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The American



Association

"THE THOMPSON LEGEND"

**SEE THE SIGN UP FOR THE
ALL THOMPSON SHOW AND SHOOT JULY
25-26, 2015
ON PAGE 10**

Vol. 37

On The Side Of Law And Order

1ST QTR 2015

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BANDITS BEWARE!

ONE OF CHICAGO'S LARGEST EXPRESS COMPANIES WHICH MAKES A BUSINESS OF TRANSPORTING MONEY, ON ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR VARIOUS BANKING HOUSES, HAS EVOLVED A UNIQUE METHOD OF FOILING HIGHWAY BANDITS. THE CUSTOMARY AUTOMOBILE INWHICH THE MONEY IS CARRIED PULLS A TRAILER IN WHICH A MACHINE GUN IS MOUNTED AND IN WHICH A LOOKOUT AND A MACHINE GUN OPERATOR RIDES. THE GUN HAS AN EFFECTIVE RANGE OF A THOUSAND YARDS AND FIRES EIGHT HUNDRED SHOTS PER MINUTE.

PHOTO SHOWS PAY ROLL AUTO AND TRAILER

JUST HOW DEAF IS THE DRIVER GOING TO BE?
THIS IS A GREAT VIEW OF THE TSMG & GUN MOUNT.

TATA LEGEND 37 (1ST QTR 2015)

SOME THOMPSON TREASURES DON'T GO "BANG"

by
Michael Shyne

In 2013, I traveled to Mexico City as one of a number of members of a national organization focusing on studying national security issues. We received briefings from the U.S. Ambassador and his Country Team, business, military and law enforcement leaders. I had been a member of this organization for over a decade, but with nearly 500 members, I did not know everyone. I was told that one of the members had been a professor of WWII history for 30 years, so I initiated a conversation with him that ultimately led to firearms history and then to machineguns. I learned that this gentleman had spent decades collecting British Regimental presentation pieces. He mentioned he had two small silver machinegun presentation pieces. One was a British Vickers given to a member of the Hong Kong Volunteer Corps in the mid 1930's. The other was a little silver Thompson machinegun. That sounded interesting, so I talked to him more about it throughout our Mexico visit.

He agreed to send me a photo and when it arrived a couple months later, I nearly jumped out of my chair as I opened it on the computer screen. Where had I seen this Thompson trophy before? In a photo in Tracie Hill's 'The Ultimate Thompson Book', showing Russell Maguire presenting a similar example to Marcellus Thompson's widow. Could it be the same one? Where had my friend acquired it?

Over the next year, I kept in touch with the owner of this beautiful silver Thompson trophy, learning more about it. I learned that the dedication plaque on its pedestal read "to Frederic A. Willis an important and delightful member of the winning team. Auto-Ordnance Corporation Russell Maguire – President, December 1941." So it was not the Marcellus Thompson trophy, which called into question how many of these presentation pieces had been made. Could these be plentiful even though I am just now encountering one?

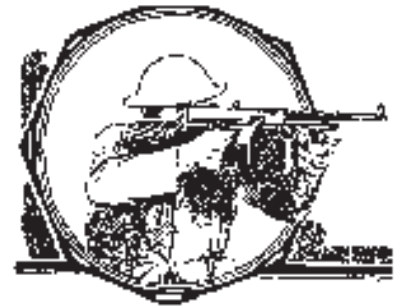
Early this year the owner decided that the Thompson presentation piece would be more complimentary to my real Thompson machinegun than to his British Regimental collection, and told me he would eventually sell it to me for an affordable amount, but he was not ready to say "good bye" to it just yet. He added that it came with a book about the Thompson machinegun.

Yet only 4 months later he sent it to me. When the package arrived, I was as excited as when I opened the box from Interarms in the 1970's – my first machinegun. (We all can remember a similar moment). There it was, a 9-inch long, sterling silver 1921 AC Model Thompson and its L-drum on a pedestal with the silver dedication plaque. The Lyman sight leaf, the sling swivel on the butt stock and the drum magazine release were even movable, and the drum was removable. What a beauty!

