Louis Schmeisser Encyclopedia Article

Louis Schmeisser

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Contents

Louis Schmeisser Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Louis Schmeisser.....3

Louis Schmeisser

German inventor who developed the first efficient, hand-carried machine gun. Although the first machine gun, the Gatling gun, was invented in 1862 and other machine guns followed, these were all cumbersome and unwieldy. Other nations such as England and the U.S. developed domestic versions of the machine gun, and, by the Second World War, machine guns were found on airplanes, tanks, jeeps, and in the hands of foot soldiers.