

SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET

Colonel Magnus Hedenlund, Commanding Officer (CO) of the Swedish Infantry Combat School, demonstrating an American gangsterpistol.



Kulsprutepistol m/40 system Thompson — s. k. gangsterpistol.

Swedish Thompson Manuals

by Tom Davis, Jr.

The Thompson submachine gun has been the subject of many stories since its introduction to the international military and police communities in 1921. There are many collectors of this fine weapon worldwide, some owning many of the different variations, most fortunate to own only one. There are also a lot of enthusiasts who do not own a Thompson, but still collect many of the accessories and paper items. As an accessory or paper collection grows in size, it is usually displayed or defined by a specific era of Thompson history. Of course, the Warner & Swasey era was first, followed by the Colt era and then the Maguire/World War II era. The Kilgore/Willis and Numrich Arms Company era are next, followed by the rebirth of the second Auto-Ordnance Corporation at West Hurley, New York. The current Thompson era is now Kahr Arms, located in Worchester, Massachusetts.

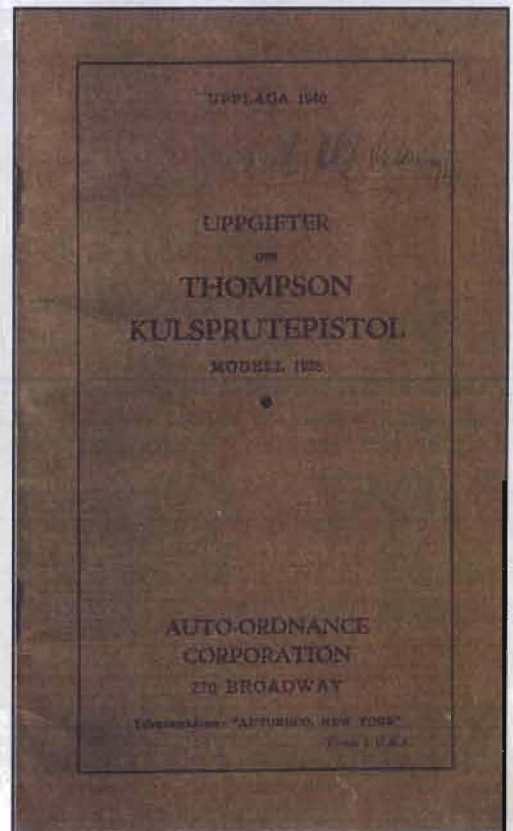
Paper items from the Colt era are very popular collectables and can be quite expensive. There are many items to collect given the Colt era lasted for nearly twenty years. Including advertisements, there is probably no one collection that has an example of every paper item produced during this time period. And the list is ever increasing; newly discovered items and what they represent make all collecting exciting. The subject of this story is a set of military manuals that can belong at the end of the Colt era or the beginning of the World War II era.

It all started on January 25, 1940 when the Royal Swedish army ordered 500 Thompson submachine guns for the Svenska Frivilligkåren SFK or the Swedish Voluntary Corps. The plan was to use the Thompson guns in Finland

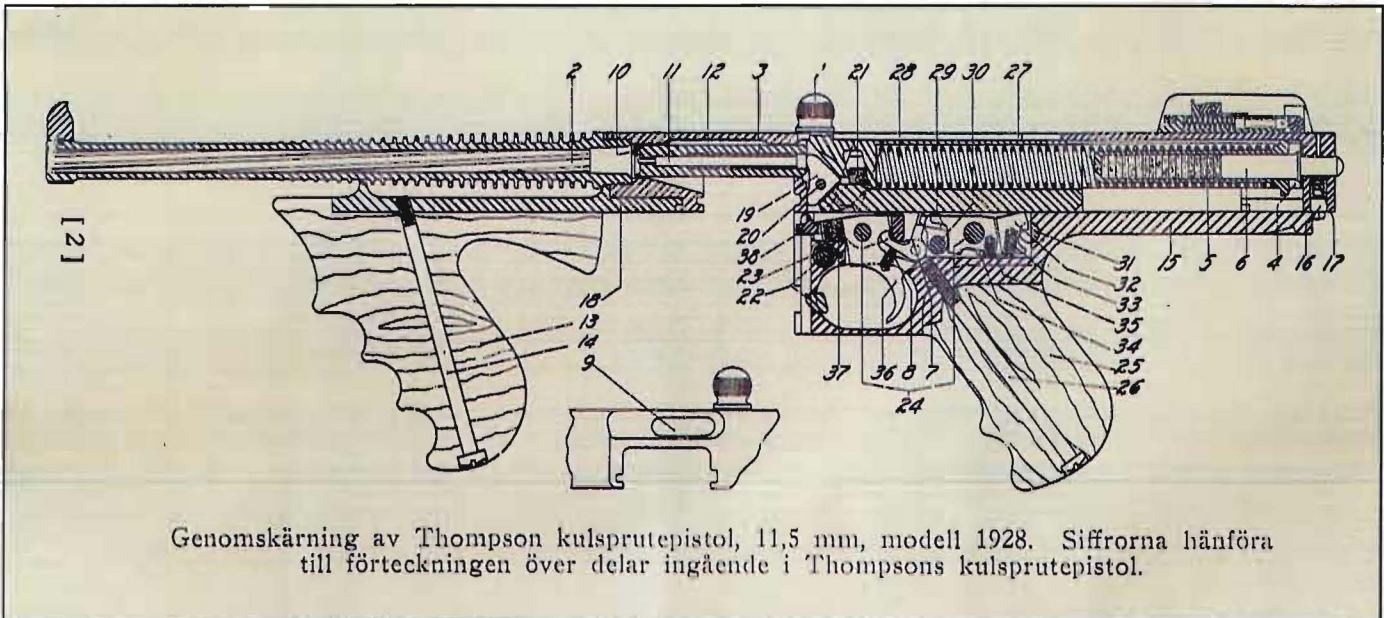
against the Russian army in what has become known as The Winter War. Delivery was made but the war ended before the guns could be issued. These 500 Thompson were then adopted by the Royal Army of Sweden in 1940 and designated Kulsprutepistol m/40 (submachine gun m/40). All 500 Thompson's were of Colt manufacture and are the only Thompson submachine guns known to have been used by Sweden. (The full story of the Swedish Thompsons can be found in the May, 2009 issue of *Small Arms Review*.)

Auto-Ordnance 1940 Handbook

Collectors have known for many years that Auto-Ordnance Corpo-



Right: The Auto-Ordnance Corporation Edition of 1940 Swedish Handbook. Note this handbook has been personalized by Erik Ahlberg.



