

The American
Thompson.
Association

ALL THOMPSON SHOW AND SHOOT
16TH ANNUAL
AUGUST 17-18, 2007
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

"THE THOMPSON LEGEND"

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Vol. 7

On The Side Of Law And Order

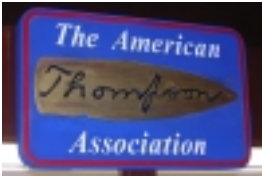
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"BONNIE AND CLYDE"-FORTY YEARS **OF MACHINE GUN MAGIC**

**WARREN BEATTY CENTER HOLDING WHAT APPEARS TO BE A MODEL 1928A1.
FAYE DUNAWAY COULD CERTAINLY HOLD HER OWN WITH A TSMG. SEE KEITH
WHITE'S ARTICLE ON PAGE NINE FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



A Historic Gathering of Thompsons! **The TATA/DACA 2007 NRA Exhibit**

BY
DAVID ALBERT



The American Thompson Association partnered with the Dallas Arms Collectors Association (DACA) to present a spectacular display at the 2007 NRA Annual Meetings in St. Louis in April. The effort recreated a portion of the “On the Side of Law and Order” display at NRA’s National Firearms Museum in 2004. Tracie Hill, President of TATA, fabricated a beautiful, 9-section display case especially for the 2007 event, and many hours were spent by Tracie and other members to enable the effort. The convention attracted record sized convention crowds to St. Louis, and the TATA display made a lasting impression on many attendees.

Forty Thompson guns were featured, ranging from four Model of 1919’s, three Thompson Autorifles, four BSA Thompsons (plus the Auto-Ordnance manufactured version of the BSA), a 9mm T2 Thompson, and many others. Of special note were the presence of the Blish pistol, the inscribed Payne and Eickhoff presentation Model of 1921 Thompsons, and General Thompson’s personal TSMG and other artifacts. The display demonstrated the history of Auto-Ordnance and the TSMG, beginning with prototype designs, Colt production guns, World War II mass production, up through the Numrich and current Kahr production models, and included many rare accessories, along with a few novelty items.

Well dressed TATA members provided enthusiastic historical narrative to inquisitive onlookers, and many attendees recounted their personal TSMG experiences. Much information was exchanged, including a contact resulting in a major documentary discovery of new historical details to be presented in the future.

On Saturday, an American Rifleman Magazine special session on the Thompson was presented to a standing room only gathering, and ran for over an hour and a half. Presenting on the subject were American Rifleman Editor-In-Chief Mark A. Keefe IV, Tracie Hill, and Martin K.A. Morgan from the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. Mark’s opening comments highlighted his interest in the weapon, and led to Tracie’s presentation of the development and history of the weapon and its designers. Martin covered the World War II contribution of the TSMG in very enthusiastic style, including some crowd-pleasing home video of him firing an M1928A1 and an M1A1.

A few celebrities passed by the display, including Ted Nugent, R. Lee Ermey, Tom Selleck, and Sandy Froman, President of the NRA. Many thousands of others marveled at the collection, and the 2000 specially printed show flyers were distributed the first day. One could spend hours gazing at the collection, and still find something they might not have noticed before.

TATA and DACA won several awards for the display, including exceptional firearm medals for 2 of the Model of 1919’s, serial number 7 and number 17. The BSA Thompsons won a special recognition award, and the overall TSMG display won best educational display for classic arms. The Ohio Gun Collectors Association display of Colt Double Action Revolvers from 1911-1941 won the overall award for the show.

Overall, the 2007 NRA Convention was very successful, and the conventioners were well received by the gracious host city, which will undoubtedly serve again to host the event sometime in the future. All TATA and DACA members involved in the display felt good about the effort and results, and are already planning another one for next year in Louisville.



***NOTHING BUT COOKIES
AND CREAM!***



***SETUP BEGINS ALL HANDS
ON DECK!***



***LOCATION, LOCATION,
LOCATION***



PHIL ASKEW CHECKING THE ALIGNMENT.



***FINALLY THE LAST NAIL! NINE HOURS OF
WORK!***



***ALLAN CORS TRING TO SEE WHAT HE CAN
SMUGGLE OUT UNDER HIS COAT.***



WHAT A VIEW! 40 FEET OF THOMPSONS!



**JOHN PERSHINA
MUST BE PROUD!**



**AWARD WINNERS S/N 7 AND S/N 17 MODEL OF 1919 AND
WWII INSPECTOR GAGES.**



**JOHN THOMPSON'S PERSONAL GUN AND
MEMORABILIA.**



**SANDY FORMAN IN HER FINAL ACT AS
PRESIDENT OF NRA REVIEWS THE DISPLAY.**

**TEAR DOWN. HERE WE GO
AGAIN!
IT ONLY TOOK TWO HOURS TO
TAKE DOWN.**



Thompson

On The Side of
**Law &
Order**



**NRA ANNUAL MEETINGS
ST. LOUIS, MO 2007**

“On The Side Of Law And Order”

The “Legend” of the Thompson Submachine Gun begins with it’s namesake, Brigadier General John Taliaferro Thompson. He was born in Newport, Kentucky on December 31, 1860. General Thompson became West Point graduate in 1882, and by the time he reached the rank of Lt. Colonel he had established for himself a world renown reputation as a firearms expert.



