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3rd July,  
1940



# Small Arms Training

Volume I, Pamphlet No. 21

## Thompson Sub-Machine-Gun

1940

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THE WAR OFFICE,  
3rd July, 1940.

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PLATE 1

THOMPSON SUB - MACHINE GUN

WITH BOX MAGAZINE

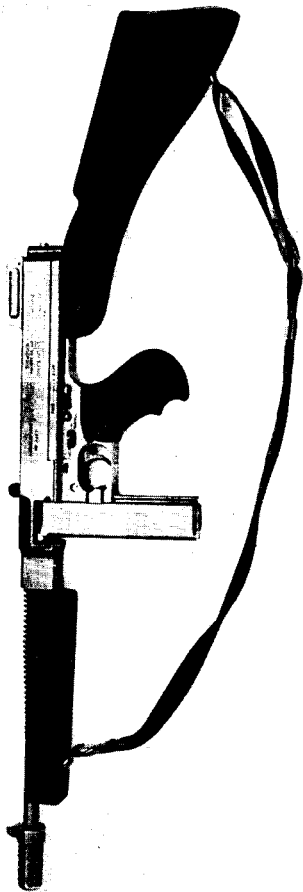


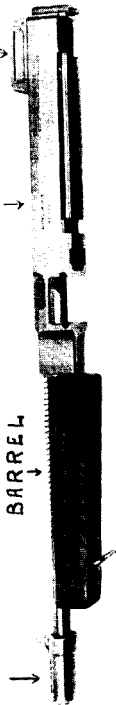
PLATE 2

BACKSIGHT

BODY

BARREL

COMPENSATOR



BUTT



SPRING



BUFFER



H' PIECE



COCKING  
HANDLE



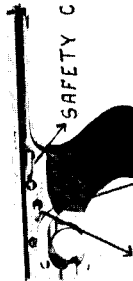
PISTOL GRIP

SAFETY CATCH

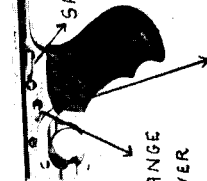
BOLT



CHANGE  
LEVER



MAGAZINE  
CRITCH



# THOMPSON SUB-MACHINE GUN

## GENERAL NOTES

1. The gun enables targets appearing from different directions at short ranges to be engaged quickly. It is particularly useful in patrolling and for close-quarter fighting in villages and woods. It can be fired from the waist by sense of direction, thereby facilitating targets being engaged with extreme rapidity. Targets can also be engaged quickly by firing from the shoulder with or without the use of the sling.

### 2. *General description*

Weight of gun—Approx. 10 lb.

Calibre—.450-in.

Magazines—two types—box holding 20 rounds, and a drum holding 50 rounds.

The gun is an automatic weapon operated by the recoil of the spent case acting on the bolt face. The gun can fire either bursts or single rounds.

### 3. *Characteristics*

- i. A high rate of fire combined with great stopping power.
- ii. With skill considerable accuracy can be obtained up to 50 yards or more.
- iii. The short barrel enables targets to be engaged quickly in all directions.
- iv. Combined with the element of surprise, the moral effect is very great.

## LESSON 1.—LOADING AND UNLOADING

*Stores :—* *Instructor's Notes*

*Gun, gun chest complete, magazines, dummies.*

*All parts will be named as dealt with*

### 1. **Introductory**

Explain briefly General Notes, paras. 1-3.

### 2. **Magazine filling**

- i. Explain and demonstrate :—

Magazine filling—magazine of box type, holds 20 rounds. Hold magazine in left hand, ribs away from the body. Pick up a convenient number of rounds in the right hand and place each round in by pressing downwards and backwards. Count the number of rounds and ensure ammunition is kept clean.

- ii. To empty—press each round forward with the nose of a bullet
- iii. Practise squad.
- iv. Magazine filling—drum type—holds 50 rounds. Remove the winding key by lifting the flat spring and

sliding the key off. Remove the cover. Position the rotor with one claw opposite the mouth, and commence to fill anti-clockwise, the outer spirals first, bullets uppermost. Count number of rounds. Replace the cover with the small slot over the stud, slide on the winding key. Wind to the number of clicks indicated on the magazine nameplate.