Genomskärning av Thompson kulsprutepistol, 11,5 mm, modell 1928. Siffrorna hänföra till förteckningen över delar ingående i Thompsons kulsprutepistol.

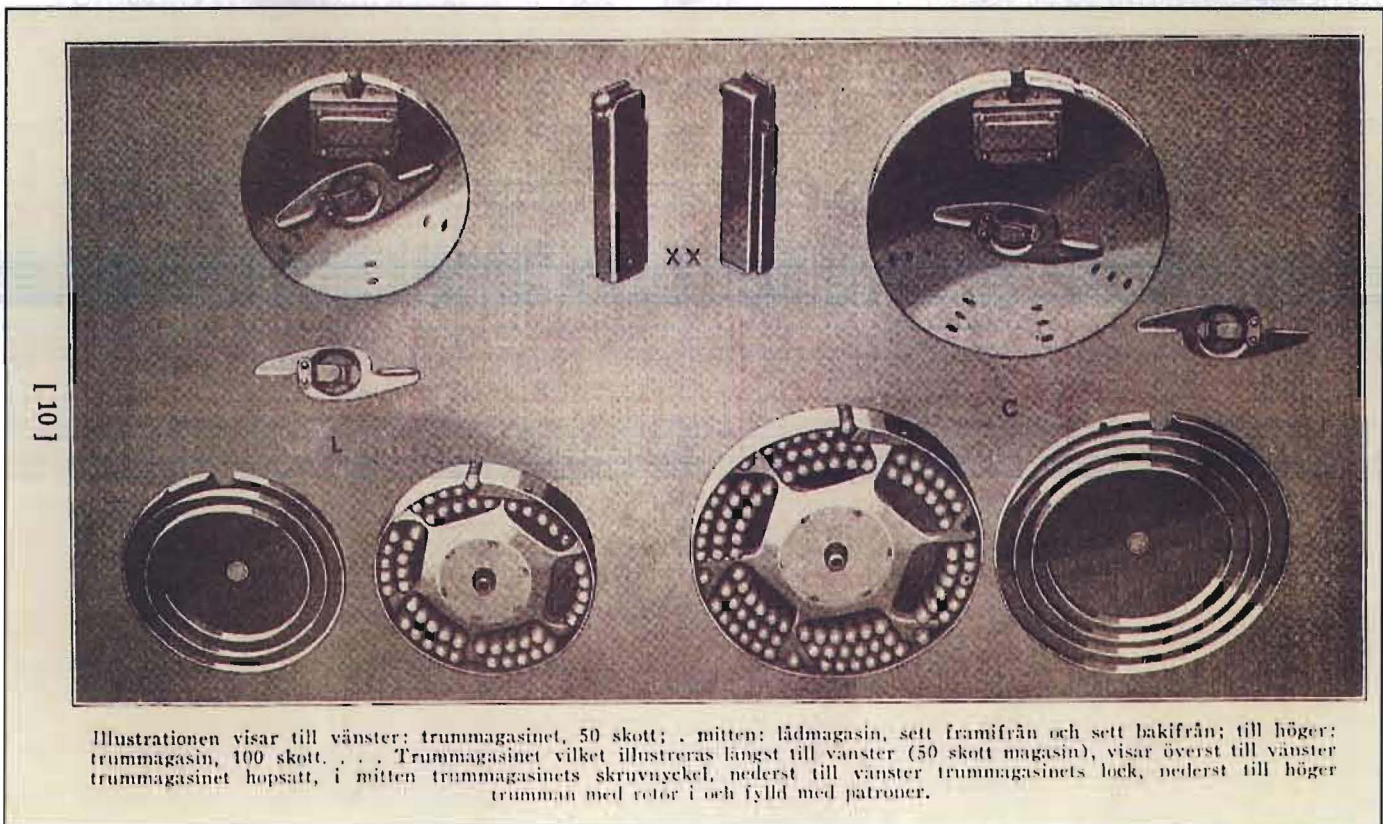
Above: The schematic drawing that is shown on page 2 of the Swedish handbook. Note the Model 1921 style Thompson actuator, buffer assembly and vertical fore grip. This is the original Thompson schematic drawing used in every AOC handbook until the release of the English Edition of 1940 handbook.

ration (AOC) produced a 1940 Edition Handbook written in Swedish. These handbooks are quite rare and not often encountered. Most enthusiasts have never viewed the inside pages, only a picture of the cover. This handbook is

almost non-existent in Sweden; enough so as to raise doubts the handbook was ever provided to the Royal Army of Sweden. Recently, a 1940 Swedish Handbook was found in Sweden bearing the name Erik Ahlberg, a former Swedish

Army Officer. Military records reveal Erik Gunnar Ahlberg was born on November 18, 1908, was a book printer by trade, and served with a Swedish Landstormen infantry regiment during World War II. The Landstormen was a second

Below: A display of magazines used in the Thompson gun as shown on page 10 of the Swedish handbook: Type L or 50 round drum; Type C or 100 round drum; and Type XX or 20 round magazines. This is the original Thompson display of available magazines and was used in every AOC handbook until the release of the English Edition of 1940 handbook.



Illustrationen visar till vänster: trummagasinet, 50 skott; i mitten: lädmagasin, sett framifrån och sett bakifrån; till höger: trummagasin, 100 skott. . . . Trummagasinet vilket illustreras längst till vänster (50 skott magasin), visar överst till vänster trummagasinet hopsatt, i mitten trummagasinet skruvyckel, nederst till vänster trummagasinet lock, nederst till höger trumman med rotor i och fylld med patroner.

line unit, much like the National Guard in the U.S. Ahlberg later received a reserve officer commission on January 1, 1956 and was promoted to the rank of captain with the Kungl. Södra Skånska Infanteriregementet (Royal Southern Scanian Infantry Regiment) 17. Captain Ahlberg recently passed away and the handbook was found while the family was disposing of his estate. It was actually discarded at first, but luckily someone thought to see if there may be any collector interest with this type of item.

