= MP 40 =

The MP 40 was a submachine gun chambered for the 9 × 19mm Parabellum cartridge . It was developed in Nazi Germany and used extensively by the Axis powers during World War II .

Designed in 1938 by Heinrich Vollmer with inspiration from its predecessor the MP 38 , it was heavily used by infantrymen , paratroopers , platoon and squad leaders on the Eastern and Western Front . Its advanced and modern features made it a favorite among soldiers and popular in countries from various parts of the world after the war . It was often erroneously called " Schmeisser " by the Allies , despite Hugo Schmeisser 's non @-@ involvement in the weapon 's design and production . From 1940 to 1945 , an estimated 1 @.@ 1 million were produced by Erma Werke .

= = Development = =

The Maschinenpistole 40 (" Machine pistol 40 ") descended from its predecessor the MP 38 , which was in turn based on the MP 36 , a prototype made of machined steel . The MP 36 was developed independently by Erma Werke 's Berthold Geipel with funding from the German Army . It took design elements from Heinrich Vollmer 's VPM 1930 and EMP . Vollmer then worked on Berthold Geipel 's MP 36 and in 1938 submitted a prototype to answer a request from the Heereswaffenamt (Army Weapons Office) for a new submachine gun , which was adopted as MP 38 . The MP 38 was a simplification of the MP 36 , and the MP 40 was a further simplification of the MP 38 , with certain cost @-@ saving alterations , most notably in the more extensive use of stamped steel rather than machined parts .

The MP 40 was often called the " Schmeisser " by the Allies , after the weapon designer Hugo Schmeisser . Schmeisser had designed the MP 18 , which was the first mass @-@ produced submachine gun in the world , and carried some resemblance to the MP 40 . He did not , however , have anything to do with the design or development of the MP 40 , although he held a patent on the magazine .

= = Design = =

The MP 40 submachine guns are open @-@ bolt , blowback @-@ operated automatic arms . The only mode of fire was fully automatic , but the relatively low rate of fire enabled single shots with controlled trigger pulls . The bolt features a telescoping return spring guide which serves as a pneumatic recoil buffer . The cocking handle was permanently attached to the bolt on early MP 38s , but on late production MP 38s and MP 40s , the bolt handle was made as a separate part . It also served as a safety by pushing the head of handle into one of two separate notches above the main opening ; this action locked the bolt either in the cocked (rear) or uncocked (forward) position . The absence of this feature on early MP 38s resulted in field expedients such as leather harnesses with a small loop , used to hold the bolt in forward position .

The MP 38 receiver was made of machined steel , but this was a time @-@ consuming and expensive process . To save time and materials , and thus increase production , construction of the MP 40 receiver was simplified by using stamped steel and electro @-@ spot welding as much as possible . The MP 38 also features longitudinal grooving on the receiver and bolt , as well as a circular opening on the magazine housing . These features were eliminated on the MP 40 .

One unique feature found on most MP 38 and MP 40 submachine guns was an aluminum , steel , or bakelite resting bar or support under the barrel . This was used to steady the weapon when firing over the side of open @-@ top armored personnel carriers such as the Sdkfz 251 half @-@ track . A handguard , made of a synthetic material derived from bakelite , was located between the magazine housing and the pistol grip . The barrel lacked any form of insulation , which often resulted in burns on the supporting hand if it was incorrectly positioned . The MP 40 also had a forward @-@ folding metal stock , the first for a submachine gun , resulting in a shorter overall weapon when folded . However , this stock design was at times insufficiently durable for hard combat use .

Although the MP 40 was generally reliable , a major weakness was its 32 @-@ round magazine .

Unlike the double @-@ column , dual @-@ feed magazine insert found on the Thompson M1921 @-@ 28 variants , the MP 40 used a double @-@ column , single @-@ feed insert . The single @-@ feed insert resulted in increased friction against the remaining cartridges moving upwards towards the feed lips , occasionally resulting in feed failures ; this problem was exacerbated by the presence of dirt or other debris . Another problem was that the magazine was also sometimes misused as a handhold . This could cause the weapon to malfunction when hand pressure on the magazine body caused the magazine lips to move out of the line of feed , since the magazine well did not keep the magazine firmly locked . German soldiers were trained to grasp either the handhold on the underside of the weapon or the magazine housing with the supporting hand to avoid feed malfunctions .

= = Usage = =

At the outbreak of World War II , the majority of German soldiers carried either Karabiner 98k rifles or MP 40s , both of which were regarded as the standard weapons of choice for an infantryman .

However , later experience with Soviet tactics , such as the Battle of Stalingrad where entire Russian units armed with submachine guns outgunned their German counterparts in short range urban combat , caused a shift in tactics , and by the end of the war the MP 40 and its derivatives were being issued to entire assault platoons on a limited basis . Starting in 1943 , the German Army moved to replace both the Karabiner 98k rifle and MP 40 with the new , revolutionary StG 44 . By the end of World War II (which ended in 1945) , an estimated 1 @.@ 1 million MP 40s had been produced of all variants .

= = = Post @-@ war usage = = =

During and after the end of World War II , many MP 40s were captured or surrendered (upwards of 200 @,@ 000) to the Allies and were then redistributed to the paramilitary and irregular forces of some developing countries . The Norwegian army withdrew the MP 38 in 1975 , MP 40 was used for some years more , the territorials (Heimevernet) used it until about 1990 , when it was replaced by Heckler & Koch MP5 .

= = Variants = =

= = = Lanchester = = =

After the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 , the British Armed Forces wanted to adopt a submachine gun similar to the MP 40 . The Royal Air Force sent a request to the Ministry of Supply for 10 @,@ 000 British @-@ made copies of the MP 40 , but eventually they settled on a copy of the MP 28 , known as the Lanchester .

= = = MP 41 = = =

In 1943 , Schmeisser designed the MP 41 , which was in reality an MP 40 with a wooden rifle stock and a selector , identical to those found on the earlier MP 28 submachine gun . It saw limited service , however , and was only issued to SS and police units in 1944 . The MP 41 was also supplied to Germany 's Axis ally Romania .

= = Operators = =

During World War II , anti @-@ Nazi resistance fighters and Allied soldiers sometimes captured MP40s to replace or supplement their own weapons .

The MP 40 was used for several decades following World War II by many countries around the

world in armed conflicts . Captured MP40s found their way into guerrilla groups such as the Viet Cong or African guerrillas .

Austria
Bulgaria
China
Czechoslovakia
France
Greece
Hungary
Indonesia
Israel
South Korea
Malaysia
Nazi Germany
Norway
Poland
Romania
Soviet Union (Captured MP @-@ 40s were used by Soviet partisans and others .)
Spain
Vietnam
West Germany
Yugoslavia

= = = Printed = = =

= = = Online = = =