

The Walther PPQ M2 in 9mm

by Geoff Smith



The right- and left-hand sides of the pistol, showing the 9mm x 19 calibre, Walther PPQ and other proof marks.



Walther's newly released 9x19mm M2 version of its 'Polizei Pistole Quick' pistol is quite similar to the Tactical version reviewed in Issue 11 of *Australian & New Zealand Handgun* magazine. Very light in weight, slick in operation and lively to shoot, it also shares features in common with Glock, H&K and other modern polymer-framed handguns, as well, of course, as its ancient ancestor the Pistole 1938.

Supplied for review by the distributor Frontier Arms, the pistol came in a foam-lined plastic case with a user manual,

magazine loader and spare magazine. A 15m, five-shot factory target is also supplied with the pistol, which reveals a very acceptable accuracy potential of just more than six minutes of arc maximum shot dispersal. This means that the pistol itself should be capable of a 10-ring hold (or 50mm group) at 25m - an offhand practical capability that has eluded all but the highest ranking of recreational handgun shooters.

As with virtually all modern 9mm-calibre handguns, the PPQ M2 employs the short recoil locked breech system, as opposed to the .22 rimfire version, which utilises a straight blowback action. It is striker fired,

in contrast with the almost identical looking yet hammer-fired rimfire model. Like the earlier 9mm Tactical, the local version features a 10-shot magazine and a 126mm barrel to meet Australia's legal requirements for recreational shooting, although this model features a plain



The set of three alternative grip inserts allows for shooters having small, medium or large hands.



The slide doesn't have a barrel bushing and uses an oval hole at the muzzle end to allow the barrel to tilt during recoil.

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barrel, rather than the capped, threaded muzzle variety.

The polymer frame encloses two separate steel inserts to engage the slide. The forward insert also functions to support the barrel lock and recoil guide and to provide the front pair of rails on which the slide operates. Through the centre of this assembly, the ambidextrous slide release latch is pivoted, as is the trigger, which also mounts on this axle.

The take-down catch and barrel lock are likewise located in the centre of this assembly and at its rear is the sloping ramp that, during firing, pulls the breech downwards in recoil to unlock it from the slide. At the rear of the frame, the other steel insert encloses the sear and disconnecter mechanism, as well as the rear guide rails for the slide.

The trigger, like those in the previously described Walther PPQ models, includes a central safety lock that ensures it cannot operate unless the shooter's finger is fully across its face. In operation, the trigger pushes the trigger bar backwards, skirting around the right-hand side of the magazine well to lower the sear.

The trigger bar includes two upwards projecting lugs that engage with features on the underside of the slide. The front one serves to ensure the firing pin block is only disengaged when the slide is fully in battery, while the rear projection acts as the sear disconnecter. Consequently, when the trigger is depressed, the trigger bar simultaneously unlocks the firing pin block and drops the sear, allowing the striker to fall and the pistol to fire. As the slide moves backwards in recoil, the rear projection of the trigger bar is cammed downwards to disconnect the trigger from the sear so that only a single shot is fired per trigger operation.

The slide and barrel are manufactured from steel and have a durable, black, scuff-resistant Tenifer nitrocarburised finish.



The pistol dismantled into its five main sub-assemblies.

There is no barrel bushing at the muzzle end of the slide. Instead, the hole in the forward end is oval shaped to allow for the tilt in the barrel as it unlocks. Lockup is achieved when the rectangular barrel section ahead of the breech locks into the ejection port in the slide.

The rather narrow top surface of the slide has a flat section, just less than 7mm wide, on which nine fine grooves are milled to reduce reflected light. Along the sloping sides are seven grip serrations at the front and eight at the back, plus there is a series of three perforations immediately behind the front sight on each side, perhaps as a frame-venting muzzle brake, or perhaps simply for aesthetic appeal.

While the instruction manual is very informative about many aspects of the pistol, it contains a number of details that do not apply to the model under review here, including the barrel length and magazine capacity. This version of the pistol, for example, weighs 746g when empty. The overall length is 205mm, height is 135mm and thickness is 34mm.

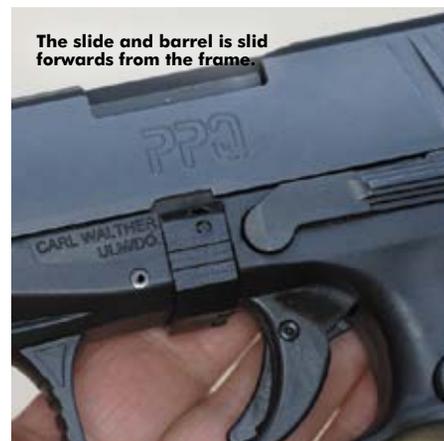
The sights feature the three white dots that are popular with this style of handgun and they are certainly easy to find for rapid-fire shooting, although they are not luminous in the dark. The rear-sight though, despite being described as 'fixed', is actually click adjustable for windage. The sight radius is 184mm. Elevation >



Taking the pistol apart for cleaning, by firstly removing the magazine.



After dry-firing, the take-down latch is lowered.



The slide and barrel is slid forwards from the frame.

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The trigger in close-up, showing the central safety lever that must be depressed before the trigger will operate.



The two-stage trigger moves about 9mm for the first stage then a little extra pressure fires the pistol.

adjustments can be made by purchasing alternative height front sights, which are screwed onto the top of the slide from beneath.

Unlike the 9mm Tactical model, the review pistol has a much more conventional magazine release button located in the grip frame behind the trigger. This, like the .22 design, is also easily reversible for left-handed operation.

