

THE THOMPSON COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION 14TH ANNUAL SHOW AND SHOOT AUGUST 2005

By Jay DIY



During August 12th and 13th, 2005, members of the Thompson Collectors Association (TCA) gathered in Ohio to share their passion for all things relating to the Thompson Submachine Gun (TSMG). Although the weather was hot, the 2 day event went off without incident, including no un-welcome summer downpours!

Friday (the 12th) was the day for gathering at the TCA Meeting Facility to display collections and re-new friendships. There was a lecture discussing the various documents that exist regarding the TSMG. Additionally, various members had items offered for sell. There was light food including delicious sandwiches, pasta salad, chips, soft drinks, and home made cookies (I liked the oatmeal best!). Later, the TCA Directors met and discussed club business, both old and new.

Since part of the annual event is the shooting competition held on the 2nd day, there was a Range Safety Officer (RSO) meeting, followed by a safety/orientation meeting for all persons intending to shoot. The RSOs are members that have been certified by the group through various means such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) RSO Course. During the RSO meeting, all “command and control” aspects of the following days’ shoot were covered. Tasks of all RSOs were clearly defined and individual assignments were made. The safety/orientation meeting for all the shooters covered all stages of the competitions, and included completing all paperwork needed to be eligible to shoot. After the meetings, the RSOs held refresher/familiarization forums for members that might not get to regularly fire the TSMG.

The shooting competitions of August 13th, which were held at a local range, were separated into morning and afternoon activities. The morning shoot was composed of groups of shooters firing under RSO supervision at paper targets. Each competitor shot 5 sets of 20 rounds at differing distances, using semi or full automatic modes of fire. Scores were kept throughout the competition and tallied for announcement later. After breaking for lunch on their own, the TCA members re-assembled at the range for either informal shooting (where the mornings paper target shoot had occurred), or organized steel plate competition in an adjoining area. Both were held under the constant supervision of the RSO staff. The steel plate competition paired two shooters in a best-2-out-of-3 ladder elimination. Each shooter had to knock down four designated outer targets before tipping over the final inner target. Up to 30 rounds of ammunition was permitted for each 5-plate match. The inner targets of both competitors were oriented to fall in overlapping locations on the ground. If the match was close, this gave a positive indication of the winner. Several of the matches were close and quite exciting to watch. As steel plate targets can cause some splash-back of bullet material, all individuals in the area wore both ear and eye protection. At about 3 PM, the shooting was concluded and every thing was put away. The range setup and teardown work was a group effort by all attending TCA members.

After a little free time, the annual dinner was held at 5:30 PM behind the TCA Meeting Facility. Served buffet style, every one dined on chicken, steak, baked potatoes, vegetables, salad, soft drinks and several different tasty desserts! Winners of the competitions received prizes and various club announcements were made. After dinner, the winner of a 50/50 raffle was also

drawn. The show continued with more informal discussion followed by an auction to raise funds for the TCA. Several items drew exciting bidding competitions. Items being auctioned consisted of posters and some vintage WWII items including patches, a British canvas bag for a 50-round drum, and a cleaning rod. A Dick Tracy movie poster was hotly desired by several members and provided some intense bidding competition. A bit of trivia: more TSMGs were used in that movie than any other. After the auction it was sadly time to take down the displays and say goodbye for another year.

Once again the annual event was a chance to meet and talk with a wide spectrum of interesting and knowledgeable individuals that share a common love for a true piece of American History – The Thompson Submachine Gun.