Review of the handbook shows it is only 21 pages in length, less than half the size of the commonly found English 1940 AOC handbook. The literal English translation for the language on the cover is as follows:

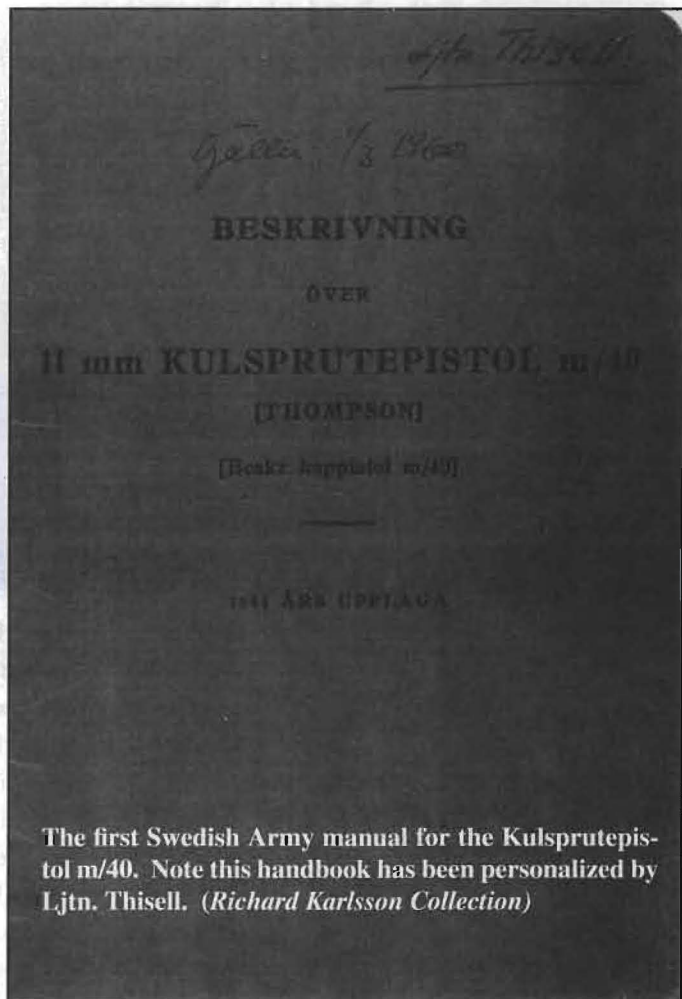
UPPLAGA 1940
EDITION 1940
 UPPGIFTER
DATA
 om
 on
 THOMPSON
THOMPSON
 KULSPRUTEPISTOL
SUBMACHINE GUN
 MODELL 1928
MODEL 1928

Please take note of the 270 Broadway (New York) address; there are only a few AOC paper items with this address. The next address for AOC would be in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Swedish AOC handbook appears to have been designed and printed very quickly. It is definitely not an exact Swedish translation of the commonly found English 1940 AOC handbook. The Swedish order was placed with AOC on January 25, 1940; the ship carrying the Thompson guns and accessories set sail on February

19, 1940. If the handbooks accompanied the guns and accessories, this left only a short time to design, write, proof, print and deliver the handbooks for shipment. The first indication the handbook

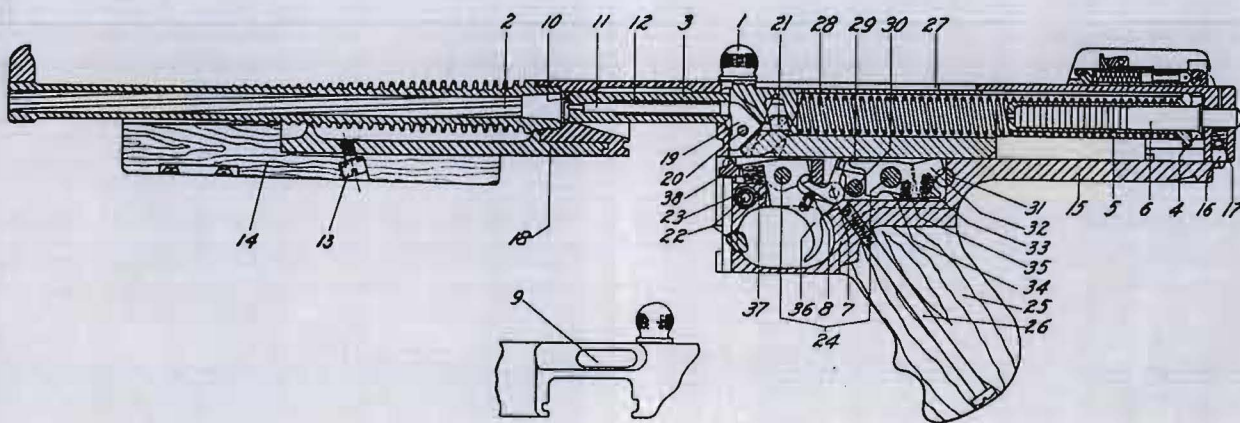
was written quickly can be found on the front cover. The phrase in the lower right hand corner, "Tryck i U.S.A.," translates in English to: Print in U.S.A. The correct word or phrase should be Tryckt i



The schematic drawing that is shown on page 10 of the Swedish Army manual. The addition of the horizontal foregrip by the Swedish government is an obvious modification to the long used AOC schematic drawing. Note the Model 1921 style Thompson actuator and buffer assembly.

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Bild 3. Genomsnitt av kulsprutepistol m/40.



11 mm kulsprutepistol m/40.

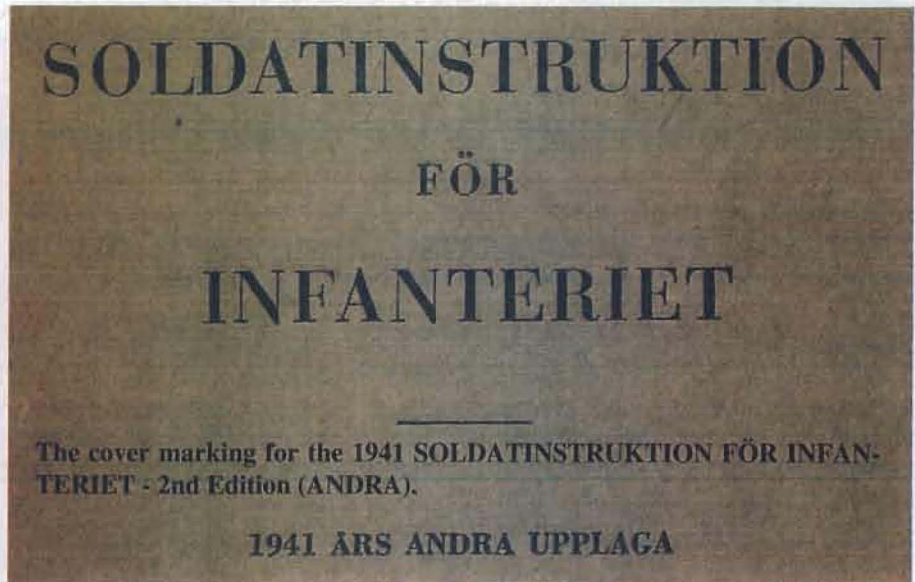
U.S.A. - meaning Printed in U.S.A. The use of stock pictures from AOC handbooks and catalogs used prior to 1940 indicate it was most likely printed and distributed before the commonly found English Edition of 1940 Auto-Ordnance handbook was compiled. The schematic of the Thompson gun pictured at the front of the handbook is actually a Model of 1921 A Thompson with a vertical fore grip. This same schematic had been used by AOC since the first handbook was published in 1921. All known Swedish Thompson guns were Models of 1928 A (no compensator) with horizontal fore grips. There is no picture in the Swedish AOC handbook of this Thompson variation.

