

MACHINE GUNS AND THE CINCINNATI POLICE

VERY FEW RECORDS EXIST ABOUT CINCINNATI POLICE GATLING GUNS. THE CITY HAD SEVERAL, AT LEAST ONE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, OTHERS WERE ASSIGNED TO THE CINCINNATI WORK HOUSE.

GATLING GUNS, BLACK POWDER REVOLVERS AND SURPLUS MILITARY UNIFORMS WERE PART OF THE SUPPLIES THAT THE CINCINNATI POLICE POSSESSED.

A review of the City Auditor's Report for 1879 indicates expenditures to the Pettibone Mfg. Co. for belts, etc. The J. J. Tower Co. supplied whistles, and the J. J. Sayer Co. supplied badges. The police payroll disbursements list one superintendent of police, one inspector, one clerk, 20 lieutenants, 20 station-keepers, 300 patrolmen, court officers, sanitary force, and other employees. The inventory for the year lists a variety of city property including the following: Awnings-8, Belts for revolvers-53, Belts and tassels-249, badges-350, Gongs (alarm)-10, Hand-cuffs (pairs)-3, Lanterns-11, Medicine cases-4, Whistles-330, Wreaths-250. Ordnance consisted of One Gatling gun, carriage and equipments. 9550 metallic cartridges. 100 navy revolvers. 75 bullet molds. 54 cap boxes. 1000 round pistol cartridges.

The officers and men of the force had been organized into a military battalion. The battalion was divided as follows: Five Companies, One Gatling Gun Squad, One Color Guard and One Marker. Each company had no less than 54 men assigned to it. The Gatling Gun Squad had 6 men.

According to the 1903 Cincinnati Police Annual Report the Gatling Gun is listed as obsolete. Below is a photo of a Gatling Gun Squad, behind the gun is a storage wagon. The Lieutenant in charge of the squad is listed as Mark Langdon.



This is the photo of the civil war era Gatling Gun that was used by the Cincinnati Police until 1903.

The 1930 Cincinnati Police Annual Report states that Instructions were given in the handling of the Colt's Machine Gun.

No photo has been located showing the Cincinnati Police Machine Gun Squad.

One photo has been found of the Boston Police Machine Gun Squad. Apparently it was not unusual for major city police departments to have machine-guns and sub-machine guns. The Thompson Sub-Machine Gun is mentioned in the 1930 annual report.

One newspaper article shows a Cincinnati Police Detective firing the sub-machine gun.

TARGET PRACTICE

Target practice was held during the months of April and September for all members of the force. Those failing to qualify were formed into classes and required to take a special course on their own time until they qualified.

Quite an improvement was shown in the marksmanship of the officers and patrolmen whose progress was slow during the previous year.

MACHINE GUN PRACTICE

Instructions were given the Machine Gun Squad in the handling of the Colt's Machine Gun, which covered mounting, dismounting, breaking, assembling and target practice. We have two of these guns.

Members of the Detective Department were instructed in the use of the Thompson Sub-Machine Gun. This instruction embraced the nomenclature of the weapon, breaking, assembling, loading, carrying and handling of the weapon, as well as the firing of same.

Instructions were also given members of the Detective Department in the use of the Webley & Scott Gas Gun.

There were purchased during the year the following guns:

Two Thompson Sub-Machine Guns,

One Webley & Scott Gas Gun,

Ten Auto-Loading Remington Shotguns.



This is a 1920 photo of the Boston Machine-Gun Squad. The photo has the notation "3rd MACHINE GUN SECTION BOSTON POLICE BOSTON HARBOR APRIL 12 1920." Photo courtesy of Gary Provenzano.

10/22/49

. . . Finds the Mark

Bob Meldon, in his days as a detective, once machine gunned a suspect who holed up in a coal cellar on West Sixth Street. The photograph was picked as one of the 10 best in the nation in 1949.

Spectators Watch Police Rout Suspect With Tommy Guns, Gas on Sixth Street

Machine-gun bullets and tear gas wounded and drove a gunman from his West End cellar hideout early Tuesday as scores of gaping spectators watched. The gunman was shot in the left leg.

The gunman, Sidney Morris, 38, of 530 W. Sixth street, was snatched, terrified, from the cellar at 528 W. Sixth street, where he had hidden after firing a shot at two policemen.

Nearly 100 shots were poured into the cellar on the heels of a police tear gas barrage. Morris had fled to the cellar after threatening a drinking companion, William Mosely, 53, of 820 W. Fourth street, with a pistol.

"He snapped it three times in my face, but it didn't go off," the terrified Mosely told Patrolmen Winston Gibson and Robert Edwards.

The patrolmen chased Morris to the cellar, where he ducked into a tunnel and fired at them. They

withdrew and called for reinforcements.

Capt. Walter Martin and District 4 police arrived. They covered all exits, and ordered Morris to surrender. There was no answer.

Lt. Jacob Schott started the gunplay by firing a tear gas shell into the basement.

When the gas drove Morris into view, Detective Robert Meldon raked the basement with machine gun bursts. Morris retreated into the tunnel again, but was routed by the gas as Detective Meldon continued to spray bullets into the cellar.

Finally, struck in the leg, the fugitive shouted "I'm coming out," during a lull in the firing.

As he came up the stairs, he was seized, hurled to the sidewalk and searched by the policemen. A dozen arms, including pistols, shotguns and machine guns covered him. They found no weapon.

"I buried it in a hole in the cellar," he told the officers. He was

unable to direct police to it and they could not find the hole.

Morris told police later that he and Mr. Mosely had been drinking "sweet Lucy," slang for any cheap, sweet wine, all night, and that an argument had broken out over having "just one more drink."

The Life Squad task unit was summoned to ventilate the gas-filled cellar before police could enter to search the rubble-strewn cellar for Morris' gun.

Morris was taken to General Hospital for treatment, and was to be booked on shooting charges. He said he came here several months ago from Jackson, Miss.

The Weather

HOURLY TEMPERATURES AT THE FEDERAL BUILDING:			
Midnight	32	8 a. m.	27
1 a. m.	30	9 a. m.	28
2 a. m.	30	10 a. m.	31
3 a. m.	30	11 a. m.	34
4 a. m.	29	12 noon	35
5 a. m.	27	1 p. m.	35
6 a. m.	28	2 p. m.	39
7 a. m.	27	3 p. m.	40
Sunset Tuesday 5:20 p. m.; sunrise Wednesday 7:29 a. m.			

Post Exclusive--

When police sprayed a West End basement with machine-gun bullets to flush out a pistol-toting fugitive, Jerry Ransohoff, Post reporter, and Arthur Lapp, photographer, made these dramatic pictures. At top, Detective Robert Meldon fires into the basement. At bottom, police question the wounded man. The wounded man surrendered during a lull after a bullet had pierced his leg.

A Shot in the Dark



The Cincinnati Police Department's contribution to the sub-machine gun is shown above. This photo appeared in the Cincinnati Post Newspaper in 1949.

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