- v. To empty—with the nose of a bullet, push out rounds from the mouth one at a time. Care must be taken to keep the fingers clear of the winding key.
- vi. Practise squad.

### 3. Loading and unloading

Explain and demonstrate :—

Box type magazine

- i. *To load*.—Hold the gun in the right hand at the small of the butt, butt resting on the waist, muzzle pointing upwards. With the left hand draw cocking handle back to the full extent. Grasp magazine in left hand, insert the rib in the corresponding recess in front of the trigger guard, force upwards until engaged. Place safety catch to the rear.

NOTE.—Safety catch can be applied and change lever moved from automatic to single rounds only when the gun is cocked.

- ii. *To unload*.—Press the magazine catch on the left side of the pistol grip upwards with the thumb of the left hand while holding the magazine with the fingers, and remove it. Put safety catch forward. Hold the cocking handle with the left hand and press the trigger with the right, allowing the action to go fully forward under control. Cock the gun and repeat this action, glancing at the chamber to ensure that it is empty.

- iii. Practise squad.

Drum type magazine

- iv. *To load*.—Adopt the same position as in para 3. i. above and cock the gun as before. Insert the two ribs near the mouth into the horizontal grooves in front of the body, winding key to the front. Force the magazine from left to right until engaged. Place safety catch to the rear.

- v. *To unload*.—Cock the gun. Press the magazine catch with the thumb, and remove magazine with the fingers by sliding it to the left. Continue unloading as in para. 3. ii. above.

- vi. Practise squad.

#### 4. Sight setting and aiming

The sights will only be used on exceptional occasions when it is desired to fire the gun by deliberate aim.

The backsight is of the aperture type with leaf graduated to 600 yards : rules for aiming as with L.M.G.

There is also a battle sight accurate up to 50 yards : rules for aiming as with the rifle.

Instructor explains the use of these.

NOTE.—Windgauge must be set central.

#### 5. Show method of packing gun in chest.

### LESSON 2.—HOLDING AND FIRING

#### *Instructor's Note*

*Stores :—*

*As for Lesson 1*

*A magazine should be on the gun when teaching holding.*

#### 1. Holding

i. Explain.—Although there is no shock of recoil whatever, the personal element of holding the gun is all-important, especially when firing in bursts, the natural tendency being for the gun to throw upward. Correct holding can only be gained by experience in firing ball ammunition.

ii. There are two positions for holding the gun—

(a) From the waist.

(b) In the shoulder.

In both cases it may be done with or without the use of the sling, though the latter ensures the better holding. It is important that the length of it is adjusted to suit the firer.

2. i. Explain and demonstrate :—

Holding from the waist. The left foot is advanced with the knee bent, the weight of the body being balanced on the left leg, rear leg braced. The right hand is on the pistol grip with the forefinger on the trigger, the left hand on the foregrip. Muzzle directed towards the target and slightly below the horizontal. The whole attitude must be one of aggression and determination. (See plate 3.)

NOTE.—If the sling is used it should be outside the left arm and under the hand.

ii. Practise squad with and without the sling.

3. i. Explain and demonstrate :—

Holding in the shoulder. The position of the



body and the hands is the same as holding from the waist. The right elbow is raised and the right shoulder pushed well forward into the gun. (See plate 4.)

ii. Practise squad with and without the sling.

4. Explain and demonstrate :—

The gun can be carried upside down at the trail or slung over the shoulder, but whenever action is imminent it should be carried at the holding position from the waist (see para. 2, above) with the gun loaded.

From this position it can be fired instantly, or, time permitting, quickly from the shoulder.

Although the gun can be fired while actually advancing, far better effect is obtained by momentarily halting to fire.

5. **Firing**

Explain.—The gun can be fired single rounds by placing the change lever to the rear (this can only be done when the gun is cocked) or in bursts by placing it forward.

Owing to the speed with which single rounds can be fired, the greater accuracy obtained by this method and the need for economy of ammunition, single-round firing should be employed whenever possible.

Bursts should be reserved for extreme emergencies, and, when used, should be of 2 or 3 rounds only.

6. The gun will normally be fired by sense of direction from the waist; the importance of determination cannot be over-emphasized.

