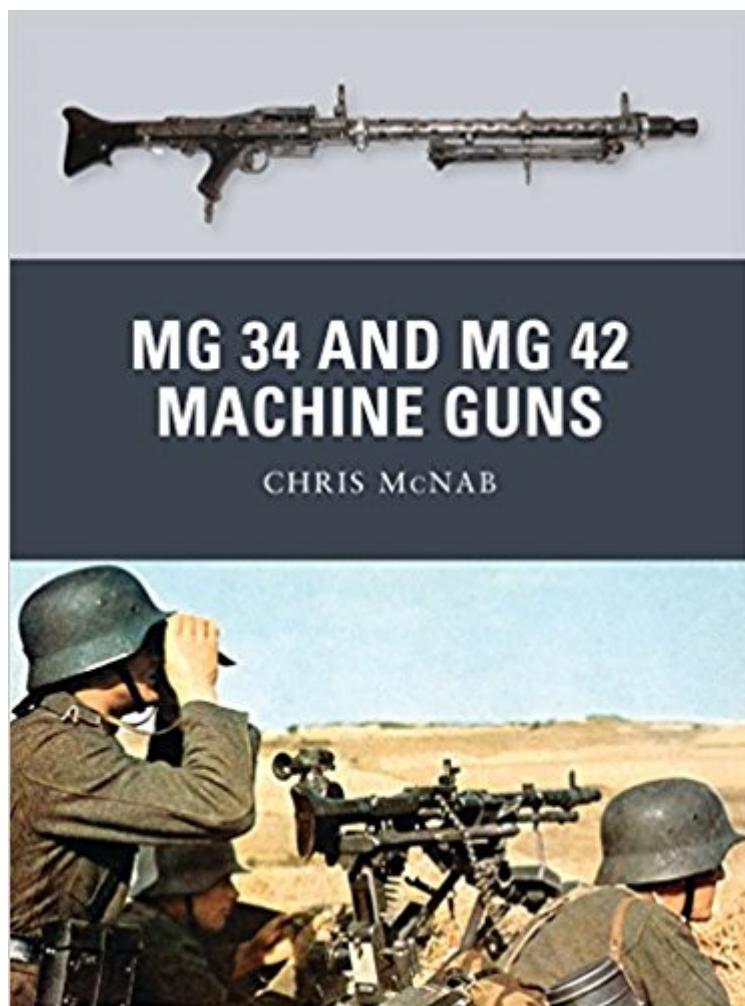


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# MG 34 And MG 42 Machine Guns (Weapon)



## Synopsis

With the MG 34, the German Wehrmacht introduced an entirely new concept in automatic firepower - the general-purpose machine gun (GPMG). In itself the MG 34 was an excellent weapon: an air-cooled, recoil-operated machine gun that could run through belts of 7.92mm ammunition at a rate of 850rpm, delivering killing firepower at ranges of more than 1,000m. Yet simply by changing its mount and feed mechanism, the operator could radically transform its function. On its standard bipod it was a light machine gun, ideal for infantry assaults; on a tripod it could serve as a sustained-fire medium machine gun; aircraft or vehicular mounts turned it into an air defence weapon; and it also served as the coaxial machine gun on numerous tanks. During World War II, the MG 34 was superseded (although it remained in combat use) by a new GPMG - the MG 42. The MG 42 was more efficient to manufacture and more robust, and had a blistering 1,200rpm rate of fire. Nicknamed 'Hitler's buzzsaw' by Allied troops, it was arguably the finest all-round GPMG ever produced, and alongside the MG 34 it inflicted heavy casualties on Allied soldiers on all European and North African fronts. Such were its qualities of firepower and usability that it became the foundation of an entire series of postwar machine guns, including the MG 1 and MG 3 - the latter is still in production and service to this day. Featuring specially commissioned full-colour artwork and drawing upon numerous technical manuals and first-hand accounts, this study explores the technological development, varied roles and lasting influence of the revolutionary MG 34 and MG 42 machine guns and their postwar successors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ã¢ “The MG 42 was actually a revolutionary approach to machine gun design, and was nicknamed 'Hitler's buzzsaw' by the Allied forces. It's still in use some seventy years later. This examination of the pioneering machine gun will appeal to military and weaponry collections alike, offering vintage black and white photos of wartime experiences throughout.”

Ã¢ ª James A. Cox, *The Midwest Book Review* (January 2013) “Dozens of excellent photos and informative drawings illustrate this handy handbook. And heavy reliance on primary sources -- coupled with abundant annotations -- confirms its value as a reliable reference.”

Ã¢ ª David L. Veres, [www.cybermodeler.com](http://www.cybermodeler.com) (November 2012)

Chris McNab is an author and editor. To date he has published over 25 books, including *A History of the World in 100 Weapons*, *Hitler's Armies* and *The Uzi Submachine Gun* for Osprey. Chris has also written extensively for major encyclopedia series, including *African-American Biographies* (2006), *USA 1950s* (2006) and *Reformation, Exploration and Empire* (2005), and has contributed to *The Times* on the war in Iraq.

