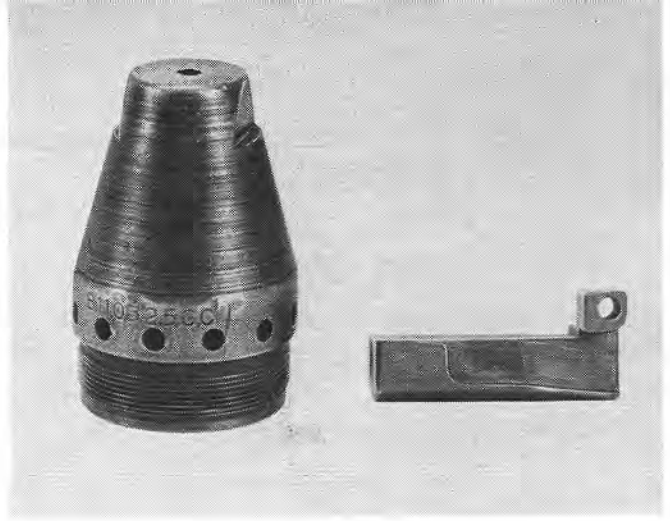
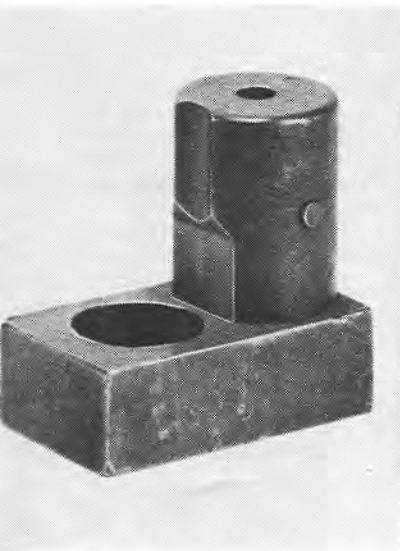


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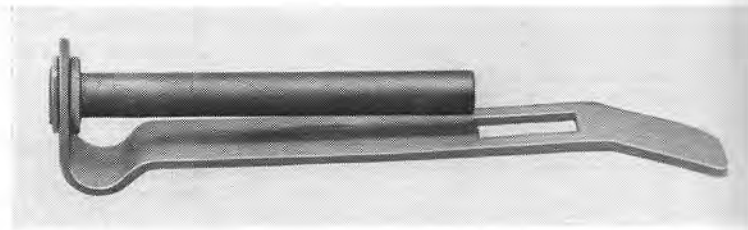
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BLANK FIRING ATTACHMENTS

Devices used to provide realistic simulated fire for military training

By JOHN C. SCHAEFER

BLANK firing attachments, often called adapters, are a little-known firearms accessory, primarily used on military weapons to provide realistic simulated fire during training. They also find wide use in motion pictures.

Blank ammunition does not generate enough pressure or recoil to operate the action of an autoloading weapon directly. Blank firing adapters make it possible for blank ammunition to operate the weapon. In blowback and gas-operated weapons, the blank firing attachment merely restricts the bore sufficiently to raise the pressure to functioning level. In recoil-operated weapons the problem is more difficult since the recoiling parts must be pushed back

with operating force. It is solved by attaching the restricting blank attachment to the barrel jacket, so that the resulting pressure is applied to the muzzle and breech faces, simulating recoil forces.

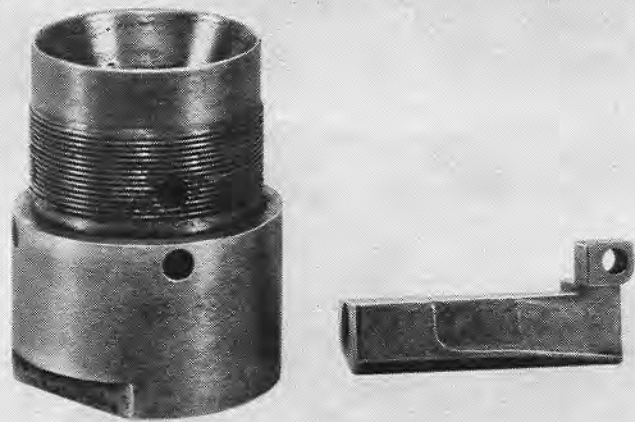
Blank firing adapters have long been used on machine guns. The blank firing attachment for the recoil-operated M1917A1 Browning water-cooled machine gun (Fig. 1), screws on over the muzzle in place of the barrel bushing. For the M1919A4 and M1919A6 machine guns, the attachments (Figs. 2 & 3) mount on the barrel jacket in place of the barrel bushing. The blank attachment for the gas-operated M60 machine gun (Fig. 4) is simply a restrictive tube which enters the bore a

short distance, and a clamp assembly which fastens around the front sight.

