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# Small Arms Training

Volume I, Pamphlet No. 21

# The Thompson Machine Carbine

1942

(This pamphlet supersedes the 1940 edition)

*By Command of the Army Council*

THE WAR OFFICE,  
15th July, 1942.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. D. ...'.

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# SMALL ARMS TRAINING

Volume I, Pamphlet No. 21

## THE THOMPSON MACHINE CARBINE

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### GENERAL NOTES

#### 1. *Object*

The sole object of weapon training is to teach all ranks the most efficient way of handling their weapons in order to kill the enemy. Instructors will always bear this fact in mind and will continually impress it upon those whom they instruct.

#### 2. *Safety precautions*

At the beginning of every lesson the instructor will inspect the machine carbine, pouches, and drill cartridges.

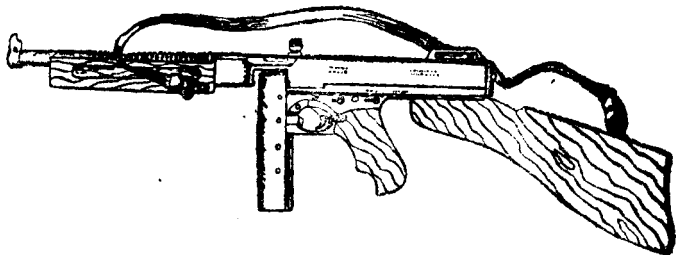
#### 3. *Training*

Instructors must appreciate that, while the lessons are designed to be taught in one period, more time will be necessary in order to permit of sufficient practice to obtain proficiency.

Excellent training value can also be obtained by using the spotlight projector (*see Appendix*).

4. The machine carbine is normally the weapon of the section commander. Occasions will arise, however, when it may be advisable to give it to another man in the section.

### THOMPSON MACHINE—CARBINE.



Weight Approx : 10 lb.    Calibre : .450 in.

Carbines with vertical foregrips have the front swivel on the left side.

FIG. 1

# LESSON 1.—INTRODUCTION—LOADING AND UNLOADING

## *Instructor's Notes*

*Stores.—Machine carbine ; magazines ; drill cartridges, if available.*

*All parts will be named as dealt with (see Fig. 2).*

### 1. Explain :—

The machine carbine is a short range weapon introduced for the purpose of engaging the enemy at ranges of from 10 to 100 yds. At greater distances the speed of the bullet is so reduced that it has lost much of its penetrative power.

The weapon is especially useful when on patrol, or for fighting in close country, such as woods and villages. It is ideal for use at night at very close ranges. If necessary it may be fired on the move during the assault. Under these conditions the enemy may appear at close ranges and from different directions, and by firing from the waist such targets can be instantly engaged. Where time permits the weapon should always be fired from the shoulder, as this method is far more accurate.

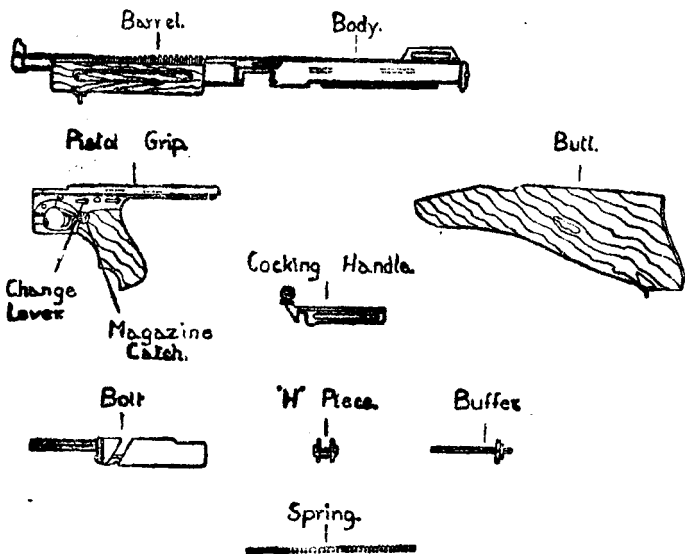


FIG. 2

It is an automatic weapon, operated by the recoil of the spent case acting on the bolt face.