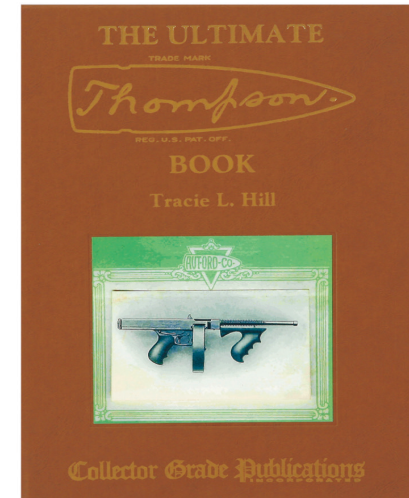


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GUN SHOW FINDS

At a recent Ohio Gun Collectors show a group of TATA members were shown and offered for sale the arsenal repacked Thompson recoil springs (4 per pack). The top photo show the tags attached to each of the packages. The tag show the Maguire Industries ID tag with a Rock Island Arsenal repack tag taped over the top. The bottom photo is of a package I already had and it shows the information that was taped over on the original tags. Basically, it shows an arsenal inspection and renumbering of part numbers done by Rock Island dated Oct 1954. The original Maguire tag was created at the end of WWII, probably around 1946-47. These small items can teach a collector a lot of information and are well worth collecting (often these can be found for under \$50. A cheap collectible for the Thompson Hobby!).



The surprise was the book, titled "Tommy," with an attractive 9-inch by 12 -inch canvas cover and a plastic "watch lens" attached to the cover within a brass bezel and containing a 2-inch long model of a 21 AC Thompson. What was this book? I had never heard of it before. The title page told part of the story:

In its 80 pages "Tommy" presents the Thompson submachine gun in a personified fashion as a little child. It begins "Tommy was first conceived in the minds of his parents, the late Captain John N. Blish, of the United States Navy, and the late Brigadier General John T. Thompson." The book includes a number of cartoon-like drawings of a 1921 AC Thompson, generally held by a small child in various scenarios. The text of the book gives a brief of the history of the Thompson, the role it played in its early years, Maguire's acquisition of Auto-Ordnance Corporation and the importance of the Thompson to the war effort. A number of war-time drawings and photographs featuring the Thompson, as well as charts outlining production are included. The pictures include a photograph of Maguire instructing Connecticut Governor Robert

This, in brief, is the story of the Thompson submachine gun popularly known as the "Tommy" gun...an American military weapon which has achieved world-wide renown and established an outstanding reputation with the soldiers of Democracy and the present war. Privately printed by Frederic A. Willis and presented to Russell Maguire, President of Auto-Ordnance Corporation, manufacturers of the Thompson sub machinegun.

