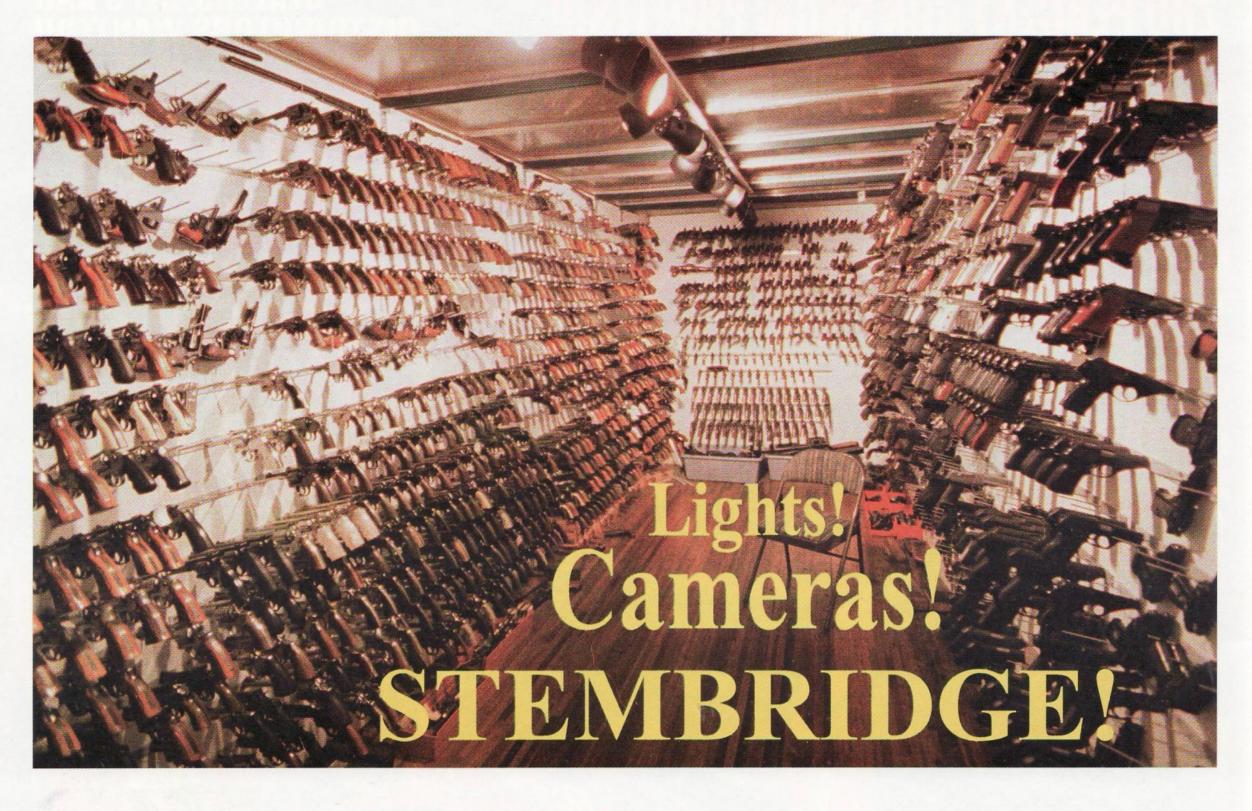


The AR-50AE
World's Most Powerful M16

The NFA Registry: How Accurate?



ongtime MGN reader Larry Merrill called and extended an invitation to come to California and do a feature on Stembridge Gun Rentals, Inc.—I just had to go! Stembridge is the oldest movie gun rental company there is, with a rich history and LOTS of major films to their credit. MGN hopes you enjoy this glimpse of the men who make the movies roar.

—Dan
When Spanish American War veteran
James Sydney Stembridge heard opportunity knock in 1916, he answered

nity knock in 1916, he answered quickly and left a legacy that continues

Transferable GE Minigun (M134) set up with the carrying handles from the movie "Terminator 2."

In through to the modern day.

James was a bit-part actor in Cecil B. De Mille's silent films.

