Subject: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by JackW on Tue, 31 May 2022 22:52:27 GMT
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Model name: 'Adams' with expansion band -or- Nimrod with leather strap
Type: Wristwatch Veri-Thin
Period/date: 1940-1944; the movement serial number is date estimated to early 1944.
Gender: mens'

Case Maker: Star Watch Case Company
Case Material: goldfill on silver and rhodum plated sterling case back*
Case Serial: 090790
Case Style no: 406-459

Caliber: 406
Movement Maker: Gruen
Movement Serial: A328801

Bracelet: In both ads it is shown with an expansion type band for the VT Adams. The leather band on the watch as purchased, is 1940s era but is marked 'Waltham'. An obvious replacement. The ads for the VT Nimrod show a leather strap.

Other info: Identified in Shawkey's book as strap 418. page 131. Strap 418 is shown with a presumably an expansion band.

I found this in a pawn shop in Chicago this past weekend (May 29, 2022). Was an inexpensive buy. The tarnish to the case made me suspect that it was a war era watch with the silver alloy basemetal for the goldfill. Otherwise it is not the typical type or style that I collect.

[Picture Front]

[Picture caseback inside]

[Picture movement]

[Picture ad]
Advertisment from December 1942 clipped from the Chicago Tribune

Although not named, it is the same model shown in this May 1944 advert from the LA Times.

Barnett's 1940s Decade book shows a very different 'Adams' in 1948. Could also be confused with the contemporaneous 'Stuart' but that has ridges that run onto the case sides.

*some debate below on my metal assessment of the back. There are certainly examples of this watch where the case back is marked as sterling. Other examples that are clearly stainless steel Guildite.

also... edits to reflect Barney's below addition of the VT Nimrod ID.

File Attachments

1) 20Dec1942_Chicago Tribune.jpg, downloaded 4403 times



2) 31May1944_Los Angeles Times.jpg, downloaded 4433 times



GRUEN
Veri-Thin, 17
Jewels, expansion band
$49.75

HAMILTON
19 Jewels, pink
gold filled case

3) Adams_bezel side.jpg, downloaded 4486 times


GRUEN

4) case_inside.jpg, downloaded 4469 times


GRUEN
VERI-THIN
CASED AND TIMED IN U.S.A.
BY GRUEN WATCH CO.
STAR WATCH CASE CO.
10K GFD BEZEL-GUILDITE BACK
ON STERLING
09079 0
406-459

5) dial.jpg, downloaded 4448 times


GRUEN
VERI-THIN
SWITZERLAND

6) movement.jpg, downloaded 4442 times


GRUEN WATCH Co.
FIFTEEN
15
JEWELS
406
UNADJUSTED
A 326801
PATENTED
VERI-THIN
F
S
SWITZERLAND
DXC

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Ephemerald on Wed, 01 Jun 2022 05:11:44 GMT
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Nice score!!! Strange...The stamp "GUILDITE BACK" on your watch would suggest that your caseback is stainless steel. Yet you're stating it's a "rhodium plated sterling case back"
Is that right? That's why I am confused... so I am curious as to how you came to that conclusion. The Chicago 42 ad states "Guildite back"....

Star did make the 406 - 459 model casebacks in both Guildite and Sterling.
If your model caseback is indeed Guildite as it's stamped, then on your outside caseback it should have a Star stamp of the double headed eagle clutching laurels and "GRUEN BASE METAL".
If it is silver then your inside caseback should be stamped "STERLING BACK".

