

Weight, 7 lbs.
No. of Parts, 30

Calibre, .45
1500 Shots per Minute

The THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN

On the Side of Law and Order

The most effective portable firearm in existence is the consensus of opinion regarding this remarkable combination of a machine gun and shoulder rifle in the form of a pistol.

Fires at the rate of 1500 shots per minute as a full automatic and a shot for each pull of the trigger as a semi-automatic shoulder rifle. The ideal weapon for the Detective, Policeman, Constable, etc. It has already been adopted by the Police Departments of such cities as New York, Cleveland, etc.; by the Guarantee Trust Company of New York and many other banking and industrial concerns.

Write for full details.

Made by Colts Patent Fire Arms Mfg. Co. for

AUTO-ORDNANCE CORPORATION

302 Broadway Cable Address, Autordco, New York City

Here are two more Thompson gun ads that appeared in *The Detective* periodical during the early twenties.

Both ads courtesy Bill Menosky collection

The Thompson Submachine Gun

On the Side of Law and Order

THE Most effective portable fire arm in existence. The ideal weapon for the use of Officers of the Law, for the protection of Banks, Industrial properties, Railroads, Ranches, etc.

A combination machine gun and semi-automatic shoulder rifle in the form of a pistol, weighing only **seven** pounds and having only **thirty** parts. Fires full automatically at the rate of 1500 shots per minute or, if desired, a shot for each pull of the trigger. Magazines hold 20, 50 or 100 cartridges of .45 calibre. Can be carried under the coat ready for instant use.

The Thompson Submachine Gun is so simple in construction that any one can at once, without previous training, fire with the effect of a machine gunner. It is Government tested and has been adopted by the Police Departments of New York, Cleveland, etc. Information, price, etc., promptly supplied upon request.

Made by Colt's Patent Fire Arms Mfg. Co. for

AUTO - ORDNANCE CORPORATION

302 Broadway Cable Address—Autordco New York City, U. S. A.

AUT-ORD-CO

About Doug Richardson

Doug Richardson is a design and manufacturing engineer who has specialized in Thompson SMGs for the last 61 years. He has written many books about Thompson guns and manufactures a broad range of Thompson products. If you wish to have a question answered, submit the question to him by e-mail (ThompsonSMG@mail.com) or by regular mail (2100 McReynolds Rd., Malibu CA 90265). Please keep the question short, to the point and address only one subject at a time. This column is not intended to be a forum. Questions and answers that are deemed to have general interest will be published.

Doug is also posting Q&As on his website (ThompsonSMG.com). If there is anything on his website that you would like to put into the news, go ahead but please give Doug credit for the item.

Questions & Answers

Dear Doug:

Every WWII Thompson gun I have taken apart has a lock washer under the rear grip bolt but I can't find a reference to that part on any drawing, manual or parts list. What is the story on that?

Ben

You are right and I don't have an answer for you. I have always felt that the 7/16" diameter head on the grip screws (bolts) was too small to be properly supported by the grip wood. I think they should have been 1/2" diameter like the stock bolts. When the 1919 TSMG was redesigned to include a buttstock, Colt (or someone) had the smarts to use the larger bolt head. Why the grip screw bolt heads were not made the same size seems to me to have been an unfortunate oversight. Very likely the lock washers used in WWII were field installed out of standard military hardware stock.

Dear Doug

Are all M1/M1A1 trigger housings serial numbered? Is there a difference between those trigger housings made by Savage and those made by Auto-Ordnance?

Tom

Trigger housings (TH) made by Savage differ from those made by Auto-Ordnance (AO) in four primary areas. Savage THs are marked "FULL" on one line and "AUTO." on the line below. AOs are marked "FULL AUTO." on one line. They also differ in the way the metal is shaped behind the grip. Savage THs have a constant curve. The AOs have a flat surface with the edges radiused. Only Savage THs have the "GEG" acceptance mark. Savage THs are serial numbered on the bottom of the trigger guard whereas AOs have no serial number.

Dear Doug

It is my understanding that the M1A1 TSMG is considered to be more reliable than the M1 because of the elimination of the firing pin, firing pin spring, hammer pin and hammer pin. Is that true?

