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## Military Small Arms of the 20th Century

*Ian V. Hogg, John S. Weeks*

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**Ian V. Hogg, John S. Weeks : Military Small Arms of the 20th Century** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Military Small Arms of the 20th Century:

26 of 29 people found the following review helpful. Overestimated and superficial, definitely no encyclopediBy Alexander EichenerThe first edition of this book, published in 1973, was also one of the first gun books I ever owned. I must have consulted it innumerable times since then - and yet I remember vividly that even at that distant time, as a boy, I felt vaguely disappointed whenever I closed it and had to put it back onto the shelf. This work has been quite a commercial success, and I am now reviewing the (previous and out-of-print) 6th edition from 1991; the 7th edition 2000 will have to be reviewed separately, in order to determine whether it will indeed offer more than a few singular additions and omissions, given how little the basic format and style have evolved or improved from the first to the sixth edition through eighteen years. Weeks and Hogg have set out to give a fairly brief, comprehensive overview of the 20th century's military small arms. The book is divided into five main subjects groups: pistols (meaning handguns in general and thus including revolvers), 71 pp.; bolt action rifles, 52 pp.; automatic rifles (comprising semi-auto and full-auto rifles alike), 56 pp.; submachineguns: 69 pp.; machineguns, 74 pp.; anti-tank rifles, 6 pp. Within each section, the entries are listed by country and then by year of military acceptance. The book is illustrated throughout with black-and-white photographs and some drawings; it averages two illustrations per page. The quality of these images ranks between average and - frequently - very low (these latter are mostly blotted and dark, occasionally too light); pictures have definitely deteriorated since the first edition, not improved. Furthermore, arms are not infrequently photographed

from an unbecoming angle which makes identification and comparison with others difficult. A number of images (mostly in the "pistols" section) are too large and give away valuable space unnecessarily. A bibliography (even a small basic one, which would help a novice) is lacking totally; equally absent are short introductory sections which would acquaint the - often uninitiated - reader with the development of small arms in the 20th century and with the basic principles of firearms operation (such sections were still present in the 1st edition, though of questionable quality). For a layman or a young student, both of which are most likely to consult this book, the many short name-dropping textual references to "delayed blowback", "toggle action", "primary extraction" will thus remain cryptical in spite of the brief explanatory glossary on pp. 339-344; clarifying drawings lack almost totally. As previous reviewers of another edition have noted (in a rather charitable and tactful way), the authors' choice of entries is ill-balanced and lacks judgement. The book is literally teeming with many quaint and little-used prototypes and experimental guns which were never accepted into military service, while important and mass-produced first-line firearms, which have shaped military and general history, are often treated just briefly, and are not infrequently misrepresented. The authors lack even a basic sense of historical weight distribution, and the unhappy reader is thus covered under a deluge of incoherent and irrelevant information factoids. E.g., the mushrooming irrelevant subvariants of the Canadian Ross rifles, or manifold Dutch Mannlicher carbine submodels are listed in tiring detail over pages, while most important small arms as the German MG 42 and StGew 44, or the Belgian FN-Browning GP 35 (Highpower), or the Soviet AK 47 Kalashnikov are brushed off in a terse paragraph. Furthermore, the accompanying texts are very unreliable; errors abound and mostly have not been corrected. While any general comprehensive work is bound to show some flaws and occasional shortcomings - as every reviewer will fairly allow for -, its quality is infinitely lower than Edward C(linton) Ezell's "Small Arms of the World" (12th ed. 1983) or John Walter's "Military Bolt Action Rifles of the World" (2nd ed. 1998), let alone a thorough technical treatise as Frank De Haas' fine, though thematically much more limited "Bolt Action Rifles" (3rd ed. 1995). The authors mix technical tidbits of little interest with general rumours, tired old wives' tales and sweeping judgements devoid of actual experience. The targeted readership is highly likely to be misinformed and misled by such a book with boldly claims to be an "encyclopedia" - but it is not even an enchiridion, not even a comprehensive basic reference text for a first approach. Even the smallest school and communal libraries would do their readers a disservice if they contemplate this book as a basic part of the (necessarily limited) gunbooks section; they should rather opt for Ezell (see above), if only one work could be acquired.

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Truly complete in scope and depth of detailed information  
By declan\_mcnally@juno.com  
This is a thorough introduction to the world of personal military firearms. In it, the authors describe each and every pistol, revolver, rifle, machine gun, and sub-machine gun produced for military use by every country in the world during this century. The text is sprinkled with historical notes, giving readers a sense of each weapon's place in history. Descriptions are fairly detailed, including calibers, rates of fire, muzzle velocities, and a concise explanation of each weapon's firing action. This book is the best place to begin learning seriously about military small arms, their uses, and their historical significance.

8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. An indispensable reference work.  
By A Customer  
Ian Hogg, one of the most knowledgeable arms experts in the world, continues to update and refine this definitive work in this 6th edition. More than a technical reference or photo album, the text reveals fascinating historical data and trivia on military weapons from around the world, shedding light on how, and sometimes why, military weapons evolved. The layout makes locating a particular weapon quick and easy, and Hogg's style makes reading enjoyable.