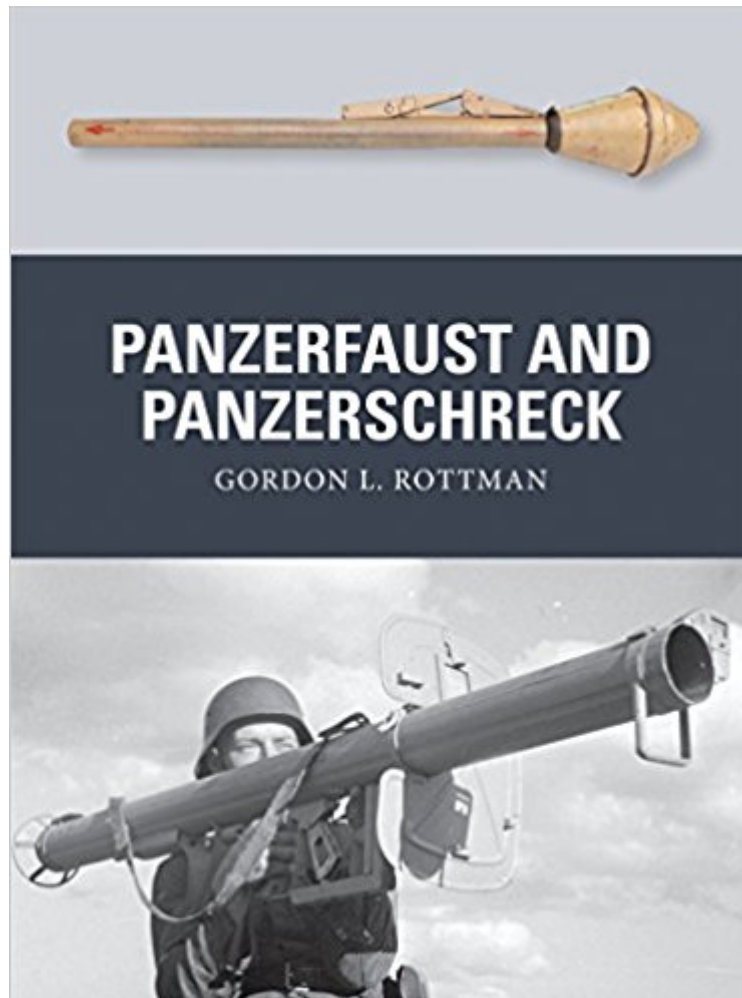




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Panzerfaust And Panzerschreck (Weapon)



Synopsis

These lethal man-portable anti-tank weapons enabled Wehrmacht infantry to destroy T-34 and Sherman tanks. Written by an expert on anti-tank warfare, this book reveals the fascinating development history of the Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck and assesses the tactics that were employed by the soldiers using these two feared weapons. Two of World War II's most distinctive weapons, the Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck offered German and other infantrymen the ability to destroy enemy tanks singlehandedly at close range. While the Panzerschreck owed its origins largely to the US bazooka, the Panzerfaust was a revolutionary design that was unlike any previous weapon, and went on to influence anti-tank technology and tactics for decades after World War II. Germany had begun World War II with several inadequate antitank weapons for infantry use, supplemented by improvised and captured weapons and, from 1942, a hand-delivered 3kg antitank shaped charge. As the fortunes of war turned against Germany, what was desperately needed was an antitank weapon that allowed the individual soldier to destroy a tank. The first effort to field such a weapon began with the Faustpatrone 43, a handheld short tube with a propellant charge and an over-caliber, shaped-charge warhead; it was the first of the Panzerfaust ("armor fist") series of anti-tank weapons. The warhead was propelled by a launcher cartridge. The sights were extremely crude, but more sophisticated sights were unnecessary owing to the short ranges and the fact that tanks were large targets. Panzerfaust models were designated by two- or three-digit numbers indicating their approximate range in meters. The reloadable Panzerfaust 250 was under development at the war's end, as was an anti-personnel high-explosive-fragmentation projectile. The Panzerfaust was not manned by a dedicated crew but was issued to individuals. Training was extremely simple and given in the form of a lecture and demonstrations, often without even any live fire. German propaganda made much of the Panzerfaust capable of being used by Hitler Youth teenagers, old men of the Volkssturm and other civilians. Over eight million Panzerfauste of all types were produced, and they became as widely used as hand grenades. They proved to be comparatively effective against tanks and other armored fighting vehicles, as well as fortifications and buildings. Allied troops, notably Soviet forces, made widespread use of captured Panzerfauste, and they were also supplied to German allies such as Finland, Hungary, and Bulgaria. The Germans provided the Japanese with examples and plans for the Panzerfaust and they went on to develop their own reloadable and very different version called the 45mm Type 5 recoilless anti-tank weapon; it was to be used to defend the Home Islands.