The machine carbine can be fired in bursts or in single rounds.

## 2. Magazine filling

i. Explain and demonstrate :—

The magazine 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 that ammunition is kept clean.

ii. To empty—press each round forward with the nose of a bullet or remove with finger and thumb.

iii. Practise squad.

## 3. Loading and unloading

Explain and demonstrate :—

i. *To load.*—Hold the machine carbine with the right hand on the pistol grip, forefinger outside the trigger guard, butt under the arm, muzzle pointing down at an angle of 45 degrees. Turn the machine carbine to the right, grasp the magazine in the left hand, rib to the rear, and insert it in the recess in front of the trigger guard. Force the magazine upwards and ensure that it is FULLY ENGAGED.

Loading is fully completed by cocking the machine carbine when it is required to fire, or when action is imminent.

NOTE.—The safety catch should NEVER be used— it being only necessary to cock the weapon to be ready for firing.

ii. *To unload.*—Turn the machine carbine to the right. Press the magazine catch on the left side of the pistol grip upwards with the thumb of the left hand, and remove the magazine. Cock the machine carbine, if not already cocked, and, holding the cocking handle with the left hand, press the trigger and ease the working parts forward under control. Repeat this action.

iii. Practise squad—Words of command—“ Load ”—  
“ Action imminent ”—“ Unload ”.

#### 4. *The sights*

Explain :—

The weapon is fitted with a simple fixed aperture battle sight, sighted for use at 100 yds. Rules for aiming as for L.M.G. With machine carbines not fitted with this battle sight, quick alignment can be made using the recess in the cocking handle.

### LESSON 2.—HOLDING AND FIRING

#### *Instructor's Notes*

*Stores.*—Machine carbine ; magazines ; drill cartridges, if available ; Fig. 2 target.

*A magazine should be on the weapon when teaching holding.*  
*Dress* :—battle order.

#### 1. *Holding*

i. Explain :—

Whether firing from the shoulder or the hip, holding is of the first importance. There is no shock of recoil when firing, but the weapon has a tendency to throw upwards when bursts are used. The individual can only find the exact hold required, to ensure hitting the enemy, by firing on the range.

ii. There are two positions for holding the weapon :—

(a) From the waist.

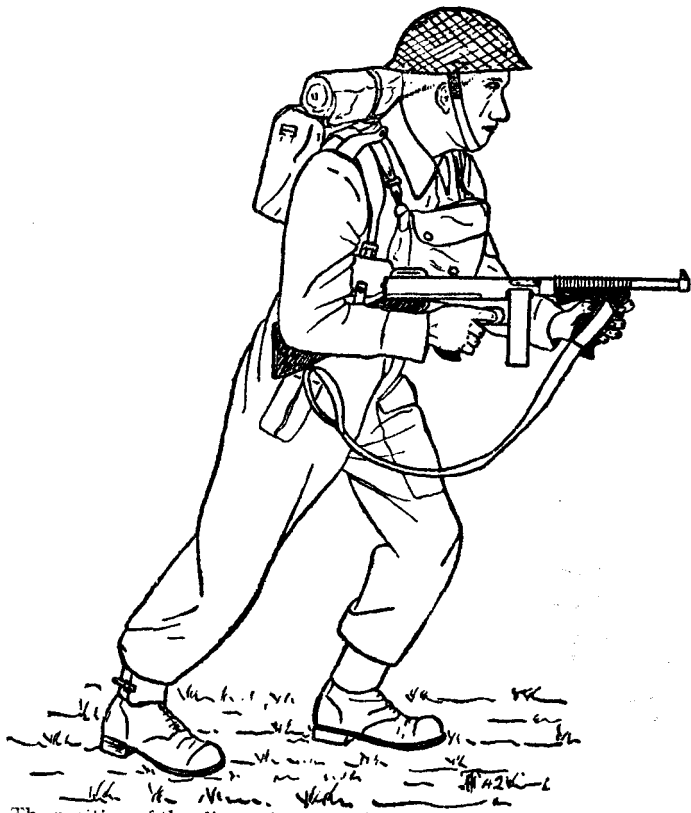
(b) From the shoulder.

