

Japanese Re-boxed Winchester Ammunition update

By Dale Crabtree

The October 2009 Banzai newsletter p. 277, featured an article on of box of .45 cal Winchester ammunition with a Japanese label over the original box markings. This article stated that ammunition had been reloaded by the Japanese for their use. It also stated that ammunition head stamps carrier markings from two different manufactures, W.R.A. .45 A. C and EC 43. This statement was corrected in the November 2009 Banzai newsletter p. 294 stating that the ammunition had in fact had not been reloaded and that the four rounds with the EC 43 head stamp where no doubt, post war additions.

The following is an update on that box of ammunition. As part of the lend lease program (with began in March 1941) the U.S. provided the United Kingdom with a number of small arms chambered for the 45 caliber bullet to include the Thompson submachine gun, Colt 1911A1 pistol and the Colt New Service revolver. It is worthy to note that all though the box is marked "for use in Sub-Machine Guns" the Thompson Sub-Machine gun was used with a 20 and 30 round box magazine as well as a 50 and 100 round drum magazines. The reason for the odd amount (42 rounds) per box and the square shape was to fit in boxes of a specific size to meet pallet specifications for shipment that were used at that time.

As noted it in the original article it was packaged on 18 July 1941. At some point after that it was captured by the Japanese for their use likely in Malaya or Burma and then sent to Yokosuka Navy Arsenal for inspection and relabeled in June 1944 for their use with captured weapons.

Translation of the label is:

Captured item: Colt type

11mm pistol cartridge

Date: June 1944

Number: Yoko-Ro-Shu #19

Location name: Yokosuka Navy Arsenal

The head stamp of W.R.A. .45 AC is correct for ammunition manufactured by Winchester Repeating Arms. So in all likelihood this ammunition is the original ammunition packaged in the box. As noted the other four rounds of ammunition with the head stamp of EC 45 have been since been removed from the box so that only the original 42 rounds are in it.

The following photos show the relabeled box of Winchester ammunition, a box of ammunition showing the original markings and a photo that appears the Men at Arms publication "The Japanese Army 1931-45, (2) 1942-45" on page 9 showing a Thompson in use by the Imperial Japanese Army.

Thanks to Frank Allen for digging through his reference library to find the photo of the IJA using the Thompson and to John Moss of Woodin Laboratory for providing some insight into this subject and also for providing the photograph of an original box of ammunition.