However, he soon believed that private enterprise’s ingenuity was needed to create new arms for the United States’s military. Therefore, in 1916, with the financial backing from a Wall Street Tycoon by the name of Thomas Fortune Ryan, Auto-Ordnance Corporation was established.

Auto-Ordnance Corporation was established to create a new automatic rifle for the armed forces. The innovative design was to incorporate a “new” principle for locking the bolt and breech of the firearm, based on the “Bliss Principle of Metallic Adhesion.”

An Engineering Department was established in Cleveland, Ohio, to work with the Warner-Swasey Co. General John T. Thompson put two very young engineers in charge of design and development. Theodore Eickhoff, a graduate of Purdue University, who had worked for the US Ordnance Department since graduation, and Oscar Payne, a self taught practical tinker and draftsman. The Engineering Department worked for two years with limited success to develop an automatic rifle using the “Bliss Locking System.” However, during one of the later tests, the new .45 ACP cartridge was found to function flawlessly with the new breech locking system.



With the full backing of General Thompson, the design team developed a series of submachine guns known as the Thompson Submachine Gun, Model of 1919. From these early prototype designs came the famous Colt’s produced Model of 1921As. These firearms are today still considered the “Crown Jewels” of submachine guns by collectors. With this new firearm, Auto-Ordnance adopted its motto: “On The Side Of Law and Order.”

On July 3, 1939 the Auto-Ordnance Corporation was purchased by a newly established corporation called the “Thompson Automatic Arms Corporation.” The majority of stock was owned by a man named Russell Maguire. Russell Maguire had bought a company that had a large debt, little assets, no production facilities and very few Thompsons in stock. But, like a Phoenix from the ashes, Auto-Ordnance was revitalized to become a leader in armament production for the Allies, during World War II.

In the spring of 1940, Mr. Maguire contracted with Savage Arms Corporation to get the Thompson back into production. This was the first new production of Thompsons since 1921. By February of 1941, the Savage factories were producing 10,000 guns per month.

At the same time, Russell Maguire established Auto-Ordnance's first factory in Bridgeport, Conn., in August of 1940. By August, 1941, this factory was in full production. In October, 1941 alone, Auto-Ordnance was able to deliver almost 43,000 Thompsons. In February, 1942, Auto-Ordnance delivered its 500,000th Thompson to the U.S. Army. By 1944 when production stopped on the Thompson Submachine Gun, over 1,750,000 complete Thompsons had been produced with the spare parts equivalent of another 250,000. For this work Auto-Ordnance was awarded the Army-Navy "E" Award four times between 1941 and 1945.



After the production of Thompson Submachine Guns ended in 1943, Auto-Ordnance contracted to produce other war time work. This included parts for the M1 Carbine (under the IBM Contract, to produce the receivers, bolts and slides), the Model of 1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle (barrels and bolt carriers under the New England Small Arms Corp. contracts.), and Model 1919A4 Browning Machine Gun (various small parts).

At the end of World War II, the Auto-Ordnance Division was closed and the tooling and history of the Thompson Submachine Gun were packed away for storage. The remains of Auto-Ordnance remained packed away forgotten, until the early 1950's when they were finally purchased by George Numrich of Numrich Arms Corporation, which is today known as Gun Parts Corporation of West Hurley, New York. When Numrich received the crates of Auto-Ordnance assets he was surprised to find many of the prototype Thompsons that are shown in this display and pieces of a corporation's interesting history.

Numrich believed that there was an interest in the Thompson among police departments and private collectors. At first the Thompsons sold by Numrich were made up from the parts and pieces of Thompsons still in the crates, but around 1975 a new era began with a new production. Numrich produced both full and carbine versions of the Thompson for the shooter and collector.

In January of 1999, the latest chapter of the "American Legend" began with the sale of the Auto-Ordnance Corporation from Numrich to Kahr Arms. Kahr Arms, which is headquartered in Bleauvelt, NY, has been in the firearms business for years making a fine line of semiautomatic pistols. The Auto-Ordnance name is now being revitalized under the new ownership.



The future is looking bright. The Thompson Submachine Gun is currently more popular, with collectors and enthusiasts, today than it has ever been. The American Thompson Association has become a the focal point of this interest and has taken upon itself the responsibility of preserving the history and lore of this firearm. The American Thompson Association are grateful to the NRA and its staff, especially Phil Schreier and Whit Fentem.

We hope you enjoy this reproduction of the exhibit of the Thompson Submachine Gun that was housed at the National Firearms Museum, in the Ruger Gallery March 2004 - March 2005.

