.

Bodies of the magazines appear to be identical and appear to be stamped on the same stamping dies, except: The OEM mags have two cartridge witness holes at 5 and 10 rounds and the Mec-Gars do not. The OEMs have two short slots at the bottom rear for the mousetrap spring and, of course, the Mec-Gars do not. The OEMs have stamped on the left side "PATENT 5,353,537" and "MADE IN ITALY CALIBER 40 S.& W." while the Mec-Gars are stamped on the middle of the left side with the Mec-Gar logo with "MEC-GAR" underneath it and down in the bottom-rear corner on the same side "MG-BRHP-40". On the front of the Mec-Gars is stamped "MADE IN ITALY."

Markings: Mec-Gar mags can be difficult to identify. They have been marked many different ways and not at all. Making the matter more difficult, is that since Mec-Gar manufactured OEM mags for Browning, it can be difficult or impossible to distinguish between factory Browning mags and Mec-Gar mags once they have been separated from their original gun. Worse yet, some dealers have attempted to pass off inferior quality aftermarket magazines as Mec-Gars. The following is a list of various Mec-Gar markings. It is not a complete list and a genuine Mec-Gar magazine may display all or none of these markings. The only consistent factor in Mec-Gar magazines will be a TIG-welded magazine body. The back of the magazine will show no weld seam (image 40) and will have a "brushed" look.



Image 40

If you see a seam, it isn't a Mec-Gar. Mec-Gar mags for the Hi-Power used either carbon or stainless steel (image 41) and were available in blued or nickel finishes (although some contract produced Mec-Gars will be parkerized).



Image 41

Mec-Gar 21rd mags may have a small hump in the back of the magazine (image 42) that locks up against the bottom of the mag well.



Image 42

Early magazines: no markings at all usually. Some early/intermediate mags marked with small pi sign (image 43).



Image 43

The majority of early unmarked mags will not have witness holes but there are some Mec-Gar mags that are both unmarked and have witness holes. Metal baseplate with single hole and stud in center. Most 21rd magazines will be unmarked and lack witness holes. Black plastic two-legged follower. Two examples (as seen in earlier

image 41) of stainless 13rd. magazines manufactured for commercial sales by Mecgar (image 44).



Image 44

Note the loose spring assembly typical of mags manufactured for commercial sale. Also note the floorplate shows no place for spring attachment. OEM manufactured mags generally will have attached spring assemblies with the spring attached to both follower and floorplate. Thanks to Dave at MecGar for confirming their manufacture and special thanks to Brian for risking the money to purchase these and chase down all the research. These mags are currently available at a good price from Numrich Gun Parts.

Intermediate magazines: Mec-Gar OEM mags will generally be marked "Italy 9mmNATO/Luger" while Mec-gar mags manufactured for aftermarket sales may be marked "Made in Italy" (image 45).



Image 45

They may also be marked with small inverted pi sign on the front of the mag. Witness holes may or may not be present - witness holes may also alternate from right to left side in zig-zag pattern across back (image 46).



Image 46

Metal baseplate with single hole and stud in center. Black plastic follower which may be marked "Mec-Gar" in tiny letters. The example shown for intermediate mags is actually a Browning factory magazine manufactured by Mec-Gar circa late 1980s (image 47).