Legend has it that during the first full-

length motion picture "The Squawman" (1914), James was asked if he knew how to operate some of the firearms that were being used as props. Army veteran and avid sports shooter that he was, Stembridge immediately volunteered that he did. Within three years, Stembridge Gun Rentals, Inc. was born in the old "Hollywood Barn." The official starting date of the company was 1919.

Stembridge's new company was strategically poised to grow with the fledgling movie industry. He had located right at the heart of the action and was in a part of the business that almost guaranteed him success, if he worked hard. So much of modern world history as well as fiction revolves around war, survival, and the

use of firearms.

Rubber Minigun from the "Terminator 2" movie set—even the Terminator needs a break from lugging around the real gun.

Satisfying audiences who had been through the Great War took more than pretending that you had a machine gun; many of the



Part of the machine gun room at Stembridge note the third and fourth guns down are Lewis Mk3 H camera guns, and underneath them are the Lewis guns that were used in the original King Kong movie (1932).

Text by Dan Shea • Photos by Jim Bonis

viewers had an intimate familiarity with the arms. It took away from the validity of a movie if the audience sensed something "wrong" in a scene. This is one of the obstacles that the modern director must also overcome. There are so many WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf War veterans out there that wrong uniforms, aircraft, slang, and especially weapons will "throw" an audience.

This is where Stembridge Gun Rentals comes in. Not only

Streetsweeper shotgun set-up for the Schwarzenegger movie "Total Recall."

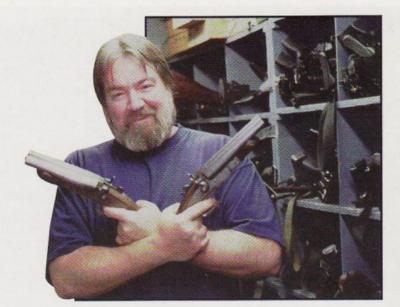
One of the "Total Recall"
Streetsweepers that was revamped for the movie "Solar Crisis," then upgraded one more time with even stranger ac-

do the employees have to be licensed gun handlers in all five of California's categories (machine guns, short-barreled firearms, destructive devices, assault weapons, and tear gas weapons), they must also have a level of proficiency in HOW

the weapons were utilized in order to ensure that the actors use them realistically.

cessories for "Batman Returns."

James died in 1942 and passed on the torch to his nephew Ed Stembridge, who had been with the company since 1933. Ed was a 2nd Lieutenant in U.S. Army Ordnance for the five years



Stembridge gun handler Larry "Antonio" Merrill with the two cut-down Rossi 12 gauge shotguns from the movie "Desperado."

of the Second World War, serving in Panama, Hawaii, and Okinawa. On his return, he resumed duties with Stembridge as the president.

> Syd Stembridge, whose great-uncle James Sydney started the company, has been involved in the

company his whole life. Syd remembers going to the Paramount Studios sets with his father when he was five years old. The studios only operated a half day on Saturdays, so Syd and his brother could play cowboys and indians on the same "Old West" street that "Gunsmoke" and "Bonanza" were filmed on. He served in the U.S. Air Force 1966-70 and came to the company full time in 1973. When Stembridge



USAS-12 rubber gun.

"The Wild Bunch"

One very interesting gun that we found was the 1917A1 Browning water-cooled (serial number 693798) on the back wall that had some paper attached to it. In the 1969 movie "The Wild Bunch," William Holden used this particular gun in the battle scene at the end.



From the photo wall: Ed Stembridge, William Holden, and Stembridge gun handler Fritz during the movie "The Wild Bunch."

• Some of the classic films that Stembridge has supplied firearms for: A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court All Quiet on the Western Front Big Jake Bob Hope's movies and road shows Bridge Over the River Kwai For Whom the Bell Tolls Gone With the Wind Gunga Din Hell's Angels King Kong (1932) Northwest Mounted Police Stagecoach The Guns of Navarone The Longest Day The Sand Pebbles The Wild Bunch Union Pacific Vera Cruz

A few of the current films that Stembridge has supplied firearms for:

........