2. i. Explain and demonstrate :—

(See Fig. 3.)

Holding from the waist.

The left foot is advanced with the knee bent, the weight of the body being balanced on the left foot. The right hand is on the pistol grip, with the forefinger on the trigger, the left hand on the foregrip. The butt of the weapon is pressed tightly against the side by the right arm. The left elbow is pulled well back into the body in such a way that, no matter in which direction the firer turns, the weapon is brought automatically in the same direction. The muzzle is directed towards the enemy, barrel horizontal. The attention of the firer must be concentrated on the target.

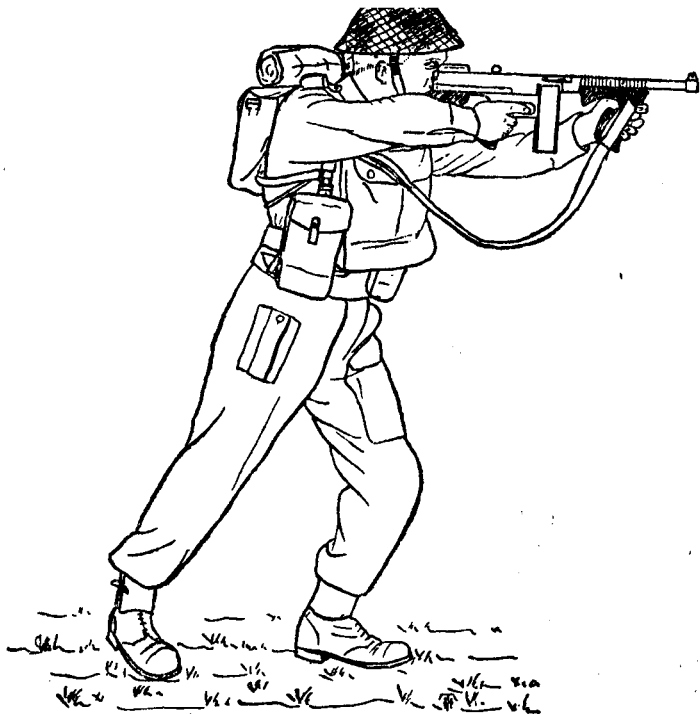


The position of the sling swivel is as shown in FIG. 1 and *not* as above.

FIG. 3

- ii. Practise squad, instructor standing behind man and checking that the barrel is aligned on the enemy.
3. i. Explain and demonstrate :—  
 (See Fig. 4.)  
 Holding in the shoulder.  
 The position of the body and the hands is the same as when holding from the waist. The right elbow is raised and the right shoulder pushed well forward into the butt.
- ii. Practise squad.





The position of the sling swivel is as shown in FIG. 1 and *not* as above.

FIG. 4

#### 4. *Firing*

- i. Explain and demonstrate, where necessary :—

The machine carbine can be fired single rounds, by placing the change lever to the rear (this can only be done when the weapon is cocked), or in bursts by placing it forward. With experience, single rounds can be fired with the change lever at automatic, thus enabling it to be kept permanently in this position. Because of 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 two or three rounds only.

- ii. The machine carbine can be carried in any convenient position, but when expecting to meet the enemy it should be held at the waist, supported by the sling round the neck.
- iii. If time permits the weapon will always be fired from the shoulder, as this method is far more accurate. An approximate aim should be taken using the battle sight, if fitted, or the recess in the cocking handle. Should the enemy appear too suddenly to allow of this method being used, it should be fired from the waist by sense of direction. From this position it can be cocked and fired instantly. Whichever method is used an attempt should be made to observe the shots, as this is the only quick method of making necessary corrections.  
Although the weapon can be fired whilst on the move, greater accuracy is obtained by halting momentarily.
- iv. Having disposed of the enemy the weapon can be placed at safety, to resume movement, by removing the magazine, easing the cocking handle forward, and placing on a full magazine.