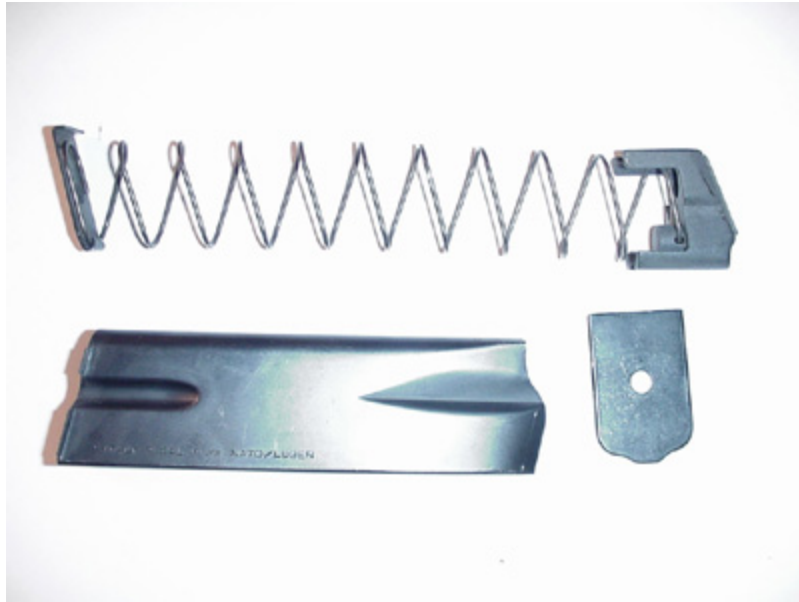


Image 47

This version has a four-legged metal follower and the spring is firmly attached to the follower and floor-plate. Most four-legged factory followers (image 48) appear to be made of plastic (image 49).



Image 48



Image 49

These mags appear to have been made in a brief period between 1985? and 1990. Sometime in 1990, Mec-gar reverted back to the traditional two-legged black plastic follower until the post-ban magazines. These magazines are reliable and effective although we have at least one report of the follower legs breaking off on the plastic followers.

Circa 1994 magazines: (image 50) Usually marked "Made in Italy" (image 51) and will have the following markings: a roll-marked peak formed from the letters "MG" (image 52), a part number (MG-BRHP-13 (IMAGE 53) or MG-BRHP-15 depending on whether it is 13 or 15rds) 13 and 15 round magazines are marked with 3 witness holes on right front side and a "13" or "15" under the bottom hole. Metal baseplate with single hole and stud in center. Black plastic follower with two legs. Other markings that may appear include an "-A-" leaning to point towards the front of the magazine (image 54) or the words "Patent Pending" on the baseplate.

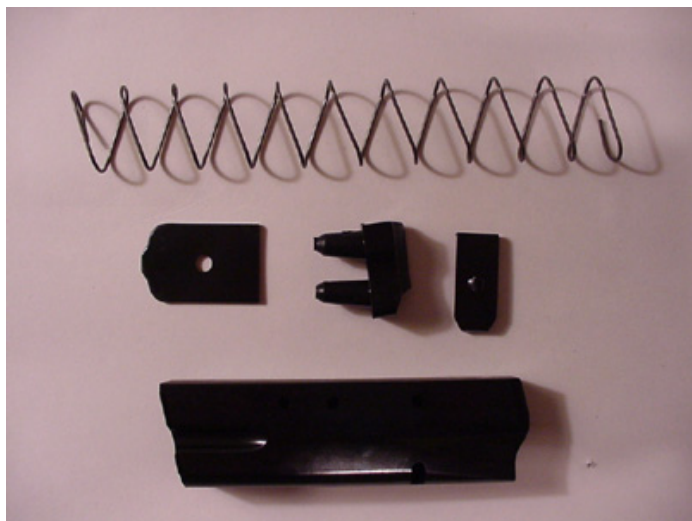


Image 50



Image 51



Image 52



Image 53



Image 54

Please note that there are many varied markings and some magazines will combine markings from different periods.

Known Problems: Two people have reported cracking around the feed lips of Mec-Gar magazines. Mec-Gars are very reliable mechanically but may lack durability. It is recommended that you periodically inspect the feed lips of Mec-Gar magazines. On 10rd 9mm mags, we have two reports of the magazine bottoming out at 10 rounds, meaning that you can't carry 10+1 because the top round butts up against the closed slide.

Confidence: Over 100 Reports + sample mags available

Recommendation: Good for self-defense use where reliability is a must.