When fired from the shoulder, great accuracy up to 50 yards can be obtained instantly, by roughly aligning the foresight in the cut-away portion of the cocking handle.

Whatever method of firing is adopted, observation is important and the firer must concentrate on his target the whole time.

Practice in firing can only be carried out using ball ammunition.

7. **Immediate action**

Explain and demonstrate :—

With the box-type magazine, the gun will stop with the working parts to the rear when it is empty. It is only necessary to change it. With the drum magazine, the working parts will stop in the forward position; a rattling sound indicating that the magazine is empty. The gun must be cocked and the magazine changed. Should the gun stop while firing, cock the gun and continue firing. Should it

still fail to fire, again cock the gun and turn it to the right, when a case or cartridge should roll out. If it does not, remove the magazine and it will drop out.

Before replacing magazine, ensure chamber is empty, if practicable.

#### 8. Practise squad.

(NOTE.—Unless dummies are available, the action must be let forward under control—no magazine being on the gun.)

### LESSON 3.—STRIPPING AND CLEANING

*Stores required :—*

*Gun complete in chest. Flannelette and oil.*

#### 1. Stripping

Explain and demonstrate :—

Cock gun—put change lever to "Automatic." Press trigger and ease working parts forward. Press down butt plunger and remove butt. Press down pistol grip plunger and, with trigger pressed, remove pistol grip.

(N.B.—Change lever must be set to "A" to avoid damage to tripping lever.)

Assemble in reverse order.

#### 2. Practise squad.

#### 3. Explain and demonstrate complete stripping of body group.

NOTE.—This will only be carried out in the event of a breakage, or for periodical cleaning after excessive firing. It will not be practised, as the spring is liable to be distorted.

#### 4. Cleaning

Explain and demonstrate :—

i. *Daily cleaning.*—Cock gun, apply safety catch. Screw adapter on to cleaning rod and attach cleaner. Clean and oil the barrel from the muzzle end, using flannelette about 4 inches by 4 inches. Care must be taken to avoid damaging the bolt face. Ease working parts forward. Clean outside with oily rag.

ii. *Before firing.*—Cock gun and clean barrel as for daily cleaning, leaving barrel dry. Clean and oil chamber, using brush and flannelette. Ease working parts forward. Remove butt and pistol grip and oil following parts :—

(a) Trigger mechanism.

(b) The lugs on the "H" piece, having drawn back bolt.

(c) All sliding surfaces of bolt and body, including front of bolt.

(d) The two felt pads.

Replace the pistol grip and butt.

With change lever at "A," press trigger and work cocking handle backwards and forwards, thus ensuring distribution of oil.

Inspect the extractor and ejector.

Clean magazines.

*N. B.*—The chamber and working parts should be oiled as frequently as possible during firing.

iii. *After firing*

Cock gun. Apply safety catch. Clean barrel with flannelette, bristle brush, oil and rod. Clean grooves in compensator. Where fouling is difficult to remove use wire brass brush. Brushes must be well oiled when used.

Barrel to be left thoroughly oiled.

Clean and oil chamber.

Ease working parts forward.

Remove butt and pistol grip.

Draw back bolt and clean face of bolt with chamber brush and oily flannelette.

Clean all other inside parts of body and bolt with oily rag and leave well oiled.

Re-assemble gun.

Clean and oil magazines.

iv. Question squad.

5. **Action during and after gas attack**

i. *During a gas attack*

Keep weapon oiled and move working parts backwards and forwards at frequent intervals.

ii. *After a gas attack*

If splashed with blister gas, the weapon must be decontaminated before cleaning, as follows:—

Rub ointment into the hands.

Remove the sling.

Strip the gun completely, remove gross contamination with swab or cotton waste. If petrol or paraffin are available, use them to swab down the metal portions. Apply ointment to the woodwork, and to metal portions if no petrol available—wiping it off after 15–20 minutes. Oil the gun thoroughly and apply ointment to the hands.

If possible, the sling must be decontaminated separately.

6. Question and practise squad in complete lesson.

PLATE 3.  
FIRING FROM THE WAIST



PLATE 4

FIRING FROM THE SHOULDER

