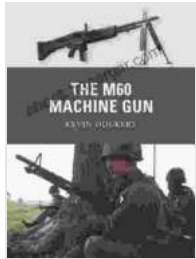


The M60 Machine Gun: Weapon 20



The M60 Machine Gun (Weapon Book 20) by Kevin Dockery

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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The M60 machine gun, officially designated the Machine Gun, 7.62 mm, M60, has been a mainstay of American infantry firepower since its adoption in 1957. This versatile and reliable weapon has played a pivotal role in countless conflicts, from the jungles of Vietnam to the deserts of the Middle East.

In this comprehensive guide, we delve into the rich history, intricate design, and proven combat effectiveness of the M60 machine gun. From its origins as a replacement for the Browning Automatic Rifle to its continued service today, we explore the evolution and impact of this iconic weapon.

Origins and Development

The M60 machine gun was developed in the early 1950s as a replacement for the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), which had served as the primary light machine gun of the US Army since the First World War. The BAR, while a reliable and effective weapon, was becoming increasingly outdated, and its heavy weight and limited magazine capacity made it less suitable for the demands of modern warfare.

In response to these concerns, the US Army Ordnance Corps began a search for a new light machine gun that would be lighter, more powerful, and capable of delivering sustained fire. The result of this search was the M60, which was designed by the Fabrique Nationale (FN) d'Herstal in Belgium.

Design and Features

The M60 machine gun is a gas-operated, belt-fed weapon that fires the 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge. It features a long-stroke gas piston operating system, which provides reliable cycling even under adverse conditions. The

M60's barrel is quick-change, allowing for rapid replacement in the field. The weapon is fed from a disintegrating metallic belt, which holds 100 rounds. It can also be adapted to use the 200-round M13 linked belt.

The M60 has a cyclic rate of fire of approximately 550 rounds per minute, and a maximum effective range of 1,800 meters. It is typically deployed on a bipod, but can also be mounted on a tripod or vehicle mount. The M60 can be operated by a single gunner, but is typically crewed by a two-man team, with one gunner and one assistant gunner.

Variants and Modifications

Over the years, the M60 machine gun has undergone a number of modifications and improvements. These include:

- **M60E1:** Introduced in 1961, the M60E1 featured a modified gas system and a new, improved flash hider.
- **M60E2:** Adopted in 1966, the M60E2 featured a shorter barrel, a new handguard, and a folding bipod.
- **M60E3:** Developed in the 1980s, the M60E3 featured a new composite stock and handguard, as well as a modified trigger mechanism.
- **M60E4:** The latest variant of the M60, the M60E4 features a Picatinny rail on the receiver, allowing for the mounting of various accessories.

Combat Use

The M60 machine gun has been used in countless conflicts around the world, including:

- **Vietnam War:** The M60 was the primary light machine gun of the US Army during the Vietnam War. It was used extensively in both offensive and defensive operations, and its firepower was essential for suppressing enemy fire and providing cover for advancing troops.
- **Gulf War:** The M60 was also used by US forces during the Gulf War in 1991. In this conflict, the M60 was used primarily for providing suppressive fire and engaging enemy targets at medium range.
- **War in Afghanistan:** The M60 continues to be used by US forces in the War in Afghanistan. It is particularly well-suited for combat in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, where its long range and high rate of fire can be effectively employed.

Legacy and

The M60 machine gun has been a trusted and effective weapon for the US military for over six decades. Its combination of reliability, firepower, and versatility has made it a mainstay of American infantry firepower.

While newer and more advanced weapons have been developed in recent years, the M60 remains a valuable and respected weapon system. Its proven track record in combat and its enduring popularity among troops ensure that the M60 will continue to serve as a vital part of the US military's arsenal for many years to come.

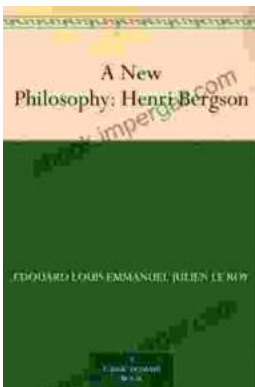


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