The American



Association

**THE 24TH ANNUAL
ALL THOMPSON SHOW AND SHOOT
NEWARK, OH
JULY 24-25, 2015**

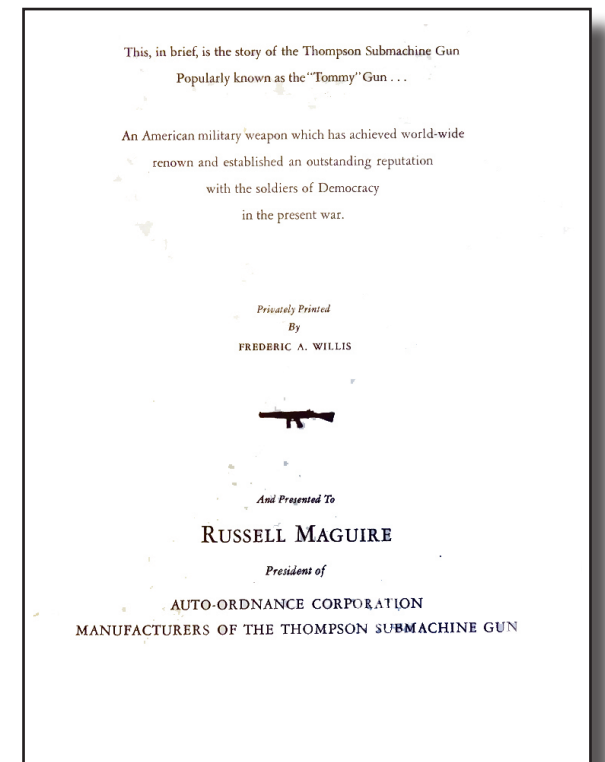
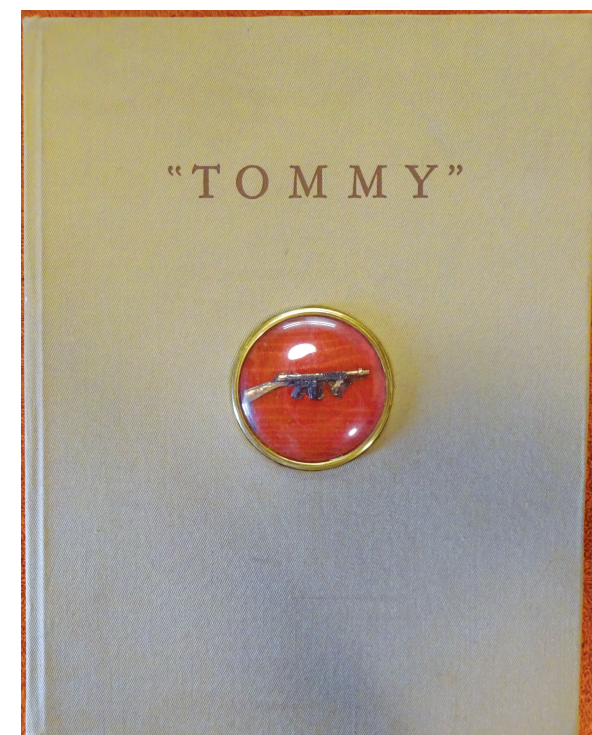
THIS IS THE ONLY SIGN UP IN THE NEWSLETTER. THIS ALLOWS ME TO SEND INFORMATION TO PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT ATTENDING. EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT SURE IF YOU CAN ATTEND, SEND THIS IN TO BE ON THE LIST.

NAME _____

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Hurley in how to shoot a nickel plated 1928 A1 Thompson and another photograph of Maguire talking to Maj. Gen. Piaokiang and Maj. Gen. Chushih-Ming of China. That photograph made me wonder if Maguire was instrumental in the production of the 1928 Thompsons the Chinese manufactured in 7.62 x 25 caliber.

My first question: how many of these privately printed books were printed? There is no indication of my example's copy number to help answer that question.

The whimsical nature of this book clearly shows that its author, Frederic A. Willis, was more than just a serious businessman, as his chapter titles reveal:

- “TOMMY” IS BORN
- “TOMMY” IS CHRISTENED
- “TOMMY” LEARNS TO WALK AND TALK
- “TOMMY” BECOMES A DEAD-END KID
- “TOMMY” IS ADOPTED
- “TOMMY” GROWS TO MANHOOD
- MARS KNOCKS AT “TOMMY’S” DOOR
- “TOMMY” HAS HIS BAPTISMAL BY FIRE
- “TOMMY” GOES TO WAR
- “TOMMY” HEARS THE EAGLE SCREAM
- “TOMMY” BECOMES A HERO
- ALL THE TIME, TOMMY’S “OLD MAN” RIDES HEARD (referring to Russell Maguire)
- “TOMMY” ACQUIRES A SENSE OF PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY
- “TOMMY” IS DECORATED
- TOMMY’S SHANGRI-LA
- WHEN TOMMY COMES MARCHING HOME AGAIN

With the plaque on the sterling silver Thompson presentation piece dedicated to Frederic A. Willis and with the book “TOMMY” written by him for Russell Maguire, I needed to learn more about Mr. Willis. The more I researched, the more interesting it became. Frederic A. Willis, Vice President of Auto-Ordnance after it was acquired by Maguire, was a cousin of Winston Churchill. Is that why we see pictures of Churchill with a “TOMMY” gun in his hands? Was the British purchase of Thompsons a cousin-to-cousin transaction? Further research on Willis revealed that he left Auto-Ordnance during WWII and joined General Bill Donovan’s OSS. After the war he constructed Wall Street transactions including purchasing the former Auto-Ordnance manufacturing facility and selling it to George Numrich, along with a substantial gun and

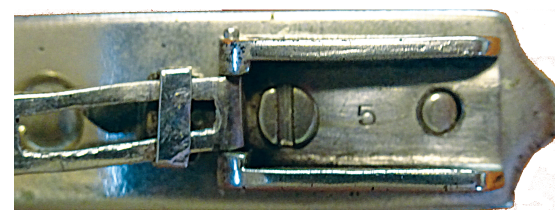
parts inventory Auto-Ordnance had stored in the facility since the end of the war.