Pictures used in the English Edition of the 1940 AOC handbook would have been much better suited for the Swedish guns. For example, the schematic used in the 1940 English Handbook was changed to a 1928 model Thompson gun with a horizontal fore grip. It also included several pictures of Thompson guns with horizontal fore grips and no compensators - just like the version purchased by the Swedish government.

More evidence of a rush to complete the Swedish handbook involves the use of stock AOC pictures showcasing the 100-round or "C" drum. One picture is of a Thompson gun described as a Model of 1928 shown with a vertical fore grip and a 100-round drum; the other a display of a Thompson 100-round drum, 50 round drum and 20 round magazines. Again, these were older stock pictures used in prior AOC handbooks. Sweden did not purchase any 100-round drums with their order of 500 Model of 1928 A Thompson submachine guns. And Auto-Ordnance had long before officially discouraged the use of 100-round drums with the Model of 1928 Thompson gun.

The First Swedish Manual

After the Thompson gun was adopted by the Royal Army of Sweden, steps

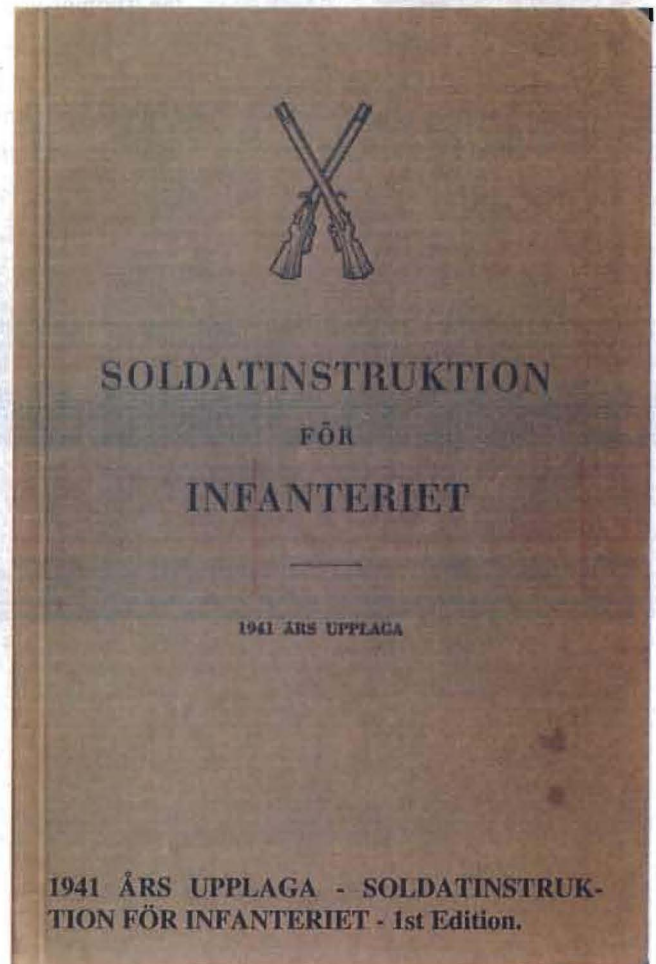


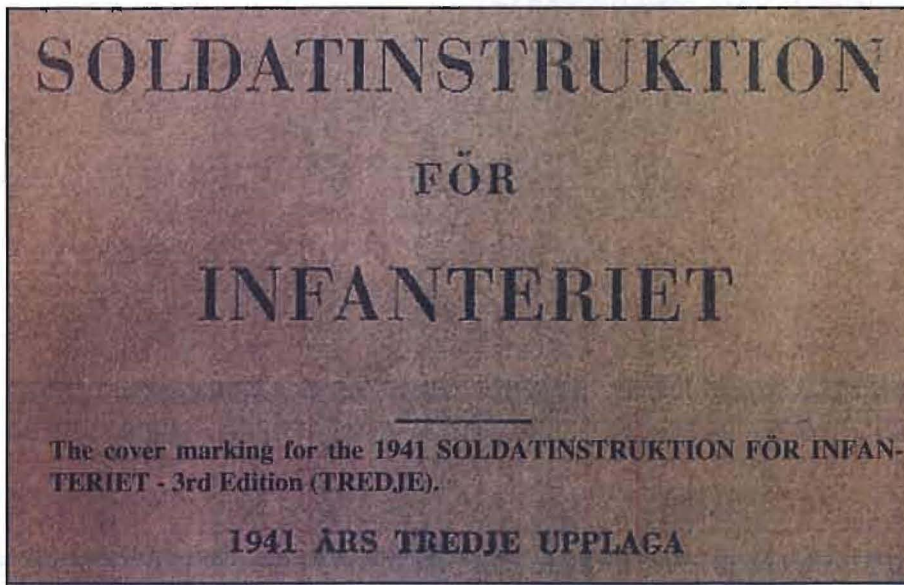
were taken in Sweden to prepare a manual for this American weapon. A stand alone 11 page Swedish manual was initially compiled, printed and distributed in 1941. Documentation at the KRIG-SARKIVET or War Archives in Stockholm, Sweden, dated December 3, 1940 revealed the initial production run for this first manual was 2,000 copies. Only a few copies of this manual are known to survive today.

The literal English translation for the language on the cover is as follows:

BESKRIVNING
DESCRIPTION
över
over
11 mm Kulsprutepistol m/40
11 mm submachine
gun m/40
[THOMPSON]
THOMPSON
[Beskr Kspistol
m/40]
Description of sub-
machine gun m/40
1941 ÅRS UPPLA-
GA
1941 EDITION

This Swedish manual did update the AOC schematic to show the horizontal fore grip but interestingly, still used the Model of 1921 Thompson actuator and buffer assembly. It appears the schematic was taken directly from the Swedish AOC handbook referenced above, and slightly modified to feature the hori-





Thompson instruction manuals; military records reveal they were both appointed as Landstorm Second Lieutenants during World War II. And both received their reserve commissions with the Royal Southern Scanian Infantry Regiment 17 on the same day - January 1, 1956.