The striker fall is quite short, meaning that the slide only needs to be drawn back about 9mm in order to cock the action. The striker assembly can be removed for cleaning and inspection by depressing the retainer at the rear of the slide with a 2mm

pin punch and sliding the retaining cap downwards.

The polymer frame has been ergonomically designed to provide the shooter with a comfortable grip. This is enhanced by including three different grip frame inserts to accommodate small, medium or large hand sizes.

A number of fellow shooters who tried this pistol commented on the nicely designed grip with its non-slip indentations moulded in. Altering the grip inserts is achieved by simply tapping out the roll pin with a 4mm punch and levering the insert out from the bottom end. The replacement one slips in at the top and is then pushed

into the base and the pin replaced. The roll pin, incidentally, can also be used to attach a lanyard should this be desired.

The magazines are tapered at their tops so that, where required in rapid-fire matches, they can easily be located into the magazine well. This version uses authentic Walther magazines that have been modified to reduce the capacity to 10.

On removing the grip insert, as with the 9mm Tactical model, there is a small receptacle designed for the insertion of an RFID (radio frequency identification device). Tiny passive transponder devices such as are used for identifying pets and covertly marking merchandise in shops can also be used with handguns in some circumstances. While this is probably of no significance to the average shooter, commercial ranges and security or police armouries would find these to be of considerable value for keeping track and booking firearms in and out to the various employees who use them. And, in fact, this model is also available in 9x19mm, 9x21mm and .40 S&W calibres with greater than recreationally allowable magazine capacity for military, law enforcement or security purposes.

The extractor claw located on the right-hand side of the slide includes a bright red 'loaded chamber indicator', which becomes visible, viewed from above, when the front end is sprung outwards by a cartridge in the chamber.

Field-stripping is extremely simple. The pistol, after ensuring it is unloaded, has the magazine removed, then, after dry-firing, the take-down catch is lowered and the slide simply slips forwards off the frame. The recoil spring and its guide pull out from beneath the barrel, then the barrel drops down and can be withdrawn, leaving the pistol fully stripped into its five main pieces, ready for cleaning. Reassembly is done in reverse order, noting that the blue end of the recoil spring guide is



A close-up of the rear-sight, showing the windage adjustment screw.



The receptacle beneath the grip insert for the placement of an RFID device where needed.

Ammunition accuracy at 25m

Projectile	Load (grains)	Average Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Extreme Spread (fps)	Average Group Radius (minutes of arc)
Speer Gold Dot 124-grain	4.8 AP70	1168.1	13.1	46	11.8
Frontier plated 124-grain	4.8 AP70	1150.5	16.6	49	10.9
Win FL (124-grain black round-nose lead)	-	1007.8	16.8	60	7.4
Win FL (124-grain plated FP)	-	1094.2	11.4	39	5.5
Russian 146-grain JHP	3.1 AP70	806.5	18.1	53	7.6
Lee cast round-nose 124-grain	3.5 AP70	887.0	33.3	105	9.7
Russian 116-grain JHP	4.5 AP70	1190.4	14.8	44	5.4

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at the breech end of the barrel.

In order to test the pistol, I took it along to the range to several programmed shoots and also for informal testing and gave a number of fellow shooters a few shots each to gauge their opinions. Comments were positive, especially from IPSC discipline devotees, who loved the trigger. However, one highly placed UIT shooter thought it had too much travel and simply didn't like it. For rapid-fire shooting though, it proved to be outstanding in my opinion.

It is a two-stage trigger, with the first stage having a take-up travel of about 9mm and requiring a force of 18.6N (4lb 3oz) according to my trigger gauge. Once the end of this travel is reached, a further 3.5N of force fires the pistol. I measured the combined average trigger pull force as 22.1N (4lb 15oz) and while it is different from the single-stage triggers most hand-gunners would be familiar with, it certainly takes little effort to become adapted to.

After the programmed shoots, I loaded up a variety of differing rounds and went back to the range for further accuracy and reliability testing. The results of some of these are given in the table on page 54. In general terms, the pistol performed faultlessly using a wide range of projectile weights, types and speeds, and gave very acceptable

accuracy. The table lists average velocities, standard deviations and extreme spreads of velocities in feet per second, as well as average group radius in minutes of arc, as an effective measure of accuracy potential. All groups consisted of 10 shots each, shot hand-held from a rest at a range of 25m.

Following this, I took the pistol and shot a 40-round, two-handed Precision match, half with this pistol and half with one of my own of similar barrel length 1911-style pistol. With each firearm, I used the same series and makes of ammo, namely: five Winchester factory loads with plated conical flat-tipped 124-grain projectiles; five Winchester factory loads using round-nosed lead 124-grain projectiles; and 10 rounds of 124-grain round-nosed plated projectiles ahead of 4.8 grains of AP70 powder. While there wasn't a huge difference in the actual scores, the PPQ M2 9mm shot tighter groups than my own 1911 pistol and it cycled flawlessly, while my pistol objected strongly to the fairly slow paced round-nose lead factory loads, which were too under-powered for it to cycle.

In summary, the PPQ M2 9mm offering from Walther, like several others released in recent years, reveals a great deal of creative thought. Having reviewed three pistols in this series and other Walthers, the striking



The muzzle up close, showing the oval hole in the slide that enables the barrel to tilt during unlocking.

feature of the PPQ series is the way the design itself has been so carefully thought out. It is great fun to shoot, seems accurate, reliable and rugged and it accepted a wide range of ammunition during testing.

The pistol retails for around \$1350. For more information, ask your local gunshop or visit www.frontierarms.com.au ●