1941 Above the Law Batavia 2, 3 and 4 Batman Returns Big Bad Momma Charlie Chaplin Clear & Present Danger Commando Cobra Desperado Dick Tracy Die Hard 1 and 2 Eraser Farewell to the King First Blood (all Rambo movies) Flight of the Intruder Heartbreak Ridge Heat Legends of the Fall Lethal Weapon Licensed to Kill Marked for Death Pale Rider Patriot Games Predator 1 and 2 Raiders of the Lost Ark Scarface Terminator Terminator 2 - Judgement Day The Outlaw Josey Wales The Rocketeer The Wind and the Lion Total Recall True Lies Waterworld

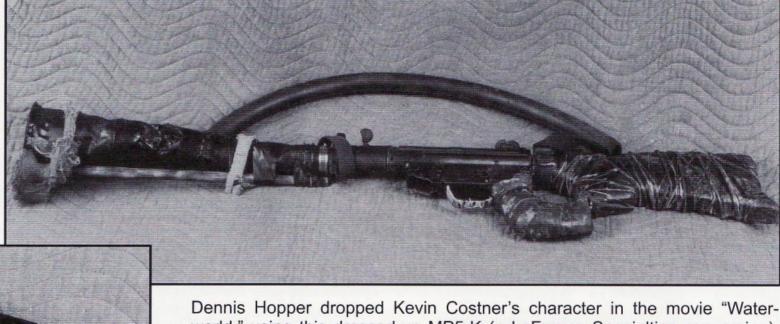
was incorporated in 1979, he became Vice President, and he is currently the President of Stembridge Gun Rentals, Inc. Harry Lu is the Master Gunsmith/Armorer and spends much of his time out on location, as does Dan Sprague. Mike Wetherell manufactures the ammo, Nat Sherrill is the inhouse man, and Larry Merrill is the pur-

chasing agent. All of them are gun handlers and are available for location work. It shouldn't surprise the readers of *MGN* that the employees of Stembridge are all historically oriented, as well as technical gun buffs.

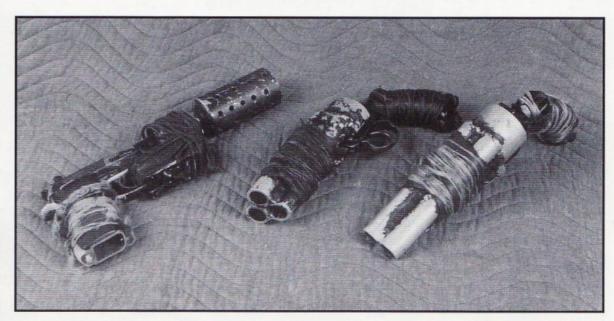
During the 1920's, when the gangster movie genre was born, the



The rarest HK accessory—the "Water-world Lower."



Dennis Hopper dropped Kevin Costner's character in the movie "Waterworld," using this dressed-up MP5-K (a LaFrance Specialties conversion). Just enough of the "stage makeup" has been removed to clearly see the HK.



Three of the "Waterworld" pistols.

Left: Gun handler Dan Sprague on location with the hottest blank gun in the business—the Quad .50 M2 for the movie "Waterworld."

Thompson gun was king. According to Keith White's section (Chapter 20) of *Thompson: The American Legend*, the first appearance of a Thompson in film was in the 1927 silent movie "Underworld." The first talking film of the gangster genre was

"Little Caesar" (1930) in which Edward G. Robinson

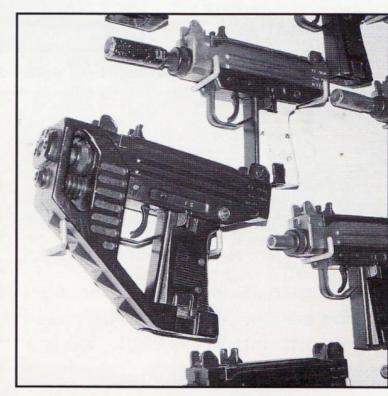
An M16
lower receiver protrudes
from this Space Age weapon. A prototype from the new movie "Escape from L.A."
starring Kurt Russell.

had a 1921A Thompson used on him—a Thompson that is still in the working inventory of over 70 original Thompson guns that Stembridge uses. Other famous Thompson users that Stembridge has sup-

Hanging on the walls of Stembridge Gun Rentals are several official letters from the Harbor Defenses of Los Angeles, dated 3 September 1944. They recognize Stembridge's patriotism for lending a number of automatic weapons to the Coast Guard for defense of the California coast against invasion by the Japanese during World War II. Their long history of service to the country is also evident in an older photograph of founder James Sydney Stembridge with a Colt Potato Digger, as a member of the Paramount Home Guard. This guard group was apparently a citizen's militia around the time of the first World War.

plied include Michael Jackson in his "Moonwalker" video, the good guys in "The Rocketeer," and of course, Warren Beatty as "Dick Tracy."

