

The Pak 40 Anti-Tank Gun

Before the advent of the Second World War the Wehrmacht had issued contracts Krupp and Rheinmetall-Borsig to develop a 75mm anti-tank gun. Development of the weapon was slow as it was initially felt there was little need for a heavy, slow anti-tank gun. Experience in Russia however had shown that the current anti-tank weapons, namely the Pak 36 and Pak 38 did not have sufficient power to deal with the latest Russian tanks and so a more powerful weapon was required.

The 75mm project was therefore given higher priority and the result was the Pak 40. Production of the Pak 40 began at the beginning of 1942 and the first weapons were issued in the spring. Production of the Pak 40 was initially slow with only 1,360 being completed in 1942 but by 1943 and 1944 the numbers being built increased massively with over 7,000 in 1943 and just under 11,000 in 1944. This substantial increase in weapons being produced in 1944 did not however mean a large increase in the number of weapons in the hands of the army however, due to the massive losses in equipment experienced in 1944. For example, between January 1st and September 30th 1944 7,954 Pak40s were produced of which 7,060 were assigned, in the same period 6,640 guns were lost - in the final three months of the year a further 2,000 were lost.

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Written by David Boyd

Sunday, 04 January 2009 14:50 -

The Pak 40 was essentially an enlarged version of the Pak 38, this lead to an increase in firepower but the mobility seen in earlier German anti-tank weapons was lost, the losses posted above are a testament to the difficultly of moving the pak40, particularly in retreat. The Pak40 did however add much needed firepower to the German army and was capable of dealing with the majority of targets it faced.

As with previous anti-tank guns armour piercing composite rigid ammunition was produced but due to tungsten supplies only around 50k of these were completed.

Pak 40 Anti-Tank Gun Statistics

Total Length

cm

Length of Gun

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370.2 cm

Calibre

7.5cm

Elevation

-6°, +22°

Transverse

65°

Rate of fire	12-15
Rifling	32 grooves
Telescope	scope magnification

Weight in Action
1428kg

Performance of the Pak 40 Anti-Tank Gun Ammunition

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Ammunition

Weight of shot/shell

Complete Weight

Bursting Charge

Propellant Charge

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Muzzle Velocity

Angle

Plate

100m

500 m

10001500m

☐ 2000m

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Sprgr Patr 34

5.8kg

9.15kg

640gm

780gm

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Pzgr 39

6.8kg

12kg

16gm

2.75kg

792m/s

30

MQ

106

96

85 74

64