### 5. *Immediate action*

Explain and demonstrate, using an empty magazine and also one fitted with a depressor, if drill cartridges are not available :—

(A halfpenny makes a good depressor.)

- i. When the magazine becomes empty the machine carbine will stop with the cocking handle to the rear. The remedy is to change the magazine and continue firing.
- ii. If the machine carbine stops during firing, cock it and continue firing.
- iii. Should the above immediate action fail, then cock the machine carbine, turn it to the right, and shake vigorously, when a live round or an empty case should fall out ; continue firing.
- iv. If nothing falls out when the machine carbine is shaken, remove the magazine, when the obstruction should drop out. Look into the chamber, if practicable, replace magazine (or a full one) and continue firing.

NOTE.—Unless drill cartridges are available, working parts must be eased forward under control to prevent damage.

- v. Practise squad, varying the order of stoppages as progress is made.

### LESSON 3.—STRIPPING AND CLEANING

#### *Instructor's Notes*

*Stores.*—Machine carbine ; flannelette and oil (oil can in butt trap) ; pullthrough ; brush, cleaning, chamber ; gauze ; graphited grease ; nail ; magazines.

*NOTE.*—Buffer rods are drilled with a hole  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. diameter,  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. from forward end of rod and at an angle of 90 degrees from the flat of the buffer collar, to enable the use of a nail for replacing recoil spring.

#### 1. Stripping

Explain and demonstrate :—

(For names of parts see Fig. 2.)

- i. Cock the machine carbine and press the trigger. Ensure change lever is at automatic. (If the weapon is stripped with change lever at single rounds, the tripping lever will become damaged.)

Press down butt plunger and remove butt. Turn the machine carbine upside down and press down pistol grip plunger. Press the trigger and remove pistol grip. Assemble in reverse order.

- ii. Practise squad.

- iii. After removing butt and pistol grip, compress the buffer and spring towards the bolt. When the rear end of the buffer is clear of its seating, lift it out, with the recoil spring under control. Move the working parts to the rear and lift out the bolt. Push cocking handle forward until "H" piece rises and then lift it out. Bring cocking handle to the rear and lift out.

Assemble in reverse order, recoil spring being replaced as follows :—

Place end of buffer in pilot seating OUTSIDE the rear of the body, with flat side of the collar downwards. Place the recoil spring on the buffer and compress the spring with the fingers until 2 or 3 ins. remain free. Insert nail into the hole in buffer to hold spring in position. Remove buffer and spring, and insert free end of spring into the recess in the rear end of the cocking handle. Make sure that the

flat on the buffer collar is downwards and guide the end of the buffer into the pilot seating. Using the cocking handle, draw back the bolt until it meets the nail. Withdraw the nail and allow the cocking handle to go forward under control. After complete assembly, cock machine carbine and press trigger, easing cocking handle forward.

iv. Practise squad.

## 2. *Cleaning*

i. Explain and demonstrate :—

Strip machine carbine completely. Clean the bore, using the pullthrough and flannelette, size 4 ins. by 8 ins., in the manner taught for the rifle. The flannelette should be folded twice until it measures 4 ins. by 2 ins. to permit easy attachment to the pullthrough.

A gauze is provided but should only be used when absolutely necessary. If used, it is necessary to pack it with two pieces of flannelette, size 4 ins. by 2 ins., one piece wrapped round each side of the loop. The gauze is placed completely round the flannelette, with the shorter ends tucked into the centre of the loop. When satisfied that the bore is clean, oil it, using 4 ins. by 6 ins. folded in three.

ii. Clean and oil the chamber, using the brush provided, with flannelette placed over it.

iii. Clean and oil thoroughly the remaining parts of the machine carbine, paying special attention to the following :—

Face of the bolt.

Trigger mechanism.

Two felt pads.

Sliding surfaces of bolt and body.

iv. Use graphited grease for the "H" piece and the recesses into which it fits in bolt and body.

Assemble.

NOTE.—The barrel should be dry before firing, if possible.

v. Clean the magazines with an oily rag.