Unknown

There is no question that fewer parts to break, wear or foul, usually results in more reliability, but that is a minor factor with the Thompson which never suffered from a reliability problem. The main reason the M1A1 gained increased reliability was that the bolt shank (the cylindrical part of the bolt which actually enters the breech) was made longer which resulted in the bolt being stopped by the back of the cartridge rather than by the front end of the

receiver bolt cavity. That coupled with the firing pin being machined into the bolt face, which guarantees penetration of the firing pin into the primer, helped eliminate misfires due to defective cartridges.

Dear Doug

At the center of the shank portion of the M1A1 bolt handle (the part that goes into the bolt) there is a groove which lines up with the recoil spring. Does the groove have something to do with the spring?

Unknown

No. The groove has nothing to do with the spring. In fact, the groove has nothing to do with the M1A1 gun at all. The "M1A1 bolt handle" is really not an M1A1 bolt handle. It is an M1 bolt handle that was carried over for use on the M1A1 probably to avoid having to stock two types of bolt handles. The purpose of the groove on the M1 gun bolt handle is to limit the rearward movement of the hammer. The bolt handle shank groove diameter determines the hammer movement limitation. On the 1921/8 gun, the back of the hammer slot in the bolt provides the hammer stop.

Dear Doug

I am left-handed and wish the M1/M1A1 bolt handle had been located on the left side of the gun. Would that have been difficult to do?

Unknown

I am right handed and I wish the M1/M1A1 bolt handle had been located on the left side of the gun. It seems that only the U.S. Army likes bolt handles on the right side of guns. Most everyone else prefers the bolt handle to be on the left side or on top. In the case of the Thompson, a bolt handle on the right side means the shooter has to release his hold on the pistol grip (for us righties) in order to cock the gun - a real time waster! Since the 1921/8 bolt handle is on top, this problem does not exist on those guns. And, there is no reason the M1/M1A1 bolt handle cannot be on the left side of the gun. If there were a bolt handle slot on the left side of the receiver, the bolt handle could be installed out the left side with no other changes. As a matter of fact, at least one M1/M1A1 gun was manufactured with bolt handle slots on both sides of the receiver. I assume it was made to demonstrate the possibilities. In any case, the decision was made to locate the handle on the right side. I have addressed this problem by offering my M1/M1A1/M2 style Display (TM) receivers with the bolt handle slot(s) anywhere the buyer wants it (them).

Dear Doug

There is a ramp (inclined groove) on the bottom back end of the 1928 bolt. What does it do?

Unknown

You could also have asked the same question about the projection at the top front of the trip because the answer would be the same--nothing! My guess is that it must have seemed necessary to make sure that the trip was in the downward position as the receiver assembly was mated with the trigger housing assembly because that seems to have been the only possible purpose of the ramp and projection. (i.e., the projection is pushed down as it engages the ramp.) This was a solution to a problem that never existed. Someone must have figured this out during the design of the Model M1 gun because the trip projection was eliminated even though M1 bolts still have the ramp. The trip was further simplified and the ramp eliminated with the introduction of the M1A1 gun. The M1A1 trip is the best design of the three versions. The proof of the uselessness of the projection is that an M1A1 trip can be installed on any model Thompson gun with no effect.

SUPPRESSED THOMPSONS IN WW-II

During WW-II, the need for a quiet submachine gun was apparent for use in covert activities. The British were the first to modify the Thompson with a suppressor for use by the commandos; the U.S. did the same later in the war. Examples of both countries' efforts are in the British military museums today.