Pachmayr

Pachmayr magazines have been manufactured by Mec-Gar for Pachmayr. They will have metal baseplate with a rubber bumper pad marked "Pachmayr". Pachmayr also sells the rubber bumper pads separately so carefully check any magazine marked as Pachmayr. The majority of these magazines were produced in stainless steel or nickel finishes and intended to be used with the Silver Chrome and other special Hi-Power editions. Magazines produced in the stainless and nickel finishes will show a Pachmayr logo on the magazine body as well. The magazine tube is completely seamless. On the left side of the tube is the Pachmayr symbol: a crest containing a capital letter P next to a seated lion. Immediately below the crest and to the right is the trademark symbol "TM". Below the crest is the Pachmayr name with the registered symbol (R encircled). On the right side of the magazine, "MADE IN ITALY" is inscribed. The follower is black plastic. The base plate is stainless steel with a black bumper pad. There are no witness holes. The brushed stainless steel finish usually shows no machine marks of any kind. Some users have reported authentic Pachmayr magazines with parkerized finishes and a single-blade plastic follower. No markings on mag body and a Pachmayr base-pad. These magazines came in a plastic bag with Pachmayr logo cardboard backing. Based on the report, these mags sound genuine but are not typical of the few Pachmayr mags I have personally experienced. Be very careful when buying mags reputed to be Pachmayr as these are the easiest to fake. There are currently Hi-Power magazines with parkerized or blued finish being sold as "European military surplus" with Pachmayr basepads - these are NOT Pachmayr mags.



Image 55

Known Problems: None reported

Confidence: 9 reports

Recommendation: Good for self-defense when genuine; but very easy to fake.

Pro-Mag

Pro-Mag is a magazine outfit known for producing "budget" magazines for a variety of weapons. Despite using a softer steel that suffers with the high-quality steel used in the mag catch, the Pro-Mag has generally been a reliable magazine for the Hi-Power with most users reporting no problems.

Markings: TIG-welded seam, Two drain holes in the front face of the mag, one centered at the top 1/2" from the lip of the mag and one centered at the bottom 5/16" from the base plate. The two drain holes may cause you to confuse ProMags with USA; but a quick examination of ProMags will show much better attention to tooling and finish, a narrow Mec-Gar style floor-plate, and a single piece baseplate. One unique feature that will help to identify ProMags is the top indentation on the magazine. On many Hi-Power magazines, this is a wide V-shaped indent (image 56) that forms a little "valley".



Image 56

On ProMags, this indent goes all the way to the front face of the magazine (see image 55) . Pro-Mags are offered in blued, parkerized, and nickel finishes. See the section on European military magazines for a good description of a Pro-Mag magazine.

Known Problems: Some have reported that the steel in the Pro-Mags is soft enough that repeated use wears out the magazine catch area and causes the magazine to remain loosely attached in the magazine well. Some have reported minor feeding problems associated with Pro-Mag magazines. Pre-ban magazines marked "Made in USA" may be particularly vulnerable to feed problems, including serious failures to feed.

Confidence: 43 reports

Recommendations: A good value for range use and practice. Some mags may be reliable enough to use for defensive purposes.

Ramline

Ramline (a subsidiary of Blount Inc.) briefly manufactured a 15rd. flush-fit magazine. It used a unique wound steel spring (image 57) to remove the need for a traditional spring arrangement and allow space for two more rounds.



Image 57

Known Problems: Unfortunately, Ramline has stopped producing this magazine entirely and they offer no replacement parts. As the Ramline magazines become older, their spring arrangement weakens and misfeeds will occur more and more frequently. The spring failure and misfeeds occur quite subtly at first and it may take months for the spring failure to become obvious. Some Ramline mags are also slightly out of spec for the mag body. This would normally not be noticeable but if you have done extensive polishing of the magazine surface where it contacts the magazine

disconnect, or the magazine disconnect itself, you may find that Ramline magazines will cause the gun to fail by not activating the magazine disconnect when inserted.

Markings: Plastic baseplate with ram's head Ramline logo (image 58) and "MAP 9015 Browning High Power 9 MM RAMLINE".



Image 58

The plastic baseplate can be easily slid off. On the right side of the magazine will be 3 or 4 equidistant witness holes (image 59).