## 3. *Practise squad.*

NOTE.—To avoid unnecessary stripping and consequent wear, the cocking handle can be held back by a small tool, as

shown in the diagram. The machine carbine need then only be stripped as far as the bolt for all cleaning, with the exception of periodical cleanings or decontamination (see Fig. 5).

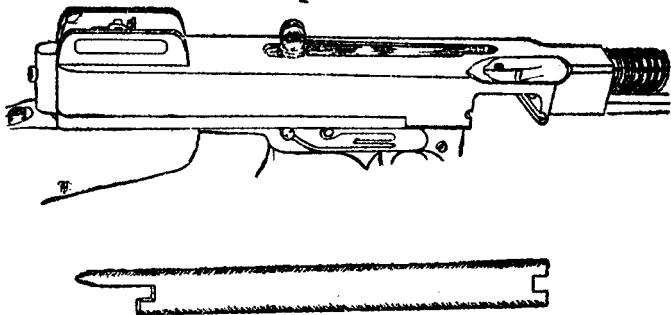


FIG. 5

#### 4. Decontamination

i. Explain :—

Should the machine carbine be subjected to gas it will be cleaned in the manner laid down for the rifle (see Pamphlet No. 3, Lesson 1).

ii. Question squad.

## APPENDIX

1. Fig. 6 shows the method of attaching the spotlight projector to the Thompson Machine Carbine with vertical foregrip and compensator. The only additional fittings required are :—

- i. Spotlight projector bracket.
- ii. A clip trigger guard.
- iii. A lead clip.

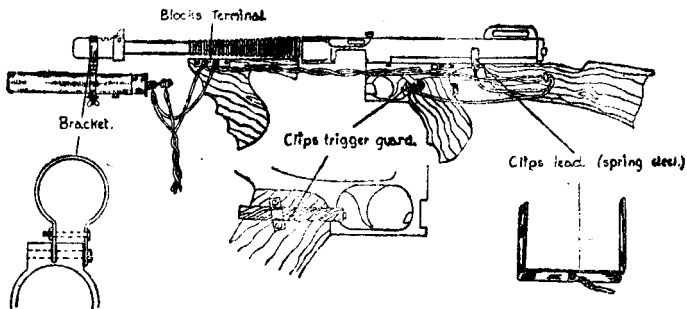


FIG. 6

2. Fig. 7 shows the modification necessary to provide a fitting for the Thompson Machine Carbine with horizontal foregrip and no compensator. The only additional fittings required are :—

- i. A clip trigger guard.
- ii. A lead clip.

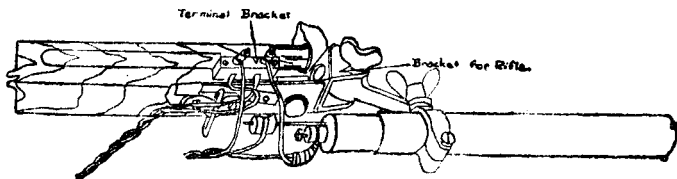


FIG. 7

NOTE.—The spotlight is carried on the bracket used for the rifle. In this case the bracket has a small hole drilled in it as indicated in Fig. 8. The bracket is fitted to the Thompson Machine Carbine under the front sling swivel. One lead fits on the clip trigger guard and the other under the plate on the right hand side of the body.

### BRACKET FOR RIFLE

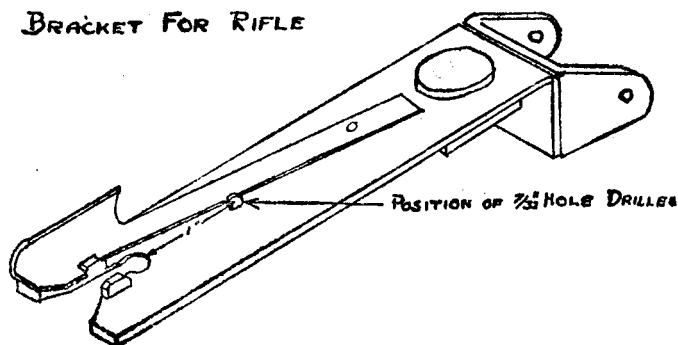


FIG. 8