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by thesnark17 on Wed, 01 Jun 2022 19:19:12 GMT
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It is clearly a Guildite back, as marked on the watch. I think Jack just made a typo.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by timeliz on Wed, 01 Jun 2022 19:30:25 GMT
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Most likely "on sterling" is referring to the bezel.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Gary on Wed, 01 Jun 2022 21:03:10 GMT
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I'm pretty sure the intent was a guildite back but quicky changed to sterling because rationing of metals in the war. Similar to the "S" markings in the Wadsworth cases switching from nickel to sterling.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Ephemerald on Wed, 01 Jun 2022 21:26:09 GMT
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"I'm pretty sure the intent was a guildite back but quicky changed to sterling because rationing of metals in the war"

Which is exactly why I personally think it's possible this watch is from the earlier part of the spectrum, more towards when it initially went on sale in '42, instead of later in '44. But, that's just, like my opinion, man. :lol:

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by JackW on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 02:22:47 GMT
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I base my assessment purely on qualitative aspects:
1) where the case back and the bezel have rubbed together at the snaps, the gold fill is intact, but the case back has blackened at the wear. The plate being far thinner on the back than the GF on the bezel.
2) work hardened silver has a distinct tone to it when it jingles against other metal. If you have a quarter or dime that is pre-1964, you can hear this too. I hear this with the caseback. Otherwise I too would have thought that this was just stainless.

Yet, short of an XRF scan of the metal content (or some destructive qualitative assessment) it is possible that I am wrong. Mostly about the rhodium plating; it might be chromed silver alloy. But I think rhodium is more likely, because of the reactive properties of chrome plate.

Personally, I think the markings are different, because the early WWII silver case backs by Star were chrome plated silver. If you have seen the worm tracks, this is a reaction between the two metals under moist (think skin contact). Here is an example in a Star case marked for sterling:

This is from a VT Practitioner. I have a later one that is marked "Guildite" on Sterling and also no mention of the goldfilled components.

I think when they switched to the rhodium, Gruen reverted back to calling it "Guildite". Maybe to be consistent with the marketing (*speculation). Rhodium is not reactive with silver and is a far more durable, albeit a more expensive material. It is marked "Basemetal" on the outside as Matt suggests for the "Guildite" case.

but, you know I can still be wrong.

File Attachments

1) twotone_bck.jpg, downloaded 3779 times



2) twotone_cs_sm.jpg, downloaded 3883 times



3) IMG_8762_sm.jpg, downloaded 3792 times



Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Case on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 02:58:13 GMT
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Interesting problem. Are we open to the possibility that both the bezel and back could be over

Sterling?

