John Talafierro Thompson Encyclopedia Article

John Talafierro Thompson

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John Talafierro Thompson

1860-1940

American soldier and inventor who developed the submachine gun in 1918. The "Tommy gun," named for Thompson, weighed only 10 lb (4.5 kg), making it easy to carry. The gun saw its first military use in Nicaragua in 1925, carried by U.S. Marines. Since then, variations and improvements on this design have given rise to a plethora of weapons manufactured by nearly every major industrial nation. The submachine gun has seen action in nearly every war since its invention.