

simple as that. By July, 1942, Britain possessed more than a million Sten guns, and the Home Guard looked forward to using one for every three men.

Suitably enough, one of the men responsible for it in New Zealand is called Thunder, though he would not want to be singled out among the many who made the Sten part of an already full day's work.

No one in New Zealand had previously tackled the job of reaming out gun barrels in quantity. It was done, and done quickly. There was no machine in New Zealand that could wind the square-shaped springs for the Sten's magazine (it holds 32 rounds). Upstairs in a machine shop hidden away in a back street, a young engineer tackled the problem. The women who worked for him wound the springs by hand. Quickly they discovered that they could make a better spring than the pattern specified. New Zealand went one up on Britain and Australia just because a young man whose name has never been in print had a bright idea.

So He Made One

That young man was, of course, not content to wind the springs by hand. But there was no machine to do it. None could be imported in time to fill the contract. So he decided to make one, and he was working on it when this was written. I asked to see his plans. "Plans?" he said. "Why, I don't draw any plans. I make a rough sort of sketch, then I see how it works."

There was not enough metal piping to make the air-jacket round the barrel. They'd already cut down the length of the air jacket until the barrel stuck out forlornly into space. Still—not enough steel tubing.

Then they found a firm which owned a line of good presses, used until recently to make radio set parts. This was a real New Zealand firm, dedicated in pre-war days to putting a radio set into every house in the country. Part of their policy had included the training of die-makers by American skilled workers. These die-makers took the raw metal and shaped it into dies. The press machinists took the dies and the flat steel and they pressed it into tubes.

It looked something like a child's toy pistol, but they welded the gap together, and they had an air jacket that did its job. They had no time to do more—but why should a means of killing men look pretty?

Some Peculiar Virtues

And how does it work? Absurd though this sounds, it has some peculiar virtues as a weapon. A recruit can pick it up and register on the target right off. Both the Gren and Tommy gun tend in

THE STEN GUN

(Continued from previous page)



The Sten gun can be fired from the hip or the shoulder. It is much lighter than a Tommy gun

stampings make a stand, and the completed weapon will throw a grenade into a 10-yard circle at 200 yards.

I haven't found out yet what happens to the rest of the old rifle. The bolt will be salvaged for its steel, and possibly someone uses the stock for kindling. I'll be surprised if any of it's wasted.

—S.B.

action to drift. By some happy chance, the Sten avoids this fault.

This is a pretty good story already, isn't it? Well, to cap it, the engineers who make the Sten gun, find a use for what's left of the old rifle barrels.

The front end is used for the Sten. The rear end, with its breech, is used to make grenade throwers. A cup to hold the grenade is welded on to the old barrel. A simple breech mechanism with trigger and firing-pin is welded against the breech of the old Lee Enfield. A blank cartridge provides the charge, a few

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