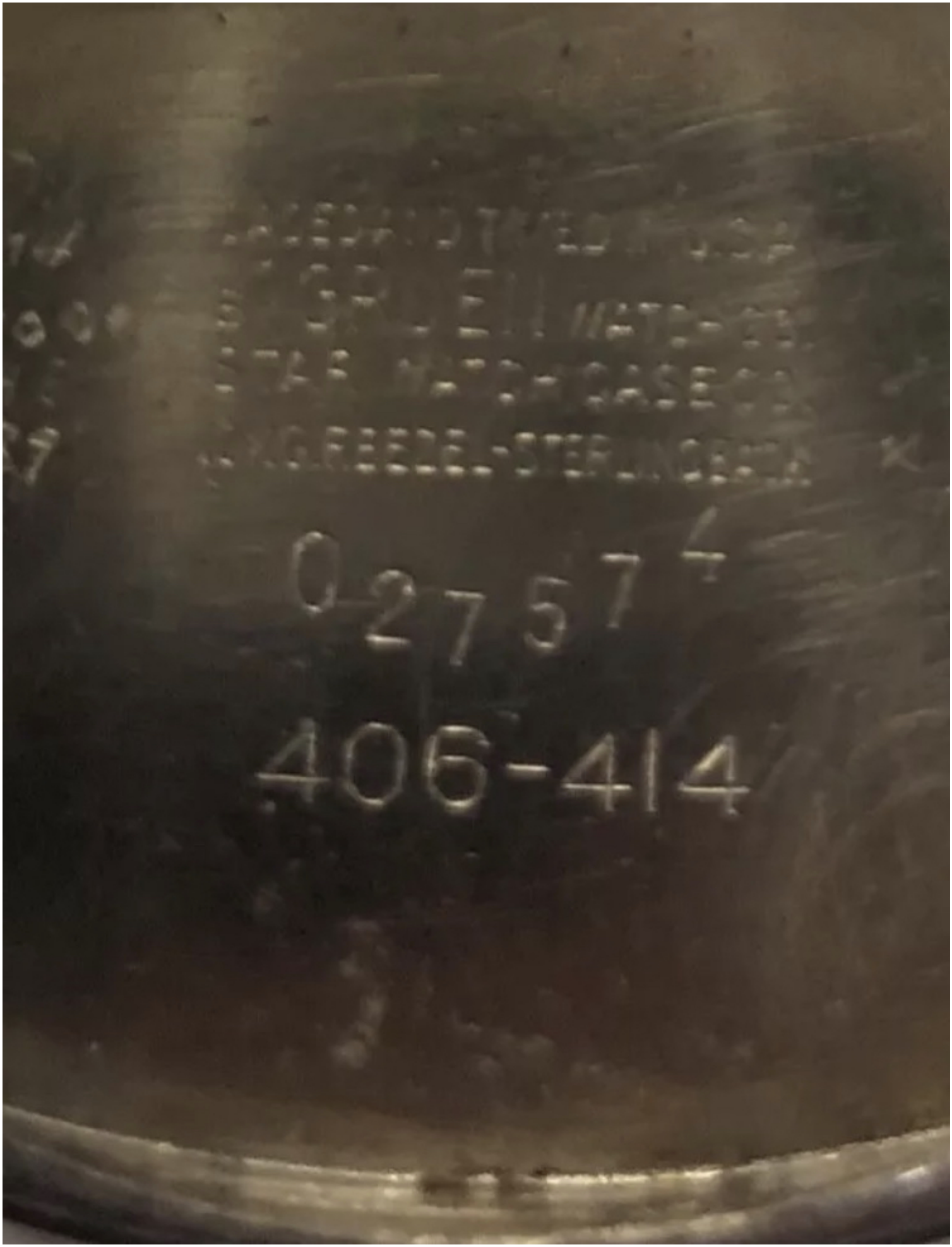
Pardon my ignorance: would a Guildite back be attracted to a magnet? Never tried it. I am familiar with the distinctive sterling “ring.”

I’ve had a very few transitional Gruen cases that were certainly misstamped for material at the factory.

Anyway, I do have one stamped “Sterling back” swcco made before Jack’s. A Courtney model, I think, if that helps. I can check my records to see if there’s a clear transition point to “gf bezel/Guildite back on sterling” from “gf bezel/sterling back.” Possibly Jack’s could be in that window.

File Attachments

1) C9DF620C-610B-4802-AF07-0426958A898A.jpeg, downloaded 3763 times


0275
406-414

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Case on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 03:15:58 GMT
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And here’s the earliest I’ve recorded that matches Jack’s caseback, although missing “Gruen veri-thin” stamps. Style number 524 (said to start in 1944) & case number below Jack’s. Movement # 669,3xx, with Veri-Thin on ratchet wheel.

FYI, this is 5,000,000 case range for swcco, but they seem to only stamp the lead digit when they get +/- about 10k from the next million.

File Attachments

1) 7587808E-6C0C-4E35-8C2F-0A3BDECF0EF6.jpeg, downloaded 3856 times



Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by timeliz on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 04:21:32 GMT

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I still doubt that they silvered Guildite. Just doesn't make sense.

I don't doubt that Star/Gruen experimented with differnet war time options, but I bet Gruen quickly put the nosh on those options that didn't rise to their standards, which makes Jack's watchcase quite the collectible.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Barney Green on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 11:01:32 GMT
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I agree that it does not make sense to place guildite on sterling so I suspect that it indeed is a guildite back and the bezel is gold plated on a sterling base.

I have one of those which has a 1943 dedication, serial number is 03xxxx and it says "STAR WATCH CASE CO. 10K G.F. BEZEL - STERLING BACK". This one clearly has a sterling back not plated and the bezel is gold plated base metal.

Regarding the model name of Jack's watch, isn't the VT Adams with it's expansion strap the same as the 1940/41 VT Nimrod with leather strap? May be Gruen needed to make some more money or thought that an expansion band sells better during war time?