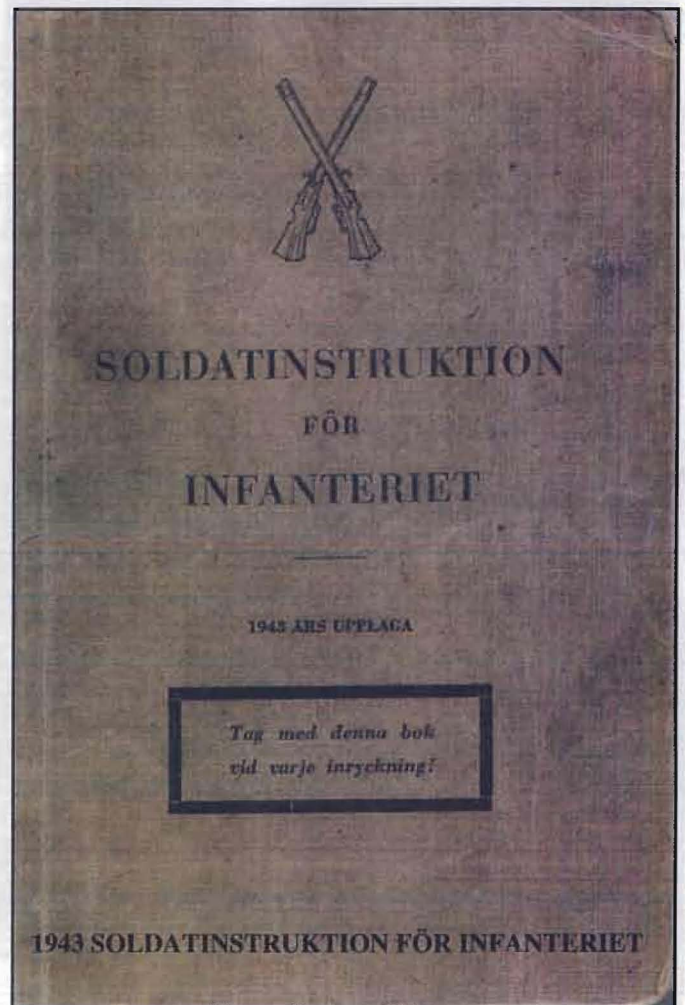
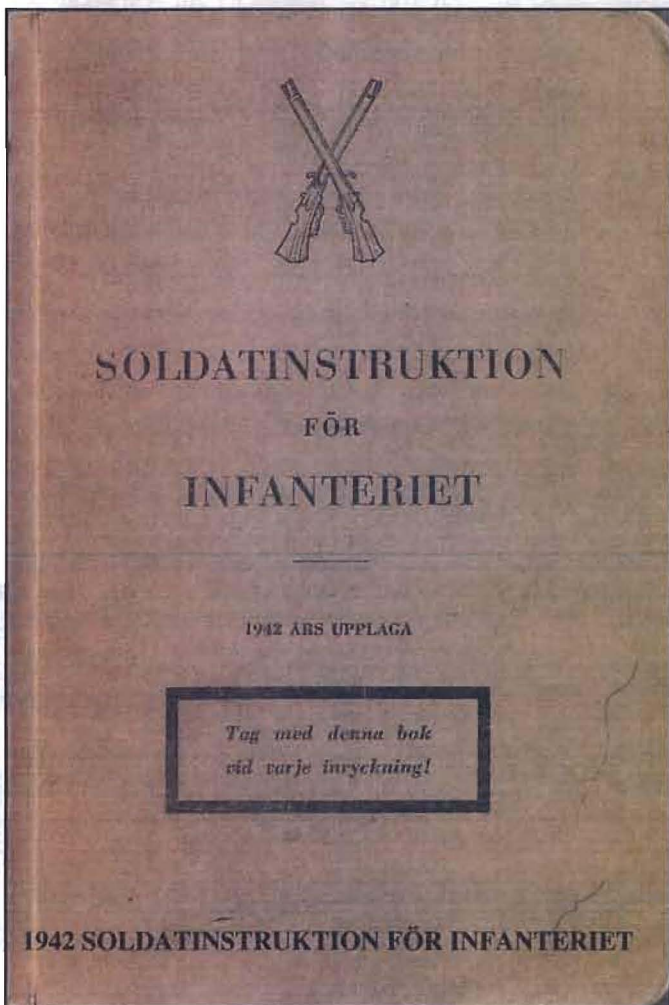
It is not surprising the featured AOC Handbook and Swedish Army manual are connected to two officers who served with a Swedish Landstormen infantry regiment. As Swedish production of the m/37-39 Suomi 9mm submachine gun increased during World War II, the 500 Thompson guns or m/40's became surplus for the needs of the Swedish military and were re-issued to the Landstormen units.

Written on the front cover of Lieutenant Thisell's manual is the statement "gäller 1/3 1960" - translation: "valid 1st. March 1960." This passage indicates the instructions inside the manual, though issued in 1941, were still valid

zontal fore grip.

It is not unusual to find where past owners have personalized a military firearm handbook or manual with their name. Such is the case with this Swedish Army manual. A quick review shows the name "Ljtn Thisell" (Ljtn is short for Lieutenant) on the cover. Research re-

vealed there was only one soldier named Thisell in the Swedish military, a Nils Erik Gregor Thisell. He was born on May 8, 1908 and served in the same Swedish Landstormen infantry regiment during World War II as Captain Ahlberg, above. Thisell and Ahlberg are not only connected in history by two very rare



Left: The spine markings for the three different editions of the 1941 SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET manuals are identical. Only the front cover markings changed.

on that day. This begs the (unanswered) question about the Thompson gun or m/40 still being used by the Swedish military in some capacity in 1960. If the Thompson gun was not in use or at least in inventory for available use, why write this statement on the cover of an old army manual?

