

HANDBOOK

An Introductory Guide to the Identification of Small Arms, Light Weapons, and Associated Ammunition

Edited by N.R. Jenzen-Jones and Matt Schroeder



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About the Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is a global centre of excellence whose mandate is to generate impartial, evidence-based, and policy-relevant knowledge on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. It is the principal international source of expertise, information, and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues, and acts as a resource for governments, policymakers, researchers, and civil society. It is located in Geneva, Switzerland, and is a project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

The Survey has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

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Using this Handbook

It is important to note that arms and ammunition identification is a very broad field, filled with many unknowns, errors, and disinformation. Arms and ammunition identification is also a very dynamic field, with new information frequently coming to light. This Handbook is intended only as an introduction to the practice and techniques of arms and ammunition identification. It is not a comprehensive list of identification techniques, or types or characteristics of specific arms and ammunition.

Most organisations and individuals do not need to identify weapons on sight; the real task of identification can often be undertaken by specialists later. What is important is to provide those specialists with relevant information, such as clear photographs and detailed records of the item's characteristics. To this end, this Handbook is intended to enable the reader to recognize important information and record it accurately, and also to classify and identify small arms, light weapons, and their ammunition according to their physical features and markings. The identification of a particular item using this guide should be considered tentative until a specialist has confirmed the identification.

Disclaimer

The information in this Handbook is provided for informational purposes only. Arms or munitions of any variety should not be handled without the correct training, and then only in a manner consistent with such training. Subject matter experts, such as armourers, ammunition technical officers, and explosive ordnance disposal specialists should be consulted before interacting with arms or munitions. Individuals must also make a full and informed appraisal of the local security situation before conducting any research related to arms or munitions.

The Small Arms Survey (including its employees and consultants) shall not be held responsible for any damage, of whatever nature, arising from the direct or indirect use of this Handbook, including any damage, of whatever nature, that may be incurred by third parties.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Arms-related abbreviations and acronyms

AGL	Automatic grenade launcher
AK	Avtomat Kalashnikova ('Kalashnikov automatic rifle')
AKM	Avtomat Kalashnikova Modernizirovanny ('Kalashnikov automatic rifle, modernised')
AK-74	Avtomat Kalashnikova obraztsa 1974 ('Kalashnikov automatic rifle, model of 1974')
AK-74M	Avtomat Kalashnikova obraztsa 1974 Modernizirovanny ('Kalashnikov automatic rifle, model of 1974, modernised')
AMR	Anti-materiel rifle
ATGM	Anti-tank guided missile
ATGW	Anti-tank guided weapon
ATR	Anti-tank rifle
CZ	Česká Zbrojovka Uherský Brod ('Czech Arms Factory, Uherský Brod')
DA	Double-action*
DA/SA	Double-action / single-action*
DGI	Direct gas impingement*
DShK	Degtyareva-Shpagina Krupnokalibernyy ('Degtyareva-Shpagina large calibre')
DShKM	Degtyareva-Shpagina Krupnokalibernyy Modernizirovanny ('Degtyareva-Shpagina large calibre, modernised')
FAL	Fusil automatique léger ('light automatic rifle')
FCS	Fire control system
FN Herstal	Fabrique Nationale de Herstal ('National Factory, Herstal')
GMG	Grenade machine gun
GPMG	General-purpose machine gun (also 'MMG')
HMG	Heavy machine gun
HK	Heckler & Koch

IZHMASH	ИЖМАШ; Izhevskiy Mashinostroite Inyy Zavod ('Izhevsk Machine-Building Plant')
KPV	Krupnokalibernyy Pulemet Vladimirova ('Vladimirova large calibre machine gun')
LMG	Light machine gun
LSW	Light support weapon
MAG	Mitrailleuse d'appui général ('general-purpose machine gun')
MANPADS	Man-portable air defence systems
MANPATS	Man-portable anti-tank systems (also known as 'MPATS')
MBRL	Multiple-barrel rocket launcher
MMG	Medium machine gun
NSV	Nikitina-Sokolova-Volkova (these are the names of the weapon's primary designers)
NSVT	Nikitina-Sokolova-Volkova Tankovyy ('NSV tank machine gun')*
PDW	Personal defence weapon
PK	Pulemet Kalashnikova ('Kalashnikov machine gun')
PKM	Pulemet Kalashnikova Modernizirovanny ('Kalashnikov machine gun, modernised')
PKT	Pulemet Kalashnikova Tankovyy ('Kalashnikov tank machine gun')*
PM	Pistolet Makarova
PSL	Puşcă Semiautomată cu Lunetă ('semi-automatic sniper rifle')*
RPD	Ruchnoy Pulemyot Degtyaryova ('Degtyarev light machine gun')
RPG	Ruchnoy Protivotankovyy Granatomyot ('hand-held anti-tank grenade launcher') or Reaktivnaya Protivotankovaya Granata ('anti-tank rocket launcher')
SA	Single-action*
SACLOS	Semi-automatic command to line-of-sight
SAM	Surface-to-air missile (when man-portable, known as MANPADS)
SAW	Squad automatic weapon
SKS	Samozaryadnyy Karabinsistemy Simonova ('Simonov self-loading carbine')
SMAW	Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon

SMG	Sub-machine gun
SPG	Stankovyy Protivotankovyy Granatomyot ('heavy anti-tank grenade launcher')
SVD	Snayperskaya Vintovka Dragunova ('Dragunov sniper rifle')
TT	Tokarev-Tula
ZPU	Zenitnaya Pulemetnaya Ustanovka ('anti-aircraft machine gun system')*

Munitions-related abbreviations and acronyms

ABM	Airburst munitions
ACP	Automatic Colt Pistol
AP	Armour-piercing
APCR	Armour-piercing composite, rigid
APDS	Armour-piercing discarding sabot
APHC	Armour-piercing hard core
APT	Armour-piercing tracer*
API	Armour-piercing incendiary
API-T	Armour-piercing incendiary tracer
API-DT	Armour-piercing incendiary dim tracer
ASM	Anti-structure munitions
ATGM	Anti-tank guided missile
AXO	Abandoned explosive ordnance
B	Belted (when used as suffix in cartridge calibre designation)
B-32	Broneboynozazhigatelnyy ('armour-piercing incendiary')
BMG	Browning machine gun
BZT	Broneboyno Zazhigatelno Trassiruyushchiy ('armour-piercing incendiary tracer')*
CCS	Copper-clad steel
CHS	Cartridge headspace
EOD	Explosive ordnance disposal
ERW	Explosive remnants of war
FMJ	Full metal jacket
FN Herstal	Fabrique Nationale de Herstal ('National Factory, Herstal')
GMCS	Gilding metal-clad steel

HE	High-explosive
HE-FRAG	High-explosive fragmentation
HEAB	High-explosive airburst
HEAT	High-explosive anti-tank
HEAT-T	High-explosive anti-tank tracer*
HEDP	High-explosive dual-purpose
HEI	High-explosive incendiary
HP	Hollow-point
IED	Improvised explosive device
JHP	Jacketed hollow-point
JSP	Jacketed soft-point
MDZ	Mnogovenного Deystviya Zazhigatelnyy ('instantaneous incendiary'; HEI)
MP	Multipurpose (ammunition)
OTM	Open-tipped match
PPHE	Programmable pre-fragmented high-explosive
R	Rimmed (when used as suffix in cartridge calibre designation)
RAP	Rocket-assisted projectile
RCA	Riot control agent
SAA	Small arms ammunition
SAPHE	Semi-armour-piercing high-explosive
SAPHEI	Semi-armour-piercing high-explosive incendiary
SAPHEI-T	Semi-armour-piercing incendiary tracer*
SCHV	Small-calibre, high-velocity
SR	Semi-rimmed (when used as suffix in cartridge calibre designation)
TOW	Tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided
TP	Training/practice (ammunition)
TPT	Training/practice-tracer
UXO	Unexploded ordnance

Other abbreviations and acronyms

ARES	Armament Research Services
ATO	Ammunition technical officer
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
dB	Decibel
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
GPS	Global Positioning System
HS	Harmonized system
HTS	Harmonized Tariff Schedule
IMP	Information, materiel, and persons
ITI	International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons ('International Tracing Instrument')
IR	Infrared
KNP	Kruger National Park
IATG	International Ammunition Technical Guidelines*
ISACS	International Small Arms Control Standards*
LAPD	Los Angeles Police Department
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PID	Positive identification
PoA	Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects ('Programme of Action')
PSSM	Physical security and stockpile management*
RF	Radio frequency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SE	Site exploitation
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SSE	Sensitive site exploitation
TSE	Tactical site exploitation
UID	Unique identification (or unique identifier)
UN	United Nations

UN Comtrade	United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNROCA	United Nations Register of Conventional Arms
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
USD	United States dollar

* These abbreviations and acronyms are not used in this Handbook. They have been included here for informative and educational purposes.