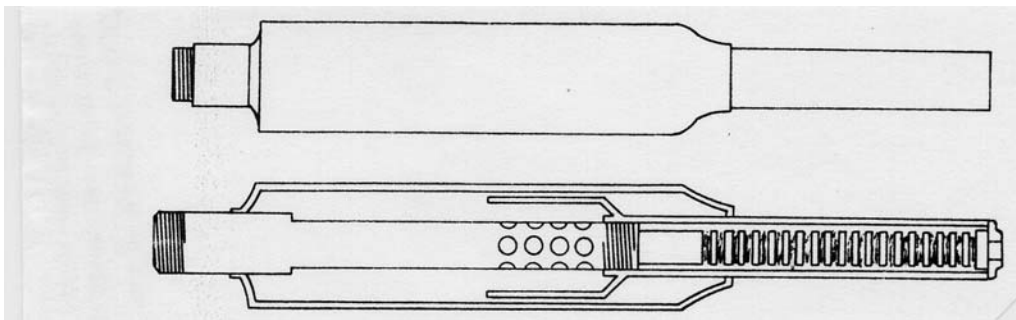
The British modified the Blish lock-equipped 1928 Thompsons by adding a coaxial suppressor that was nearly 20" long with approximately a 1.5" diameter. The suppressor appears to be concentric (barrel centered within the outer casing) with a sling swivel band mounted mid-tube (about where the muzzle of the original barrel should be). While there are no official records of this gun being used in combat, curiously there is a combat photo of this gun being used in the Burma theater during WW-II (Quiet Killers, Vol. II, page 67, by J. David Truby, copyright 1979). One of these modified 1928 Thompsons is in the British Imperial War Museum. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the internal construction of this particular model.



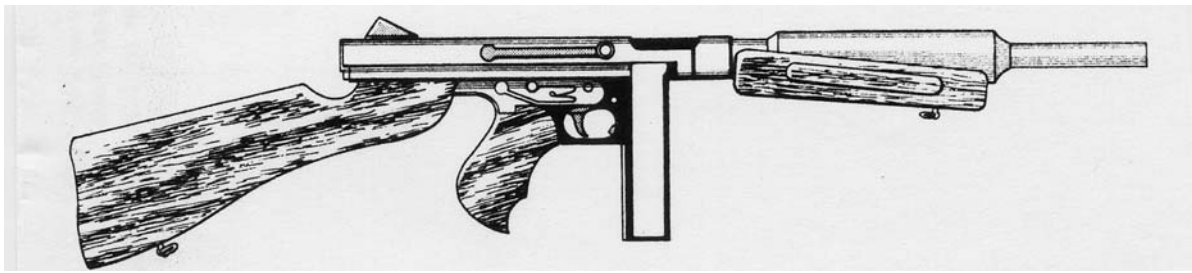
Photo credit: British Imperial War Museum

British 1928 Suppressed TSMG (Combat Photo reveals stick magazines were used in the field).

A bit more is known about the American suppressed Thompsons. At the request of "Wild Bill" Donovan's Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the CIA predecessor), Chrysler Corp. built a suppressor for the M1A1 Thompson. It was patterned after the original Sten Mk II "S" suppressor. The barrel was drilled (ported) to vent combustion gases into an expansion chamber while the bullet preceded through a stack of thirteen rubber discs that acted as self-sealing wipes to trap propellant gases thereby muffling shot noise. I rather suspect that the rubber discs had a fairly short lifespan and contributed to an increase in back pressure which would result in an increase in the gas exiting the ejection port along with the fired casings. An example of this modified Thompson is in the British Pattern Room.



Internal diagram of OSS M1A1 suppressor—patterned 1st Sten Mk II "S" suppressor.



Line drawing OSS M1A1 Suppressed TSMG example in M.O.D. Pattern Room
Note the peculiar angle of the front foregrip due to the suppressor shape.

By all remaining accounts of the period, the addition of a suppressor made an already heavy gun extremely unwieldy. Mechanically the Thompson is a noisy gun and since the suppressor only dealt with the muzzle blast, it is doubtful that the gun could have been made quiet enough for widespread use in WW-II. However there was a Thompson-related, suppressed firearm that was successful in WW-II, and it was the British DeLisle .45 ACP Commando Carbine. This bolt action suppressed carbine was made from unserviceable, drill-purpose, WW-I Enfield rifle receivers fitted with .45 Thompson spare barrels. They used modified Colt 1911 .45 magazines as the feeding device. Reasonably effective out to 200 meters for eliminating sentries, it was fairly accurate and exceptionally quiet (by most accounts, the sound of the firing pin strike was louder than the muzzle noise). Approximately 147 DeLisle Carbines were produced and widely used. The DeLisles stayed in use by the British all the way into the Falkland Island campaign in the 1980s.