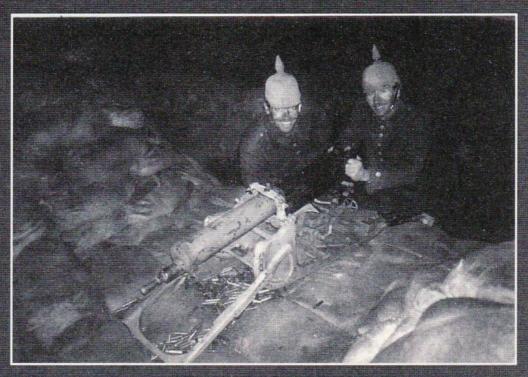
Stembridge's talents are not limited to Thompson guns. Gary Cooper's character in "For Whom the Bell Tolls," died with one of Stembridge's Lewis guns in his arms. Steve McQueen carried a Stembridge 1918A2 BAR in "The Sand Pebbles." Modern television's "Tour of Duty" starred Stembridge's M60's, among other machine guns. "Waterworld" fans will remember the Quad Fifties in the assault scene.



Dressed-up Micro-Uzi from "Total Recall."

The Benefits of Being a Gun Handler:

Ctembridge has a general policy of not letting their gun handlers work as extras on the movie sets. The men have other responsibilities on the set—firearms safety, training, and keeping the guns operational can be a handful. However, some of the more complex machine guns require a lot of training, and it is not uncommon for directors to ask the gun handlers to work as "extras" operating the guns. On the set of "Legends of the Fall," the producer asked two of the Stembridge gun handlers to work the MG08/15. Due to timing and training schedules, they agreed, and were quickly suited up in WWI German uniforms. Dan Sprague describes the scene: "Imagine yourself sitting in a trench, staring across 200 yards of barbed wire and muddy field...the whistles of the enemy officers start, then the wail of the bagpipes floats over the mist. You and your 100 fellow soldiers nervously watch, and suddenly 400 enemy soldiers start yelling battle cries and burst out of the trench in front



Stembridge gun handlers Tony Didio (left) and Dan Sprague (right) worked as extras in "Legends of the Fall."

of you, firing rifles.... Your line fires its Mausers, and a few of the enemy drop...they charge through the mud amid bursting shells, and the light from rockets flying overhead casts eerie moving shadows. The explosions are deafening, and the constant chatter of the beltfeds provides a backdrop for the rifle fire. Suddenly, a squad of enemy soldiers is stopped at the barbed wire to your left—you bear down on them with the Maxim, and they start dropping. To the right, another squad is at the preordained place, and you aim your withering fire and stop their advance. The battle keeps on until the director cuts the scene and the field lights are brought back on.... What a cool scene!"

Nice work if you can get it....



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High quality, Bulgarian manufacture military ball ammunition for Tokarev pistol, CZ-52 pistol and PPSh41 submachine gun. Mod. No. AMB30T. \$10.00 per lot of 100 rds., Fgt. collect. \$75.00 per lot of 1,000 rds., Fgt. collect.

7.62 x 54R

Super clean Bulgarian manufacture brass case military ball. Packed 300 rds. per tin, four tins per case of 1200 rds. Mod. No. AMB54R. \$13.00 per lot 100 rds., Fgt. collect. \$144.00 per case of 1200 rds., Fgt. collect.

7.62 x 39 BLANKS new, manufactured in Germany, Lot of 100 rds. Mod. No. AMBK39

.50 M2 BLANKS Crimped, blanks for the .50 Browning machine gun. Late 60's to early 80's F.N. Mfg.