"MG 34 and MG 42 Machine Guns" by Chris McNab is a good, solid book covering the development, employment, and lasting impact of these German machine guns. The book is 80 pages cover to cover, including a bibliography and index. The author begins with briefly describing World War I machine guns, particularly German guns, and how they evolved, step-by-step, into the MG 34, both physically and conceptually in how they were to be used. He then describes how the MG 34 was "improved" to become the MG 42. He next covers the ways they were used tactically, how they operated in their many roles, and even discusses how to fire and maintain the guns themselves. The author finishes by showing the impacts of the weapon on both those facing and firing these machine guns, and on their post-war development into even better machine guns that are still in use today. The book is full of interesting photos and illustrations. The photos range from black and white period pictures to color pictures from the present day. The text is well-written and easily understandable. Overall, this is an excellent book on an important weapon family used in World War II and beyond. Four stars.

As part of the Osprey "weapons" series this book, like all those in the series, is not intended as anything more than an introduction. At 80 pages, about a third of which consist of illustration, the format can only fill this function. For a more encyclopedic treatise on the weapon the interested

reader should refer to something else. Hence the relevant question to ask is, for the given format limitations, how well does the book cover its topic as an introduction? The answer is very well. The book starts out with shortcoming in German machine guns during WWI. The British guns were much more mobile (at about half the weight of the German). This fact, combined with German Stormtrooper tactics and the importance they placed on machine gun fire (unfortunately a fact ignored in the book), lead the Germans to discard their WWI machine guns and attempt to find new replacements. These new replacements not only required a lighter gun but were required to fulfill a number of needs. These included the ability to operate on bipod, in a prone position, on tripods, to be fired from the hip and, most importantly, to have a high rate of fire. All these requirements, combined in no small part with German industrial capacity, lead to the development of the MG 34 between the wars. The book goes into the many details of this weapon including: the many sights made for it, tripods and bipods, its relatively complicated build and the weaknesses it entailed (i.e., expensive to manufacture, relatively easy to jam due to many openings and parts, etc.). These problems led to another machine gun, the MG 42 superseding it. It never was replaced, however, due to its advantages over the MG 34. These included primarily the fact that the barrel, unlike the MG 42, could be replaced from tight areas hence it would always fulfill a role that the MG 42 could not (i.e., in interiors of armored fighting vehicles, tight fortifications, etc.). The book goes into quite a bit of detail on each type of machine gun. For example, on the MG 34, rate of fire could be controlled depending on where on the trigger the operator pressed it (as opposed to having to use a separate switch like so many of its competitors). Pulling the trigger at the very top enabled the weapon to fire only one round at a time, in the middle a medium rate of fire and at the very bottom the maximum. The MG 42, on the other hand, only permitted one rate of fire. It was this crudeness that enabled the MG 42 to be much more cost effectively produced and eventually led to its superseding the MG 32. The book provides a treasure trove of such details, despite its small size. It should be stressed that the book not only covers the actual physical characteristics of the weapon itself, but also the doctrine under which it was used, how the German squad centered around its use (even most squad members who were not members of the machine gun team carried a variety of parts for it such as tripods, sights and, of course, ammunition). The book, in addition, covers the tactics that the allies used in overcoming German superiority in this particular type of weapon, primarily by overwhelming it in terms of armor and the liberal use of mortars and artillery. The book concludes by discussing the extensive production and use of this weapon in the post war period, including the fact that it currently still (with only slight alteration) is the standard machine gun of the German army. All and all a very good introduction to the weapon even for those with a basic

knowledge of military hardware of WW2. A true value for the hour and a half or so it takes to read. Addendum: Mr McNab has just written (April 2013) a new book in the Osprey series "German Automatic and Assault Rifles 1941-45: Gew 41, Gew 43, FG 42 and StG 44". This is another book that provides a very good overview, despite the limitations imposed by Osprey's "weapons" format, of the weapons. Please see this reviewer's review (Yoda) of that book for more details.

This book is relatively short, but it does cover a lot of ground in terms of design, development, implementation, and post war use/development of the MG34/MG42 system. This is more of a survey than an in depth look however, which is not necessarily a bad thing. I was personally hoping for a more in depth look, but this certainly worked well as in general information and a great place to start looking for further details. If you're not already an expert on the MG34/MG42, this book will have something in it that you didn't know.

Covers the development, firing, operational history, and post war modifications including exploded views and photos without boring you to tears. Good read. For me, just enough information without being too much. Recommended.

This series of book is surprising since I found information that was not in books costing 5 to 10 times as much. It is a very good start for people who want to learn about a certain firearm or weapon. It is also good for people who know the firearms in question as well. I will suggest this book for people who don't know anything about the MG 34 and MG 42 Machine Guns.

This book is an excellent source for information on two very important machine gun designs. It covers their operation and accessories very well. It also covers how they were used in the German Army of WWII and how the technology affected tactics and organization. Finally, the book describes the current use of the MG 42 design in many armies with only slight changes required to bring it up to date.

This book was enthralling from beginning to end telling the reader what lead up to the modern, now in use German machine gun. On personal point, as I am a Military Model Builder it gave me a better understanding of the subject. Recommended for the avid militarist. Thank you to . Cheers from Australia

A very good quick read of the development of the MG 34 family in WWII with great photo, illustrations and comments from both ends of this workhorse of combat. It includes the current models in service which followed the family tree.

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