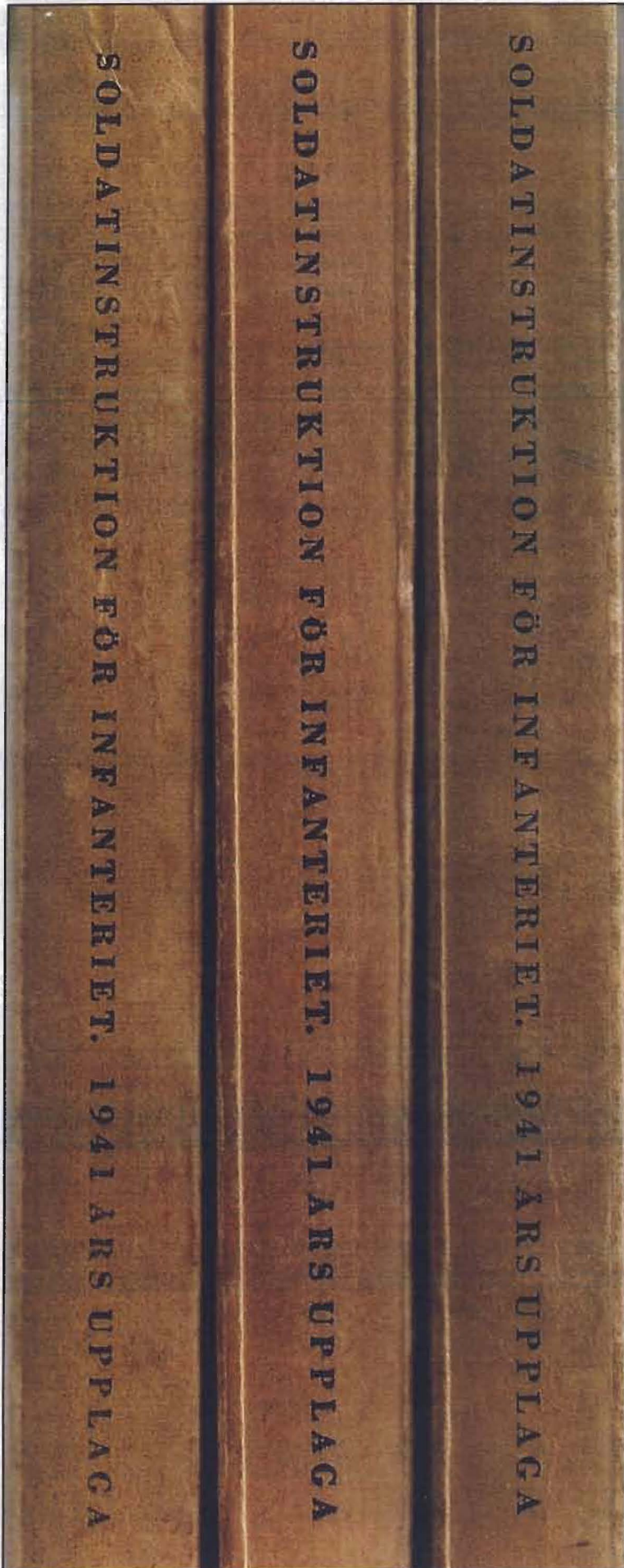
SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET

In 1941, information on the new submachine gun, Kulsprutepistol m/40, was included in the Swedish Army manual, SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET (Instructions to Soldier - Infantry). Much of the information on the m/40 or Thompson submachine gun, including two of the pictures, came directly from the initial 11 page Swedish Army manual, BESKRIVNING över 11 mm Kulsprutepistol m/40, referenced above. While not common, Swedish SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET manuals can be found in the U.S. and make a great addition to a Thompson paper collection. Just remember that detailed information on the m/40 or Thompson gun is only found in the 1941, 1942 and 1943 Infantry manuals.

The 1941 SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET manual was the first to include information on the Kulsprutepistol m/40. As the pictures of the manual covers show, there are three different variations of the 1941 manual: the initial or first edition, a second edition and a later third edition. The information on the Thompson or m/40 in all three 1941 editions is identical.

A new SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET was issued in 1942 that contained information on the Kpist m/40. There were two editions in 1942. Interestingly, the cover marking on the 1942 second edition is different than the 1941 second edition. Instead of using the word ANDRA (Swedish for second), a Roman Numeral II is used. The information on the Thompson or Kpist m/40 in both 1942 editions is identical.

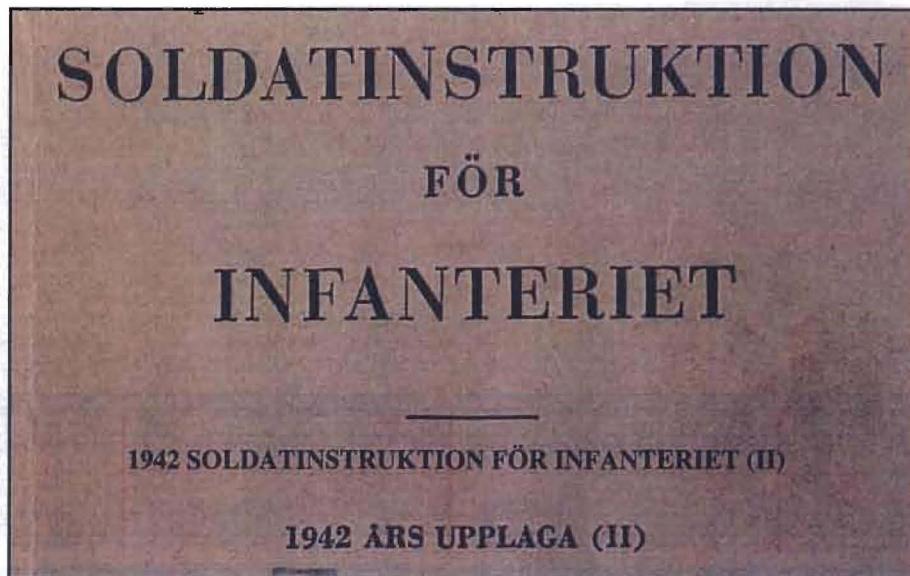
A new SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET was issued in 1943. Only one edition is known to exist. The information on the Thompson or Kpist m/40 in the 1943 manual is identical to the 1942 manuals.



The information in the 1941 and 1942/1943 manuals is not exactly the same, but the minor variations are mostly linguistic. For example, in the 1941 manuals accessories are referenced as follows: "Tillbehör äro: reservdelsask med innehåll rem, gördel med väskor för reservdelsask, 4 stavmagasin och 1 trummagasin." This translates to: Accessories are: spare parts box with contents, sling, belt with pouches for spare parts box, 4 stick mags and 1 drum mag.

In 1942 the wording was changed to: "Tillbehör äro: ask för reservdelar med innehåll, kulsprutepistolrem m/40, livrem med väska för 20-skottsmagasin och väska för 50-skottsmagasin, 4 st 20-skottsmagasin och 1 st 50-skottsmagasin." This translates to: Accessories are: box for spare parts with contents, submachine gun sling m/40, belt with pouch for 20-rd mags and pouch for 50-rd mag, 4 pcs 20-rd mags and 1 pc 50-rd mag. While the language is not identical, there is really no substantive difference between any of the manuals - but collectors want every version.