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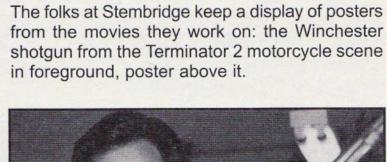
(2% surcharge, applies)

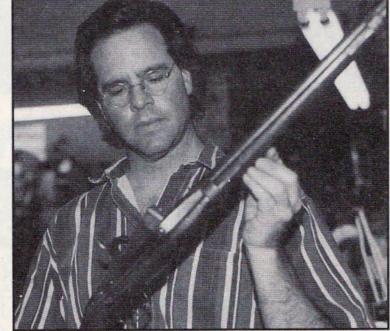
envelope "Attn: Returns Dept." Please allow 4-6 weeks for repairs and returns.



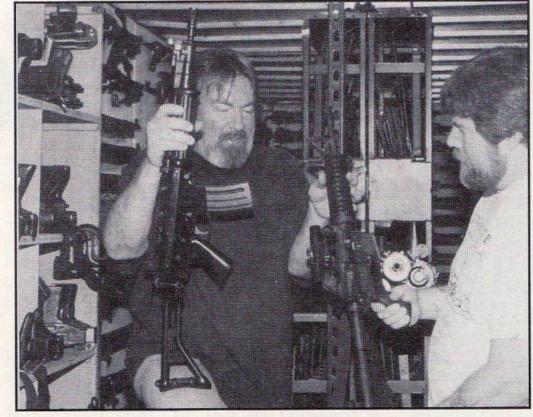


From Bazookas to belt-feds, Stembridge's back room is a treat to the Class 3 devotee. Note the M60E3's on the right wall from Stallone's movie "Rambo II."





Nat Sherrill, a Stembridge gun handler, examines an 1838 Hall's U.S. Army. This is an original Flintlock breechloader—taken from a SHELF full of them!



Larry Merrill showing Dan Shea two guns from the recent Michael Mann movie "Heat" starring Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino. (Left: FNC, Right: Colt Model 733 submachine gun.)



Colt's Gatling Model 1883, serial number 353, caliber .45 is the top gun; the bottom is also an original Colt! At the very end of the movie "Gunga Din," the elephants carried these two Gatlings into the battle.

The walls are covered in posters of the movies that they have worked on. One wall of particular interest has autographed pictures of stars using the firearms in the movies or out shooting with the Stembridge crew. Many of these pictures date back to the 1940's and 50's. Such luminaries as John Milius shooting a 1919A4 and Sophia Loren cleaning rifles at the old "Hollywood Barn" location are real eye-openers.



Photo from Stembridge's celebrity photo wall. How about Sophia Loren cleaning guns?

In the past, many of the major studios have kept their own arsenals. In recent years, they have all auctioned off or depleted their stock because of increasing gov-



Candidate for a "Mystery Photo"? This is one of the gas grenades from the original 1932 movie "King Kong." It is carved from wood.

ernment regulation and liability. It is now the policy of all the majors to hire out the gun work. This fits right into Stembridge's plans.

continued on page 42

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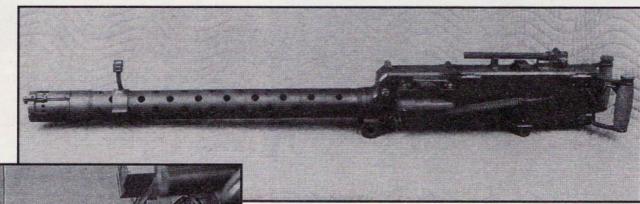
Division of Special Technologies Group, Inc.



Mini bike, Minigun—Dan Sprague having a little fun at base camp on the set of Iron Eagle III.



"Somewhere, somehow, someone's going to pay"; the special stock Valmet in 7.62 x 39 that was used in the Schwarzenegger movie "Commando." It was first used in John Milius's "Red Dawn."



Above: An absolutely cherry Japanese Vickers, possibly a "Type E."

Left: Larry Merrill and Dan Shea holding John Wayne's two rifles from "Stagecoach" and "True Grit." The one that Larry is holding is a Winchester Model 92 in 34/40, and the other is a Winchester Model 92 in 32/20.

Below: Hotchkiss Model 1914.