Image 59

They will be unmarked. Small raised circle on top right side near feed lips. Finally, slide off the plastic baseplate, if no spring shoots out and the mag still works, its a Ramline. No visible seam on the back of the mag body.

Confidence: 9 reports + sample mag available.

Recommendations: These can be excellent magazines in good condition. Unfortunately, Ramline stopped producing them prior to 1994 and they are rare to find in any condition, let alone a good one. I'd recommend Ramlines only at a good price and then only for range use. If you use these for self-defense be sure to test them thoroughly and repeat the testing process at regular intervals of not more than a month.

Triple K

Triple K is an aftermarket magazine manufacturing company. They make a budget-priced pre-ban magazine that is roughly made (image 60 - Thanks to the fumegator for pics).



Image 60

Markings: Marked "Browning Hi-Power 9mm" vertically along the right side. Thick black finish similar to lacquer with a rough weld seam along the back of the magazine (image 61). Pinholes visible along roughly ground weld seam. Hard plastic baseplate tapered from 3/16" in front to 5/16" in back with single locking bump. Black plastic two-legged follower similar to Mec-Gar but crudely molded. The magazine appears to be a modified Beretta 92 magazine.



Image 61

Known Problems: Rough follower needs to be deburred before gun will feed reliably. Triple K will only replace pre-ban mags with post bans. Magazines may not load certain types of ammunition (Winchester 115gr FMJ) due to insufficient interior length. Individual magazines may also not lock into pistol due to out-of-spec location of mag catch on some magazines (1.110 inches from top for Triple K compared to 1.070-1.085 for a sample of factory mags - Thanks Joeseeph!). Mag follower sticks and/or nosedives and dumps rounds. Mag bodies are routinely out-of-spec.

Confidence: 9 reports

Recommendations: Pass on these - three different reports of mags not fitting into guns with a nine mag sample probably bodes poorly for other Triple K mags. Out of the nine reports submitted, not one magazine has worked without substantial modification and four of them were totally unsalvageable. I'd personally buy USA before these and would not take them as a gift.

USA

USA (Disassembled view, image 62) is almost universally reviled by gun owners for the substandard quality of their magazines and this carries over to the Hi-Power as well.

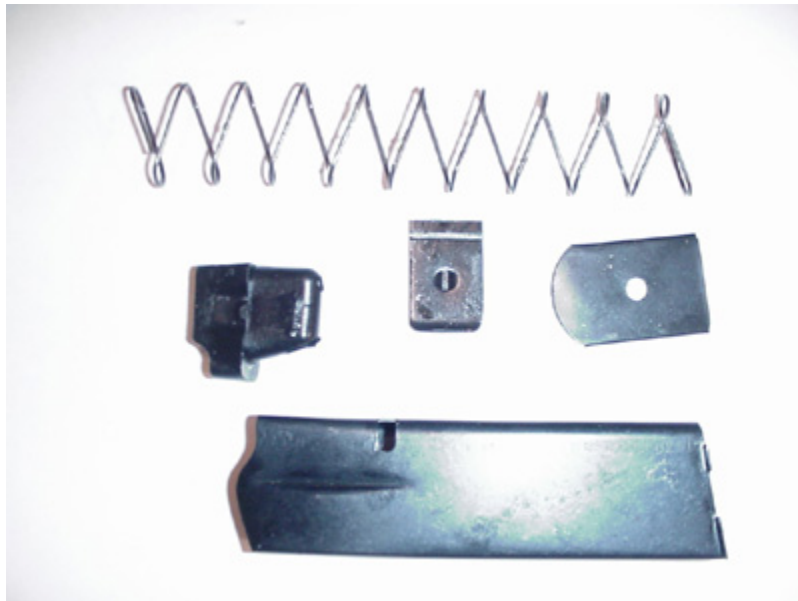


Image 62

It was actually difficult to find a sample for the FAQ since most people had learned to shun USA products long before I began this effort. So, I purchased my own USA mag

to verify if these rumors were fact or myth. The magazine was exceedingly rough. Tooling marks are plainly visible through the finish (image 63).