The last SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET manual was issued in 1944. It references the Kpist m/40 as one of three submachine guns in the Swedish Army, but states: "Not described here." The same notation is used in this manual on many other weapons in Swedish army inventory that were procured in small numbers during



World War II.

The picture of the Kpist m/40 in Thompson Model of 1928 A configuration from the infantry manuals is representative of all known Swedish Thompson submachine guns. While an original Model of 1928 Thompson without a compensator is not frequently seen in the United States, the 500 Colt Thompson's shipped to Sweden indicate that this was indeed a variation that could be easily purchased from the Auto-Ordnance Corporation.

Epilogue

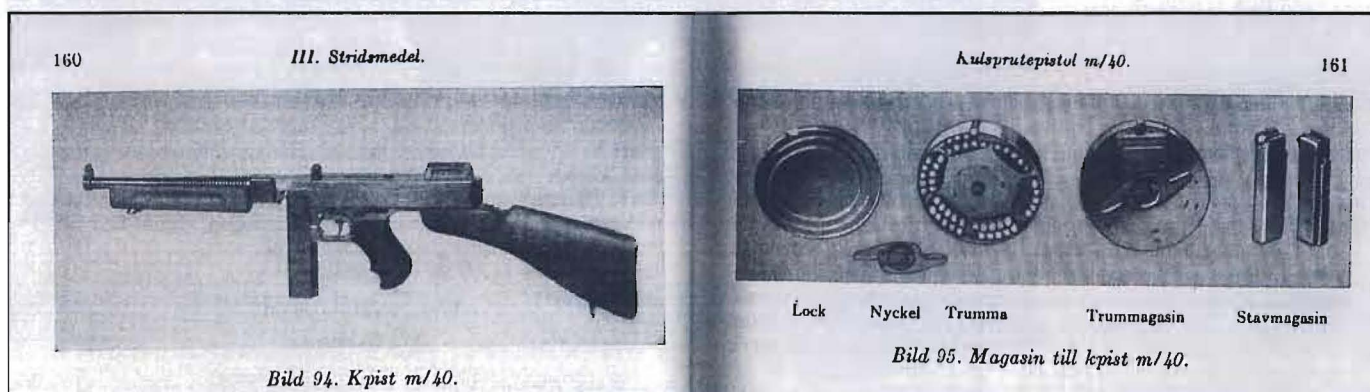
There is one more Swedish publication that contains a reference to the Kulsprutepistol m/40. The reference is only a picture, but the description show-

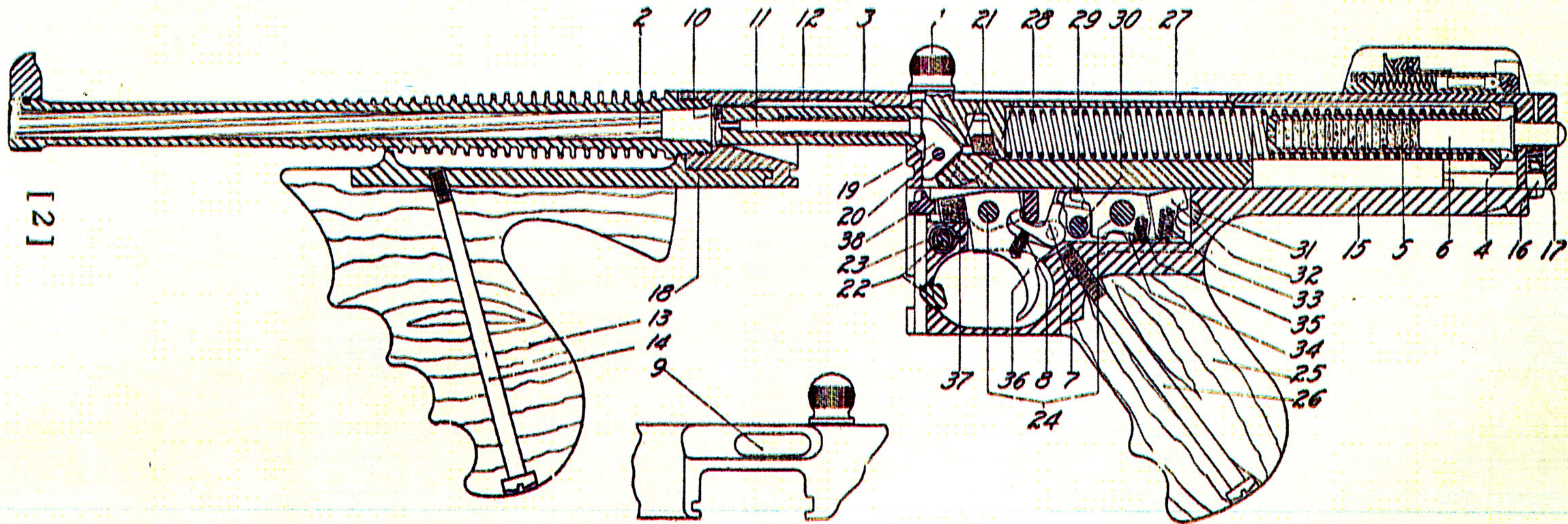
cases the international reputation of the Thompson gun, even during the middle of World War II. The publication is the MILITÄRKALENDERN 1943 or Military Calendar. One word in the caption on page 35 tells the world exactly what the Swedish military thought of this American submachine gun: "s. k. gangsterpistol" - translation: so called gangster gun. And who in this country would dispute that!

(The author wishes to acknowledge the great assistance provided to this story by Mr. Peter Sonesson, an advanced collector and dealer of Swedish military armaments, Tingsryd, Sweden and Ms. Ann Gillberg, Librarian, Krigsarkivet, Stockholm, Sweden)



Below: The top of pages 160 & 161 from the 1943 SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET showcasing the m/40 and m/40 magazine types. The same pictures appear in all of the 1941 and 1942 manuals. In the original 11 page Swedish Army manual and all three 1941 editions of SOLDATINSTRUKTION FÖR INFANTERIET, the Kpist m/40 is referred to as the Kulsprutepistol m/40.





Genomskärning av Thompson kulsprutepestol, 11,5 mm, modell 1928. Siffrorna hänföra till förteckningen över delar ingående i Thompsons kulsprutepestol.

11 mm kulspjutepistol m/40.

