

Granatwerfer 42

The *12 cm Granatwerfer 42* (literally, "grenade thrower Model 42"; official designation: **12 cm GrW 42**) was a mortar used by Germany during World War II.

Development

Developed in 1942, the 12 cm (about 4.7 in) GrW 42 was an attempt to give German infantry units a close support weapon with greater performance than the mortars used in general service at the time. This weapon was very similar to the mortar used by Soviet forces on the Eastern Front which in turn was an improved version of the French 120 mm Brandt Mle 1935 mortar. The 120 mm Brandt m35 was used in limited quantities during the Battle of France and exported to the USSR and other nations before the country's capitulation in 1940. The Soviet PM 38 120 mm mortar, were captured in large quantities during the war in the East and pressed into service by the Germans and other Axis nations before the introduction of similar nationally produced 12 cm mortar designs. In German use, the captured Soviet mortar was given the designation **12 cm Granatwerfer 378 (r)**.^[3]

Description

The GrW 42 was basically the usual three part construction made up of a circular base plate like the previous Soviet design, the tube itself and the supporting bi-pod. Because of the greater weight of the weapon (280 kilograms or 620 pounds) a two-wheeled axle was utilized, enabling the mortar to be towed into action. The axle could then be quickly removed before firing. A total of 5,373,000 rounds of ammunition were produced for the weapon.^[1]

References

1. ^[1] (<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Waffen/granatwerfer.htm>) (in German)

12 cm Granatwerfer 42	
	
Granatwerfer 42 on the Eastern Front	
Type	<u>Mortar</u>
Place of origin	Nazi Germany
Service history	
Used by	<u>Nazi Germany</u>
Wars	<u>Second World War</u>
Production history	
Designed	1942
Unit cost	1,200 <u>Reichsmark</u>
Produced	1943–1945
No. built	8,461 ^[1]
Specifications	
Mass	280 kg (620 lb)
Barrel length	1.8 m (5 ft 11 in) L/15.5 ^[2]
Shell	15.6 kg (34 lb 6 oz) bomb
Caliber	120 mm (4.7 in)
Elevation	45° to 85°
Traverse	8° to 17° variable with elevation ^[2]

2. Chamberlain, Peter (1975). *Mortars and rockets* (<https://archive.org/details/mortarsrockets0000cham/page/9>). Gander, Terry. New York: Arco Pub. Co. p. 9 (<https://archive.org/details/mortarsrockets0000cham/page/9>). ISBN 0668038179. OCLC 2067459 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/2067459>).

Rate of fire	8-10 rpm
Muzzle velocity	280 m/s (920 ft/s)
Maximum firing range	6 km (3.7 mi) ^[2]

3. "120-HM 38". *Encyclopédie des armes : Les forces armées du monde* (in French). Vol. IX. Atlas. 1986. p. 2042.

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