Image 63

There is evidence of some pitting (on a new mag!) that has been finished over. Cuts are not always square and the feed lips are slightly uneven. There is a rough seam along the back of the magazine. The finish is a thick black paint-like finish that seems to stay sticky for years. The magazine does not drop free even with the magazine disconnect removed. After more testing (+300 rds), the USA mag continues to feed without problems. However the USA mag follower will not engage the slide stop on the last round.

Markings: No logos marked. Two large drain/witness holes (image 64) on front of mag (although second hole is too low to be of use as a witness hole).



Image 64

Strange baseplate crimped down in two pieces (image 65).



Image 65

Small gap visible looking down on top front of baseplate. Seam has been sanded down and painted over but pinholes and finish irregularities show in a straight line along the seam (image 66).

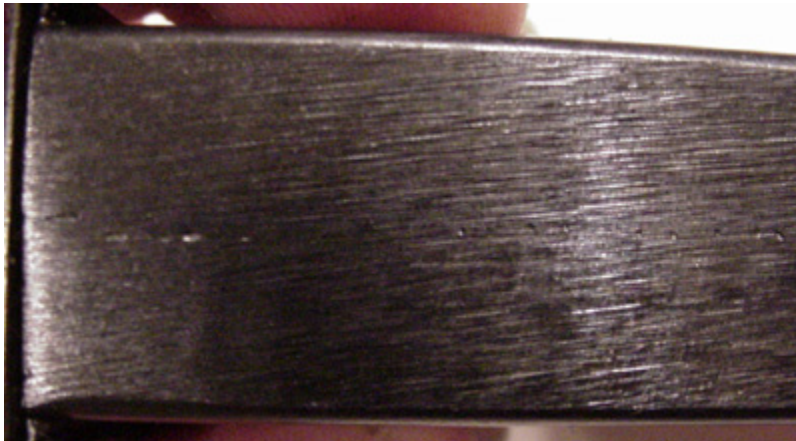


Image 66

Tooling marks and minor pitting visible on most magazine edges (image 67).



Image 67

Black plastic follower with long single blade (image 68).



Image 68

The floorplate that contains the stud that connects with the baseplate will be much wider than normal - almost the entire width of the magazine.

Known Problems: Made by USA - This company cranked out a ton of magazines prior to the 1994 ban and the emphasis on quantity over quality shows in practically all their products (as evidenced by people who still have large stocks of unsold USA pre-94 inventory seven years later). Follower-binding and other serious feed problems reported by others - no problems yet with sample mag. Magazines are not drop-free. Magazine follower will frequently fail to engage slide stop. The USA mags are also made out of extremely poor quality steel. The sample mag shows burring and deformation practically any place it contacts the harder steel of the Hi-Power. After about 600 rounds, the mag catch has been enlarged (image 69) and cracks are beginning to develop along the weld seam (image 70) in back where the slide contacts the magazine. See Tips & Hints for suggestions on how to enhance USA reliability.