DeLisle .45 ACP Commando Carbine with integral suppressor

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of firing a 1928 Colt Thompson with a modern suppressor on it. The gun belonged to J.D. Jones (developer of the, 300 Whisper platform) and had a current state of the art, stainless steel, concentric suppressor. Unfortunately, even J.D. admitted that the bolt cycling noise of the 1928 was too much to overcome; the muzzle blast was non-existent, but the mechanical noise (from actuator to Blish lock to bolt to hammer--via receiver--to firing pin to cartridge) was pronounced. It makes you wonder just how quiet those early Maxim-equipped Thompsons really were (as listed in the sales catalogs from the 1920s).

By B. Sutton Coffman
Feb 28, 2006

ANNOUNCING

The 12th Annual WESTERN SHOW & SHOOT

Kingman, Arizona



April 21st & 22nd,
2007



PLANS INCLUDE:

- **Saturday**, April 21st - 9:00 am-The Thompson Show. Also, visiting guest speakers from the TCA Board will discuss our future and will answer your questions.
- At 11:00 am the **MANDATORY** safety briefing and registration of shooters will take place. Souvenir coffee mugs will be given out to all those registered.
- Historic T-shirts of the event are to be ordered in advance and will be available. See form below to order.
- **Sunday**, April 22nd - 8:00 am - The Thompson Competition. Open shooting will commence after the competition.

Please detach this portion and return it with **payment** of \$27.00 **no later than** February 28, 2007.

Please mail to: **DON HALL**
3584 N. BIBO ROAD
GOLDEN VALLEY, AZ 86413

If you have any questions or comments, please call Don at (928) 565-4575

Name _____ Phone No. (____) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

YES, I plan to attend the 12th Western Thompson Shoot. I will bring ____ (how many)

____ YES, I will require ____ (How many) eight-foot tables. (Thompson's)

____ YES, I wish to order historic Thompson T-shirts, @ \$10.00 ea. Please indicate how many.

Med. ____ Lg. ____ Ex. Lg. ____ XX Lg. (add \$ 2.00) ____ XXX Lg. (add \$3.00) ____

Note: Nearest Airport is Las Vegas

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ANY AD \$6.00 PER ISSUE

MISMATCHED DRUMS – Do you own a Colt “C” or “L” drum with mismatched covers? I am providing a service to TCA members. The “Drum Registry” has dozens of Colt mismatches listed with their last known address. I can help you locate the matching lid or base for your Colt drum. The cost is two (2) 1ST class postage stamps per drum. Don Hall, 3584 Bibb Rd., Golden Valley, AZ 86413.

FOR SALE: The book *Colt Thompson Serial Numbers*. The book includes sections on the listing of all 15000 serial numbers of the Colt TSMG, an index/history section, Marine Corps and Navy section and a drum section. A must for all Thompson Collectors. THOMPSONACCESSORIES.COM. Gordon Herigstad. 1632 West 10th St., San Pedro, CA 90732. (310) 831-9339. GORDONCOLT@AOL.COM.

DRUM REPAIR TSMG DRUM DR. CALL Merle F. Bitikofer. 224 N. W. Woods Ln., Dallas, OR 97338. (503) 623-8294. e-mail KKB@OPEN.ORG.

54 PAGE THOMPSON CATALOG \$5. Display guns, semi-finished receivers, parts, tools, books, drawings, accessories. ThompsonSMG.com. Doug Richardson, 2100 McReynolds, Malibu, CA 90265. 310-457-6400. ThompsonSMG@mail.com.

FOR SALE: 2006 TCA Show & Shoot T-Shirts (XL only) available now. Delivered to your door for \$15.00. Send your check to TCA, PO Box 1675, Ellicott City, MD 21041-1675. Other sizes available if volume warrants. Send your check for \$15.00 If not enough orders are received, your check will be returned or your membership can be extended by 6 months—your choice. Sorry, checks not accepted via e-mail. ☺

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