INCMOENTAIN

FOR THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY

Your faithful correspondent wishing he had a belt for the Terminator Minigun, while photographer Jim Bonis models the Hawk 12-shot 37 mm gas launcher from the same movie. After holding that Minigun up for a few minutes, it's hard to keep from wondering exactly what would happen if you tried a 50- or 100-round belt of live ammo....





A wall display showing the handguns from "Bat Masterson" and Paladin in "Have Gun, Will Travel."



Above: Stembridge's semi-auto and higher value gun vault.



Left: Modified Winchester 1887 12 gauge shotgun, being modeled by Larry Merrill. There were extensive modifications to the gun to make it "move perfectly" for the Terminator to flip onehanded in "T-2." This is the actual gun, with an 18" barrel and 27 1/2" overall length. Note the pallet racks full of rifles in the background

The Chaplin Film:

When the producers of the film about Charlie Chaplin's life were preparing for the set, they made a call to Stembridge for rifles. In 1918, Laskey, the silent film studio, had produced Chaplin's film "Shoulder Arms." It was about life in the trenches of World War I, and in the new film "Charlie Chaplin" starring Robert Downey Jr., there was going to be a sequence on the filming of "Shoulder Arms." Stembridge was asked if they could supply some rifles approximately like the Dutch Beaumonts that were in the original film. Larry Merrill went to work on it, and in a rack in the back, he found some 11 mm Dutch Beaumonts. On further examination, the "Laskey" imprint was found on the side of the guns—it turns out that these were the original rifles used in Chaplin's movie. Stembridge immediately signed them out to the studio for use in the "Shoulder Arms" sequence in the new movie.



Laskey marking on a Dutch Beaumont (8 mm) from the original 1918 Charlie Chaplin film "Shoulder Arms" that was also used in the Robert Downey Jr. film "Charlie Chaplin."



Renting firearms to the movies is not a simple business to get into. It takes massive resources: availability of the proper firearms, skilled personnel to keep them operational and train the actors, and the proper connections to get the contracts. Machine shop skills are a must, as well as an expert grounding in general gunsmithing to deal with all of the problems inherent with such a vast inventory of firearms that must function in a blanked-up condition.

Reputation is very key to getting the work, and Stembridge's seventy-odd years in the business provide sterling credentials. One final note on "what it takes"—you have to have the people skills to gently talk directors and screen writers out of giving silenced AK-47's to small-town cops in Iowa...and to let them use .357 mags and Ruger bolt actions like they would probably have in real life! The knowledgeable professionals at Stembridge have those skills, and considering their track record, should be supplying the movies that we will enjoy well into the next century.

MGN

The Machine Gun Dealer's Bible

The newly revised Machine Gun Dealer's Bible is a hands-on reference guide that is available anytime you need it. If you're already a dealer or an FFL, who is contemplating becoming a machine gun dealer, you will have an easy step-by-step guide to refer to. From getting a license to actually doing business, the Machine Gun Dealer's Bible will provide you with the information you need. This book will save you a lot of aggravation, time and money.



Written by Dan Shea, Technical Editor of Machine Gun News, the Machine Gun Dealer's Bible explains:

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Locating
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Procedure or Legality Question Answered
Finding Out the Registration Status of a Firearm

From the space to store your essential original documents, to the specially-designed bound record book, to the resources section, to the copies of all of the federal forms that can be taken out for use or photocopying, the Machine Gun Dealer's Bible is meant to be your working tool. The entire book is meant to be part of your daily business. The three-ring binder format allows the insertion of update packages when the Machine Gun Dealer's Bible needs a revision.

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Doing Business with Stembridge:

There are several set-in-stone policies that Stembridge Gun Rentals follows:

- 1. They sell absolutely no firearms except to law enforcement agencies. Renting out firearms is their primary business; they don't sell the stock.
- 2. All rentals are for entertainment purposes, i.e., theatrical, television, amusement park or movie use.
- 3. They do sell theatrical blanks to other companies.

For all the readers of MGN who have been wondering where to get a reliable source for blanks for shows, demos, etc., you can contact Stembridge at (818) 246-4333 or fax at (818) 246-3990. (Tell them you read it in MGN.)