Because blank cartridges are usually shorter than their respective live rounds, they present a feeding problem in many belt-fed weapons. To counter this difficulty, a device called a cartridge stop is placed in the feedway to hold the shorter blank cartridge in the proper position for feeding. The cartridge stop, since it will admit only the blank cartridge, also serves to prevent the use of live ammunition.

The cartridge stops for the Browning series of machine guns are shown in the illustrations of their respective blank attachments.

No cartridge stop for the M60 ma-



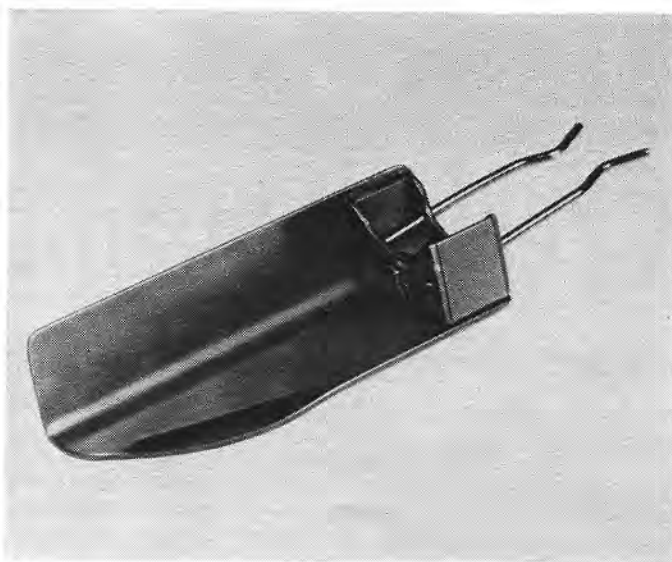
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chine gun has been developed, and the present standard 7.62 mm. blank, the M82, is made with an extended bullet-shaped neck in order to feed properly. A blank cartridge similar in shape to the cal. .30 M1909 blank has been made and, if a cartridge stop should be designed for the M60, this shorter blank might be adopted because it costs much less to manufacture.

The blank firing attachment for the M1 Garand rifle fastens on the muzzle in place of the gas cylinder lock, and is held in place by the gas cylinder lock screw. Two examples are shown (Figs. 5 & 6). Makeshift blank adapters have also been made from the M7 grenade launching tube by grinding off the gas relief stud, plugging the front of the tube with a weld, and drilling the proper size gas relief hole (Fig. 7).

The Blank Firing Attachment M12 for the M14 rifle (Fig. 8) is simply a small restrictive tube which fits through the flash suppressor and enters the bore a short distance. It is fastened to the weapon by a sheet-metal strap which clips onto the bayonet lug. The reason for this method of fastening is that

should a live round be accidentally fired, the strap will shear off with minimal damage and danger.

There is no U. S. blank cartridge for the M1 carbine. The M6 grenade launching blank was authorized for use as a blank cartridge, but no blank firing attachment for it was adopted. However, a blank cartridge made of red plastic and a blank firing adapter are made in Holland by *Nederland Wapen und Munitiefabriek (NWM)* for the M1 carbine (Fig. 9). The adapter fastens around the front sight, and is held in place by a spring detent. NWM also makes a breech shield for the M1 carbine (Fig. 10). This is a sheet metal guard which snaps over the breech, and serves to protect the firer from being injured if, after prolonged firing of blank ammunition, some of the unburned powder collected in the breech should ignite. It is similar to the Breech Shield M3 for the M14 rifle.

The blank firing attachment for the Browning Automatic Rifle (Fig. 11) replaces the flash hider and bipod bearing assembly.

The blank firing adapter for the Rus-

sian Tokarev rifle (Fig. 12) screws into the muzzle brake in place of its end cap, and butts against the muzzle face.

Blank firing adapters used in the motion picture industry usually are fixed permanently inside the barrel so the weapon appears normal. This is practical since ball ammunition is never fired. Recoil-operated pistols, such as the Luger and the .45 automatic, are usually reworked to operate by blow-back alone, and then the bore is sufficiently restricted to provide operating pressures with blank ammunition.

Because there is no bullet to offer resistance to the burning powder in blank ammunition, the powder must be fast burning. Blank fire powders, such as the EC powder which has been loaded in .30-'06 blanks, and the commercial blank fire powders which may contain flash powder, react violently when confined. For this reason, one should not attempt to make blank firing adapters unless one is thoroughly familiar with their construction. For the same reason one should not attempt to make blank ammunition by taking the powder from other blank ammunition. ■