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by afire on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 15:59:32 GMT
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Case wrote on Wed, 01 June 2022 21:58Pardon my ignorance: would a Guildite back be attracted to a magnet? Never tried it.
I have, and the answer is no. I was hoping it might be an easy way to identify a Guildite case under uncertain circumstances. It is not.
Barney Green wrote on Thu, 02 June 2022 06:01I agree that it does not make sense to place Guildite on sterling...
But it might make sense to rhodium plate sterling and call it Guildite under wartime conditions. After all, it's not like marking for precious metal content where you have to be accurate. Guildite can mean whatever Gruen wants it to mean, including rhodium plated silver if that was easier to source than stainless steel.

I'm going to trust Jack's experience and firsthand observations here.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Ephemerald on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 17:05:46 GMT

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I kindly disagree. I highly doubt Gruen is producing rhodium plated sterling silver case backs and stamping them Guildite. Every which way I look at it, doesn't add up.
Jacks watch could be an anomaly, if it actually is what it's theorized.

Of course, I can only speak from my experience also but I've worked with, in, on and under stainless steel for the last 25 years, and I can spot it a mile away, in the rain, bad photos, whatever,...From what I see of Jacks inside caseback, that is Guildite, it absolutely has the look of stainless. Unfortunately, I do not see a pic of the outside caseback of debated watch, so literally impossible to even truly discuss it.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Barney Green on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 17:18:12 GMT
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Matt,

this is in line with my findings and watches. If Jack could look up the outside of the case back it may help. All my Star made Guildite backs have the Star Logo and GRUEN BASE METAL marking, while all Sterling backs are not marked at the outside.
But this is just from the watches I own and may not be a proof although it statistically makes another 10 samples to tighten the theory.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by thesnark17 on Thu, 02 Jun 2022 19:36:08 GMT
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I agree with Ephemerald. I also looked at that caseback and said, "has to be Guildite", when I made my initial post in this thread. It has the "look" about it.

I've definitely seen mistakes in case markings from this period, but I've never seen anything as wrong as this marking would be, if it is wrong.

For the record, I once found a Gruen from this era with a Guildite back that was magnetic. Not only was it attracted to a magnet, you could pick it up with an unmagnetized screwdriver... needless to say, that's atypical behavior in a stainless steel! The movement would run out of the case but not in it, and it took me forever to find out why (since I "knew" that Gruen's stainless steel is nonmagnetic). And then forever to fix the problem - I ended by blowtorching the case back to anneal it, which finally worked. Never found anything else like that one though. I wonder what happened to it to induce the magnetism in the first place.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by JackW on Fri, 03 Jun 2022 02:01:06 GMT
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Barney Green wrote on Thu, 02 June 2022 05:01Regarding the model name of Jack's watch, isn't the VT Adams with it's expansion strap the same as the 1940/41 VT Nimrod with leather strap? May be Gruen needed to make some more money or thought that an expansion band sells better during war time?

Here is an image of the Veri-thin Nimrod:

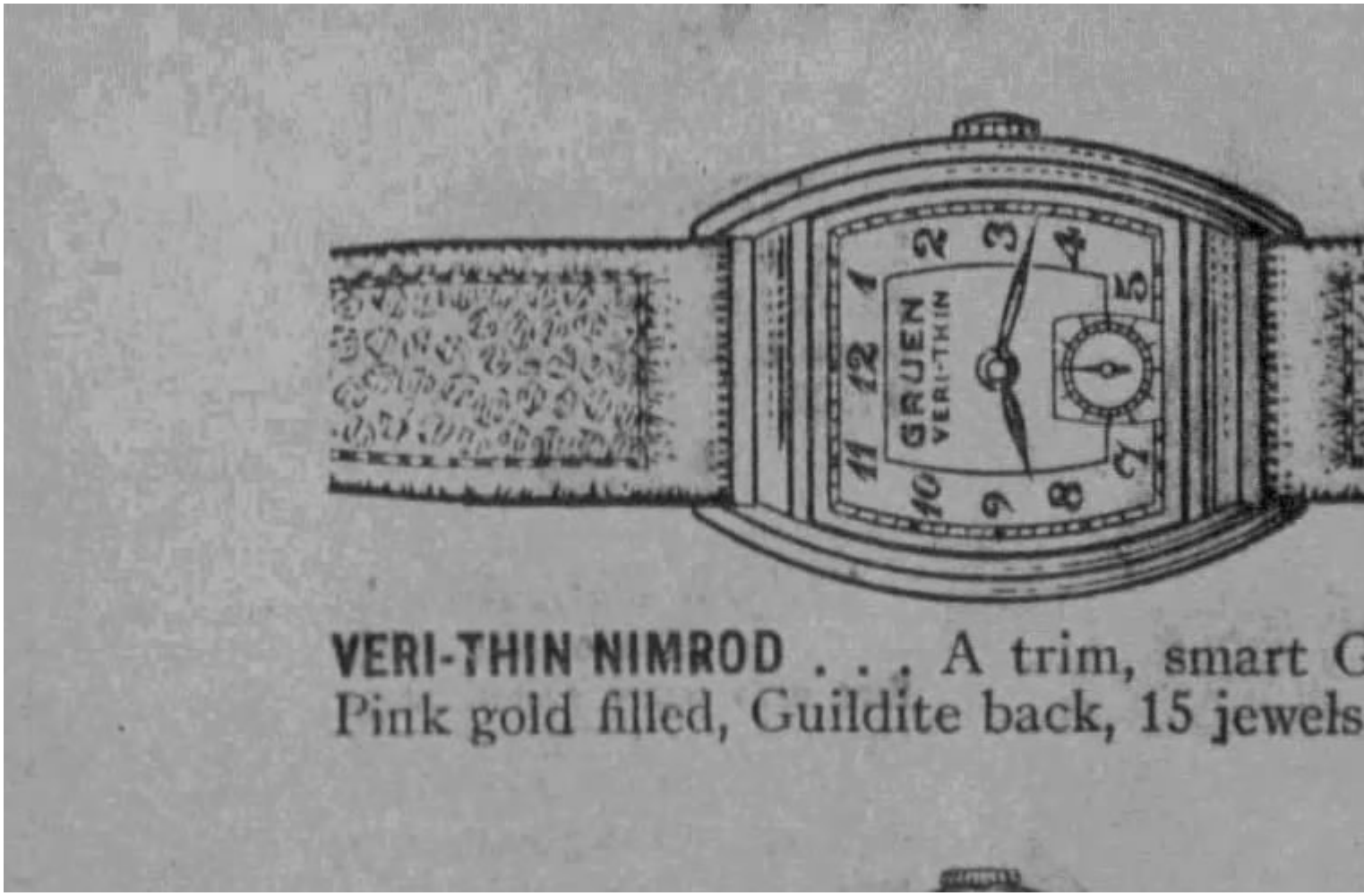
That name sure has not aged well. :roll:

Anyway.... it is certainly the same case design from the ads, as the Adams. Isn't the first time that Gruen seemingly swapped a feature, such as band or case color to justify a different name. Thank you Barney; I've made some changes to the OP to reflect this.

Glad I can still engender a lively conversation.

File Attachments

1) 01Dec1940_VT_Nimrod_The Kilgore News Herald.jpg, downloaded 3670 times



Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Gary on Fri, 03 Jun 2022 02:11:35 GMT
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JackW wrote on Fri, 03 June 2022 02:01That name sure has not aged well. :roll:
 You got that right! :lol:

Definition of Nimrod
1 : a descendant of Ham represented in Genesis as a mighty hunter and a king of Shinar. 2 not capitalized : hunter. 3 not capitalized, slang : idiot, jerk.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Case on Fri, 03 Jun 2022 03:35:29 GMT
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I was wondering how to say that I want one, just for the pleasure of owning or one day listing on eBay a “Vintage Nimrod”... guess I just did! :lol:

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Barney Green on Fri, 03 Jun 2022 06:18:00 GMT
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Thanks a lot for the education, Gary, as I indeed was only aware of the first two definitions.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by JackW on Fri, 20 Feb 2026 05:17:10 GMT
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I was thinking about this post recently and the discussion on the composition of the case back: Is it stainless or is it silver alloy of some sort.

