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THE ULTIMATE



BOOK

Tracie L. Hill

872 pages, 1,201 illustrations, over 200 in color
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US \$150.00 list

Tracie Hill's critically-acclaimed Collector Grade title *Thompson: the American Legend* was a huge hit when it appeared in 1996. That book was large for its day, containing 584 pages with 456 b&w illustrations and 22 color plates. When it sold out a few years ago, our first thought was to simply reprint this popular reference, but Tracie Hill suggested that we go right back to the drawing board and engineer a complete revision, in order to incorporate a vast amount of important new information.

A Total Explosion of "New"

As indicated by the sheer size of this new study, virtually every chapter and topic covered in *The American Legend* has been expanded, and some new ones have been added. The gathering gravitational power of The American Thompson Reference Collection has produced an almost overwhelming attraction for original documentation, augmenting every aspect of the history of the Auto-Ordnance Corporation, the Thompson family, and the design and production of the hardware that bears the Thompson name. Much of this priceless new material, including personal memoirs, dimensioned blueprints and other rare memorabilia, has been bequeathed by key people who were intimately involved in the day-to-day operations of the company.

As most aficionados know, rather than waiting for demand to precede production, an astounding 15,000 Model 1921 Thompson submachine guns were manufactured to order by Colt's, paid for out of the bottomless pockets of Fortune Ryan, one of the great Robber Barons of American history and a co-founder, along with General John T. Thompson, of the Auto-Ordnance Corporation. Ironically, by the late 1930s, after nearly two decades of largely unrestricted sales to America's criminal underclass had led to mayhem and bloodshed, with the Thompson generally scorned and reviled as the ultimate "gangster gun", Fortune Ryan and General Thompson were dead, several thousand original Model 1921 Colt Thompsons still remained unsold, and the firm was mired in debt. The name and assets of Auto-Ordnance were then acquired by a smooth-talking stock promoter named Russell Maguire—just in time to ride the rocket of history to dizzying new heights during WWII, when the last of the original inventory was eagerly snapped up by some of America's weapon-starved European allies and new production was instituted for the U.S. military at Savage Arms and by the reborn Auto-Ordnance Corporation itself, in its own factory in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Over 1,750,000 new Thompsons were produced during WWII.

The post-WWII history of the Thompson begins with more new documentation that has only recently come to light concerning the further succession, first to the Kilgore Manufacturing Company, historically a manufacturer of cap pistols and pyrotechnics. Kilgore's plans to re-launch the M1A1 Thompson came to naught, and the next incarnation of Auto-Ordnance was in West Hurley, New York, as part of the Numrich Arms Corporation. Many details of NAC production are included before the story shifts yet again, with up-to-date coverage of the products of the current proprietors, Kahr Arms.

The fascinating history of Thompson drum and box magazines is expanded to include original manufacturing drawings and operation detail sheets. Chapters on Web Gear, Other Ancillaries, and Models and Miniatures; then over 100 pages listing the serial numbers of all 15,000 Colt Model 1921 Thompsons, with shipping dates and dispositions where known. Then an impressive display, taken from today's finest collections, of rare, colorful original paper—handbooks, brochures, price lists, catalogs, and military manuals, both U.S. and foreign. No single collection anywhere is known to contain all the items shown, the cumulative effect of which is an overwhelming affirmation of the worldwide popularity of the Thompson.

All this and much, much more—plus **ten times more color** than *The American Legend*.

Every copy of *The Ultimate Thompson Book* comes individually shrink-wrapped in protective plastic.

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