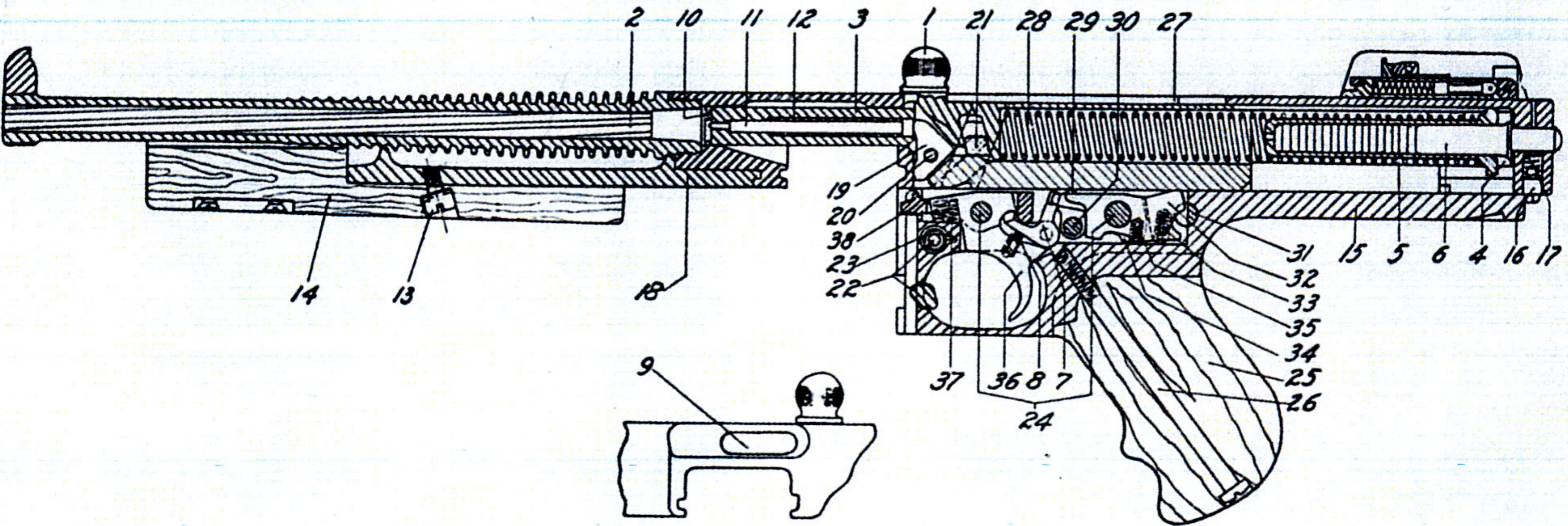
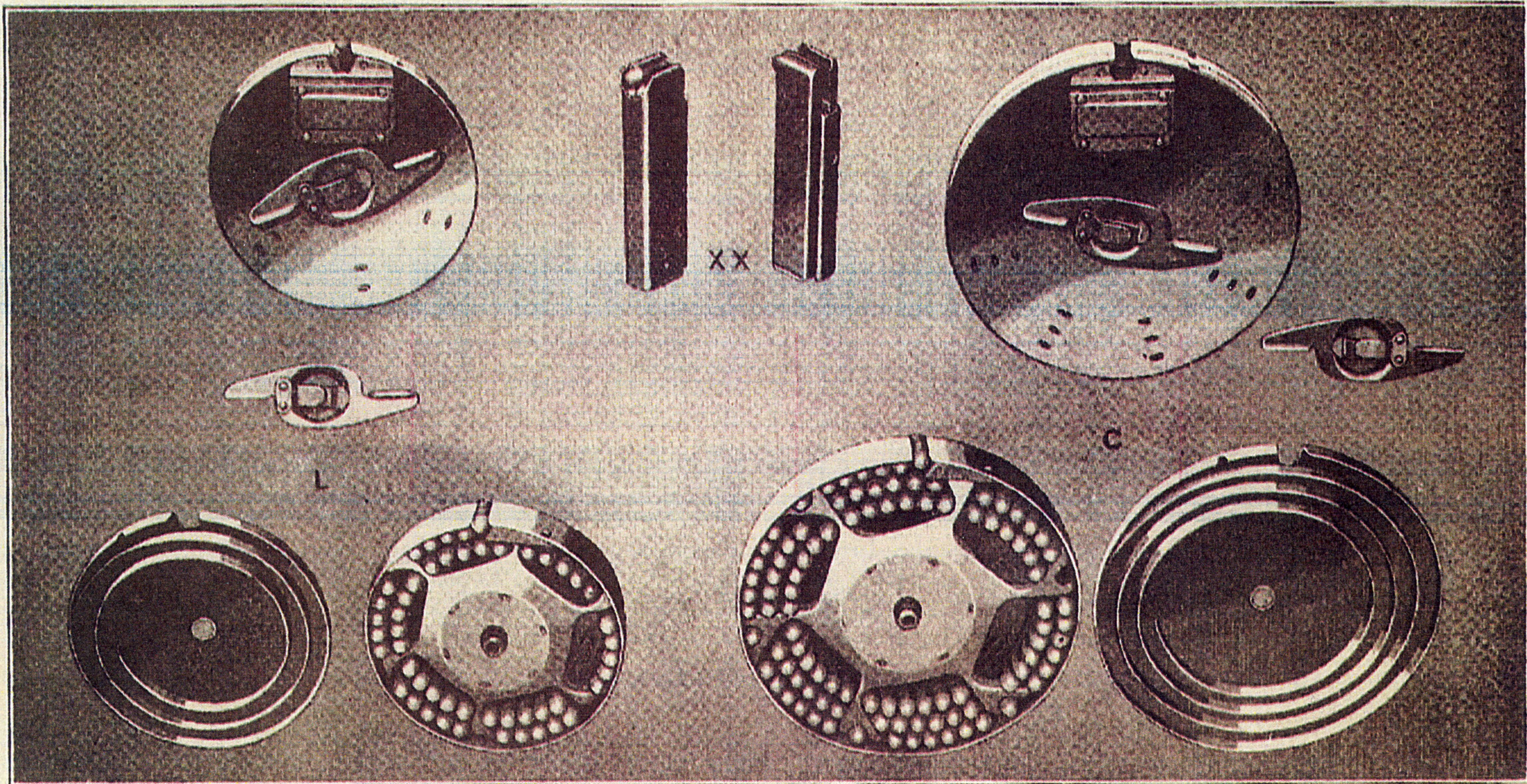


Bild 3. Genomsnitt av kspistol m/40.



Illustrationen visar till vänster: trummagasinet, 50 skott; . mitten: lädmagasin, sett framifrån och sett bakifrån; till höger: trummagasin, 100 skott. . . . Trummagasinet vilket illustreras längst till vänster (50 skott magasin), visar överst till vänster trummagasinet hopsatt, i mitten trummagasinet skruvnyckel, nederst till vänster trummagasinet lock, nederst till höger trumman med rotor i och fylld med patroner.