Image 69

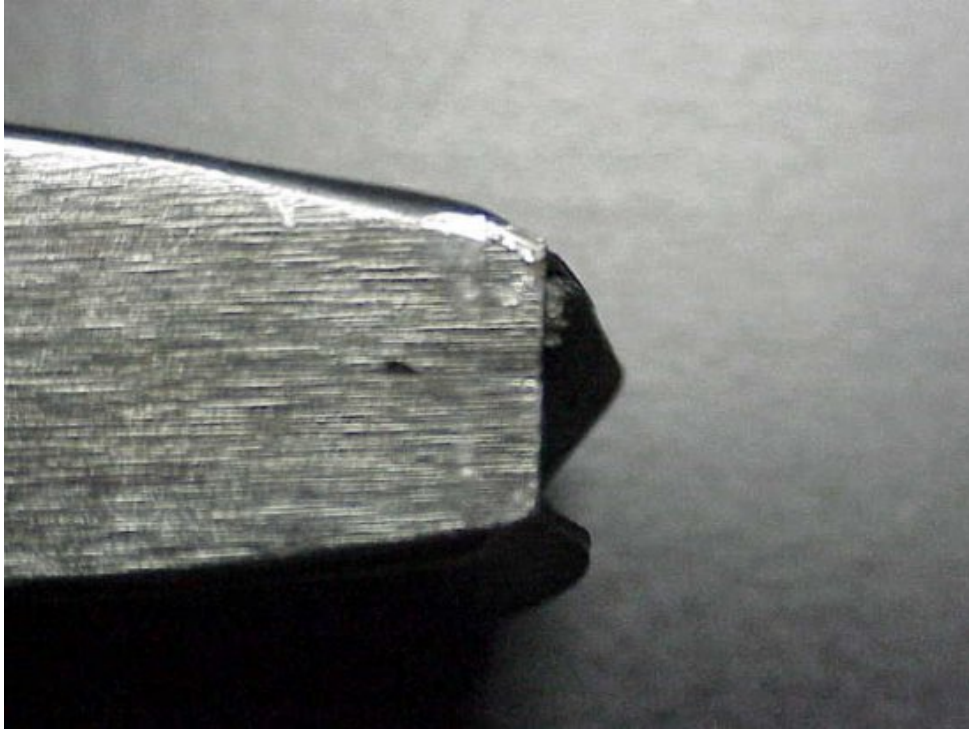


Image 70

Confidence: Over 100 reports (not all Hi-Power mags though) + sample mag available.

Recommendations: Not recommended at any price.

Western

These mags appear to be constructed of somewhat thinner metal than the OEM mags (image 71) and have a rough weld seam up the center of the spine. The base plate was metal with the spring-loaded button retainer in the center. The finish was an even matte blue-black. Feed lips felt a little flimsy while loading. Loaded mags did not drop completely free in BHP with magazine disconnect.



Image 71

Markings: Seam visible on back. Design appears very similar to factory mags; but no markings. These mags are similar enough to factory mags that it is possible many are being reported as factory mags. We're looking to acquire a verifiable Western mag for close comparison to a factory mag to show the differences - so email me if you want to sell!

Known Problems: Follower binding, soft steel and misfeeds on two reports. No positive reports on these mags yet; but Western is rarely seen (possibly because they are confused with factory mags).

Confidence: 2 reports.

Recommendations: These magazines are fairly rare on the market for pre-94 mags. The consensus to date has been that these are range use only mags at a good price (less than \$15)

Unidentified Mags

This section is reserved for mags with easily identifiable markings that cannot be traced to a particular manufacturer or category. UI #1 has been identified. Many thanks to Nolan!

UI #2: This mag is with an old T-series Hi-Power but is not original. Appears to be a standard 13-rd factory mag in all respects.

Markings: On the back of the Mag there is a Q or O inside a diamond lightly stamped at the bottom Aprox 3/8" up from the floor plate. **Update:** Sean writes in to tell us he was able to examine a batch of these mags at the local dealer. "The "O" or "Q" inside of a diamond is actually a partially stamped "8". One magazine out of the three I examined had the "8" properly stamped while the other 2 were only partial. No witness holes of any sort. The finish appeared to be parkerized with blued baseplates. The back of the mags had a brushed finish with no weld seams same as the Mec-Gars, however, the FRONT of the mag bodies had the same brushed finish. One mag had a very battered catch, so the metal may be a little on the soft side. The dealer told me they were British but I have no conclusive proof though."

Known Problems: None reported

Confidence: 2 reports

UI #3: This magazine (image 72) was sold over the web as a ProMag 13rd Hi-Power magazine. It is a pretty unusual design I have never seen before. A real rough look (image 73). About 300rds through it with no issues so far although the weld by the mouth of the mag appears weak. Thanks to Rob for bringing it to our attention.