Tom Woods



**This exhibit is dedicated in honor of
Walter T. (“TOM”) Woods.**

Tom’s dedication to the education and preservation of the history of the Thompson and all Class III arms has been endless. Tom was President when this exhibit opened in Washington DC at the National Firearms Museum in Fairfax, Virginia. He wrote the above words in that exhibit’s catalog. Tom has recently engaged in the fight of his life. That fight is with cancer. The members of The American Thompson Association and Dallas Arms Collectors wish Tom all the best during this time.

The American

Association


The Dallas Arms Collectors Assoc., Inc.

"BONNIE AND CLYDE"-FORTY YEARS OF MACHINE GUN MAGIC

BY
KEITH WHITE



*If they try to act like citizens
And rent them a nice little flat,
About the third night
They're invited to fight
By a sub-gun's rat-tat-tat.*

-Bonnie Parker

In the 1967 motion picture, "Bonnie and Clyde," as actress Faye Dunaway recites from Bonnie Parker's poem, "The Story of Bonnie and Clyde," she quotes the stanza reproduced above, verbatim. In the original poem, the term "submachine gun" is shortened to "sub-gun." It's a minor point, but even in this abbreviated form, the word's meaning is not lost upon the audience. Having witnessed a spectacular display of full-automatic pyrotechnics earlier on in the film (the Platte City tourist court gunfight), viewers know precisely what she's talking about. "Sub-guns" are Thompson submachine guns.

It makes no never mind that the real New Deal desperado Clyde Barrow committed the majority of his deprivations armed with either a sawed-off shotgun or a BAR lifted from some National Guard armory. This newsletter is dedicated to all things Thompson. Since, "Bonnie and Clyde," producer actor Warren Beatty stocked his motion picture with tommy guns, it is appropriate for us to give pause and celebrate the 40th anniversary of the release of this classic gangster film. Doubly appropriate since the majority of those same said submachine guns were of incorrect vintage for the 1931-1934 time frame depicted in the movie.

Say what?

It's true. If you have, "Bonnie and Clyde," on DVD or VHS, give it a watch. Of the seven Thompsons that you'll see on the screen, five-and, possibly, all seven-are Model 1928A1s of World War II manufacture. Two of these guns have Lyman adjustable rear sights. The other five are fitted with stamped "L" rear sights. As anyone who has read, THOMPSON: THE AMERICAN LEGEND, knows, the "L" rear sight was adopted in 1941.

While Thompson purists might complain, this faux pas does not detract from the film's overall entertainment value. Accessorized with vertical fore grips and the infamous Hollywood self-replenishing "L" drum magazine ("never runs out of ammunition"), these military veterans perform admirably.

If anything, one can gripe that the, "Bonnie and Clyde," TSMGs are given too little screen time. Our favorite gangster icon is fired on camera in only two of the five scenes it appears in. But what an impression the gun makes in these key sequences!

The first is the aforementioned Platte City shootout. Hollywood has always misrepresented the .45 ACP caliber Thompson submachine gun as being just slightly less powerful than an atomic bomb, so the Barrow gang easily decimates man and machine as they escape this police trap. The action takes place at night. The muzzle flash light show is mesmerizing.

The second drum roll of thunder conies at the conclusion of the motion picture. In Realty's version of the May 23, 1934 ambush that ended the lives of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, six lawmen accomplish the task, each officer armed with a M1928A1. Filmed in slow motion by director Arthur Penn, the resulting ballet of death has been called one of the most visually explosive moments in all of cinematic history. Not a bad day's work for six

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blank-adapted military surplus tommy guns!

I can't help but wonder where the, "Bonnie and Clyde," Thompsons are today. The motion picture was filmed on location in Texas in 1966 and released the following year. In those days, most NFA props were supplied by Ellis Mercantile or by Stenbridge Gun Rentals. Sadly, both firms have since quit the business. Their inventories have been sold. I'd like to think that each of those wonderful, old movie veterans has found a comfortable spot in some Thompson collector's gun safe.. .but who can say?



Happy 40th anniversary, "Bonnie and Clyde." Thanks for the "sub-gun" memories.

C DRUM RAFFLE!

Thanks to the folks at Kahr for their gracious donation, The American Thompson Association is, raffling a new Kahr C Drum (\$800 value) with all proceeds going to the club. This is a chance to own one of these new drums for \$10. Only 100 tickets will be sold. There will be a limit of 5 tickets (\$10 ea) per member.

The drawing will be held at the TATA All Thompson Show and Shoot August 18th.

Postcards will be sent out to all TATA members, so even those that cannot attend the show will have a chance.

We must receive your reply by August 1st. There may be some tickets available at the show, but it would be best to get your tickets early.

This is available to TATA members only, so tell all your friends to join and get in on this SUPER raffle.

Your Humble Treasurer
Phil Askew

P.S. Don't forget to bring extra money for our famous 50/50 drawing at this years Show and Shoot!!!!