A non destructive test is to measure the specific gravity, which can be converted to density, but honestly the value calculated from specific gravity are nearly the same. It is easy and I don't know why I didn't think of this earlier. I only feel better that no one else on this thread did either.

Jewelry grade sterling (935 silver) has a density of about 10 g/cm^3.
Stainless steel per Google's AI has a density in the range of 7.5 and 8.0g/cm^3
Also here.

That said, I measured the case back from this watch and calculated a specific gravity of 9.37. I also measured the specific gravity of one that I believe is the non-war production of the same model (stainless/Guildite back) and got a value of 8.38. This higher value is consistent with some especially malleable austenitic stainless steel.

I also measured case backs with clear "sterling back" marking getting 9.4 and the corresponding "pre-war" of the same model yielding 8.4
To check if I am doing things right, i did the same for a sterling ring (no solder) and got 9.96
I also checked to see if the WWII era US made 5-cent piece which is made of 56% copper, 35% silver, and 9% manganese and has a reported density of 8.92. I did the same for a 1944 5-cent piece and got 8.75.

A combination of 70% silver and 30% zinc or 75% silver and 25% manganese will yield a density of 9.4. However, I think zinc is the likely alloy. Manganese was more strictly rationed. 70% silver would not be sterling. Zinc is a common alloying metal with silver. It adds hardness to the mix. However, the AI says that a 70/30 mix is not cold malleable.

A Swiss-cased Pan Am case back yielded a specific gravity/density of 7.1. Huh? A post war Guildite marked case back from an Autowind all Swiss case gave 7.5. Air being trapped in a recess of the case can lower the density value derived via this method. So, this kind of error (air) causes an underestimate.

So, while this is not conclusive, it is my opinion, this hints that the back of the "at question" case back is not stainless steel. This test also has an advantage: You can easily repeat this experiment at home with your own case backs. Just need a good scale.
I followed this as it was pretty straight forward. Rather than string, I used a piece of thin copper wire.
http://www.johnbetts-fineminerals.com/jhbnyc/articles/specif ic_gravity.htm

I know a lot of the people that commented in this thread have pared back their participation here, but I do welcome your comments.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Jenneke on Fri, 20 Feb 2026 19:03:39 GMT
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I guess I am to lazy to do the test. But my excuse, I dont have a guildite back on sterling case.

does also mean rationing on stainless. It would be weird to have silver as a base metal for the bezel, but not for the back.

The silver “base metal” (gf, sterling) cases I have, have a specific tarnish. The silver definitely goes black over time and on the wear spots even more.

Anyhow , it would be interesting to scratch the caseback on the inside and do a silver test.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Gary on Fri, 20 Feb 2026 23:15:34 GMT
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I also wonder why case makers just made guildite for the case back and not the bezel? My Pan Am bezel is degrading, chrome pitted like the nickel cases.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Jenneke on Sat, 21 Feb 2026 15:21:27 GMT
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I guess its al about the (shiny) look? Or price. Back has more skin contact.

and replating. It is difficult to get it right though (in my eyes).

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by Gary on Sat, 21 Feb 2026 16:03:27 GMT
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Yeah, Gruen wasn't expecting these timepieces to last for several generations, so my expectations are probably too high. I'd probably replace the bezel altogether, then try to re-plate. The lug pin holes being worn is another issue all in itself.

Subject: Re: The Veri-Thin 'Adams'
Posted by JackW on Sat, 21 Feb 2026 17:12:32 GMT
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there are some Swiss made 6-point case back models in the 1943 period, that are all Guildite. Where the mixed metal Swiss cases, with Guildite backs, are stamped "Back". The all Guildite ones are not, just noted with Guildite. None though with a 24-hour dial style other than the snap-back cases.

I might break this off of the Adams thread and make it a new one. If you want to discuss more. I can show pictures of what I mean too.