Image 72



Image 73

UI #4: This mag was sold on ebay as a "high quality Wilson-made 13 round magazine" but is likely not Wilson. Thanks to Frank for the report (he has promised a follow-up range report and pictures too).

Markings: They are all black, with a black plastic follower and metal base plate (flush fitting, supposedly 13 rounds). The only witness/drain hole is on the FRONT of the magazine, about a quarter-inch above the magazine catch hole. There is a very rough seam up the back of the magazine. It came in a small, clear zip-lok style baggie with no markings. Seems to insert and eject fine from my BHP.

Known Problems: Loaded 13 rounds into one of them - partway through, it seemed like the follower was stuck, as I could tip the magazine over and a couple rounds actually fell out! I worked the follower up and down a bit and it seems to have smoothed out, and is holding 13 rounds fine now

Confidence: 2 reports

Tips and Hints on Preban Magazines

A reader writes in with a tip for Ramlines. Gene notes that you can drill out the rivet for the follower spring in Ramline magazines and replace the follower with aftermarket preban followers and springs to get a reliable 13-14rd mag for the Hi-Power.

On KRD mags - I removed the old follower and spring. Then I installed a new plastic follower (after grinding off about a 1/4 inch or so) and a new spring, not as strong as the original. When this is all back together, you get a mag that holds 16 rounds, loads a lot easier and works fine. Thanks to Don

Followers from 10rd magazines will work in KRDs but reduce capacity by two.

Followers from CZ75 magazines work in KRD mags also. Thanks to Harold.

If someone is really stuck for a mag - S&W 69 series mags can be altered to function - standard 15 rnd mags will need a new higher mag catch cut in and will stick out from the bottom of the mag well about 1/2 an inch. Lips may need adjustment and a new follower would be needed for hold open on last shot. Thanks to FOURN6.

K487 writes in with a tip on how to improve the reliability of USA mags. About 3 years ago I bought 4 30-rnd mags (I think they are good 'ol USA mags) from CDNN (Abilene TX 800-588-9500) for \$7 each, figuring they would need some work (too cheap a price even though I didn't know about USA mags at the time). CDNN advised they had bought a bunch. Well, they didn't work worth a nickel, so I started fiddling with them. They work almost perfect now and I want to pass on what I did -

A. I cut the legs on the plastic follower down to about 1/4" each, and cleaned any burrs off - makes them more horizontally flexible.

B. I was keeping the mags stored and fully loaded. After a few months I'd use them shooting and discovered the springs were weak and not feeding well at all. I then stretched the springs and put them back in and loaded the mags and let them set for a couple of months - same problem.

Through some research, last month I purchased a 3-pack of Glock 31/33 round magazine springs (stock number 969-000-076) from Brownells (800-741-0015) for \$18.49 plus \$3.70 1st class USP shipping. They fit the mags perfectly with the following tweaking:

1. The curl in the end of the spring that pushes against the follower needs a little bending to keep it flush/level with the outside spring wire (so it sits evenly under the follower)

2. The curl in the end of the spring that pushed against the follower also needs a little squeezing with pliers to reduce its diameter to fit nicely inside the 4 follower legs. That's all, but note that the springs are REAL strong and take some muscle to bend. Lastly, I VERY lightly oiled the inside of the mag well sides AND when loading my S&B JHP put about 1/2 drop of light oil on my index finger, spread it to my thumb and middle finger, then loaded about 10 - 15 cartridges, then reoiled my finger(s) for the rest. This of course reduces friction and the S&B ammo has the primer sealed (with red "paint" around it,) and with this little amount of oil I figured it would almost never seep into the cartridges through the bullet/casing seal. I've only fired the 3 repaired mags once each (30 rounds/mag,) and had one failure to feed on one magazine (quite a total improvement in the "junk" magazines.) I would NOT recommend them for self-defense unless FULLY tested and of course their extended length is an awkward tactical problem. CDNN still sells these for \$10 each now (probably paid \$2 each when they bought the batch.) Still, for under \$20 (mag and Glock spring) we can now have highly reliable 30-rnd mags for shooting fun.