Upon careful examination of the Thompson, the word “sterling” and its manufacturer’s proof mark are visible along the bottom of the barrel. I cannot identify the proof

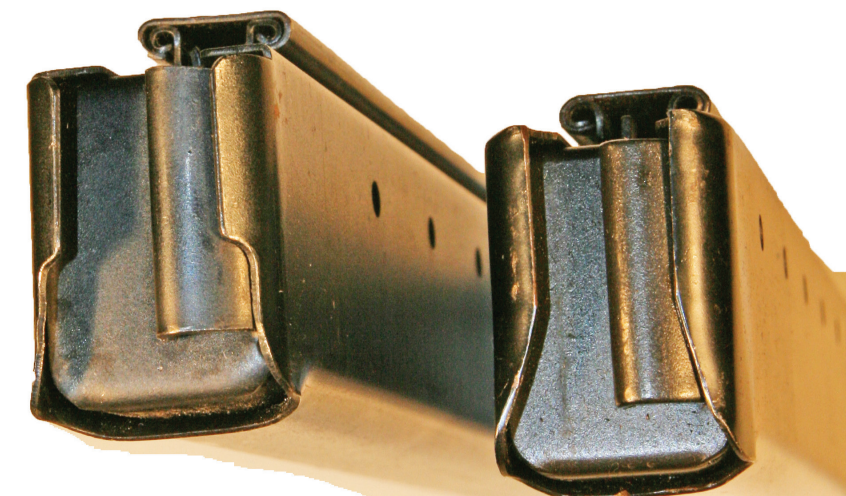


mark, but a reader may be able to, in order to identify the manufacturer of these presentation pieces. This example is SN 5 as shown on the inside of the butt plate and beneath the Lyman sight leaf. The dedication plaque is dated December, 1941, just as America entered the war! The example given to Marcellus Thompson’s widow would surely have had a plaque dedicating it to her deceased husband.



These 32 round magazines were made by The Model Gun Company, Tokyo, Japan. The magazine’s body has no markings anywhere, but they are easily identified by the feed lips. In the photo below the 32 round mag is on the left with a WWII 30 round mag on the right. Notice the cut out notches in the feed lips to allow the special blank cartridges to pop up more quickly than the WWII mags. This is needed due to the weaker recoil springs used in the MGC guns.

Now this is where it gets interesting. This magazine may have been shipped with the early West Hurley Thompsons. We know West Hurley used MGC drum magazine bodies and later rotor systems, but it also seems they used this magazine. Yet, not many of these 32 round mags exist. The 32 rd mags may have been reduced to the more commonly seen 20 round mags due to a change in US or Japanese laws. The mystery continues.



Previous pages are a free mini poster for our membership. This is showing the motorcycle sidecar mounted Thompson Submachine Gun. This is the vehicle used in the first public display of the Thompson at Teneffly, NJ.

THE REALLY RARE 32 ROUND THOMPSON BOX MAGAZINE

For the first time we have proof of the existence of the very rare 32 rd Thompson Submachine Gun box magazine. I guess we will have to call it the "XXXII" magazine. The magazine shown below, third from the left, is the discovery. It is apparent from it's size that it was purpose built as a 32 round maga and was not a creation of welding two magazines together. However, it is NOT what you think!



FREDERIC ARTHUR WILLIS

And the third example, the presentation plaque pictured in the ultimate Thompson book shows its presentation to the Savage Arms Corporation on August 25, 1941. If everything was done sequentially, at least two more examples would have been presented before SN 5. Each must come with fascinating history. But all I know about the history of sterling silver Thompson SN5 is that the collector who kindly allowed me to purchase it had acquired it 45 years before from a collector of Napoleonic artifacts willing to let it go since the Thompson items did not fit into the theme of his collection!

When I trace all of this back, I am so thankful for that conversation in Mexico City. We never know to what a casual conversation will lead!



Russell Maguire posed with his Thompson miniature.