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Customer Reviews

Gordon L. Rottman entered the US Army in 1967, volunteered for Special Forces, and completed training as a weapons specialist. He served in the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam in 1969-70 and subsequently in airborne infantry, long-range patrol and intelligence assignments until retiring after 26 years. He was a Special Operations Forces scenario writer at the Joint Readiness Training Center for 12 years and is now a freelance writer, living in Texas. The author lives in Texas, USA.

This book is a must have for the scale modeler as well as military historians. The book is a comprehensive explanation of the history, development and use of Germany's most prevalent anti-tank weapons, the Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck. When you finish this book you will know all about these weapons, something that has always been a quasi-mystery to me in the past. This will add a special depth to the high quality photographs that typify Rottman's works. For the scale modeler, this book is invaluable. The color plates show detailed cross sections of the weapons as well as full color renderings so you will know exactly what color to paint, where to place decals and what the aiming devices look like in detail. The Panzerschreck illustrations were like I have never seen before. The black and white photographs are high quality and show the weapons being carried, loaded, aimed and fired. There is a bonus section on precursors to these weapons that has some very good photographs, many of which I had never seen before. A 4 page reprint of the Panzerfaust 100 issued January 1945 is included and is of high quality and easily readable (in German of course). I have been studying military history and German weapons all my life; there was always a

paucity of information, usually sketchy or incomplete on the Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck weapons until now! The book also explains the influence these weapons had on post war developments including the US M72 LAW and the Soviet RPG 1 and 2. Johnny Shumate has also included some superb action illustrations that would be worthy of framing. They are so rich in accurate detail that they alone serve as painting guides for scale modelers. Rottman is a retired Special Forces weapons expert with over 26 years in the military and as such offers a very deep and thorough understanding of these weapons and their deployment.

Like all militaries of the 1930s the German Army underestimated the need for a cheap but effective anti-tank weapon which gave the soldier a fighting chance of stopping the armored beasts. Anti-tank guns were either light, which meant they didn't pack enough of a punch to destroy the newer tanks, or too heavy, which meant that they were often unable to set up in defensive positions or were too easy to spot. The panzerfaust and the panzerschreck turned out to be some of the most effective antitank weapons developed during the war. A fascinating book, this volume of the Weapon series gives insight into the two systems development, tactical employment and future influence on antitank weapons. Well illustrated with photos and original artwork.

“Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck” is Osprey Publishing’s 36th entry in its “Weapon Series”, where to quote from Osprey’s website, they present “the most important, famous and infamous weapons throughout history” (examining) the full story of each weapon, beginning with its design and development, following through its operational history, and finally analyzing its impact on warfare and violence. This book, as typical for the series, is 80 pages long and contains over 70 period pictures and illustrations, as well as charts, tables, and so on. Author Gordon Rottman does a very good job of covering both the Panzerfaust (designed as a cheap, single use, throwaway rocket-propelled anti-tank weapon) and the Panzerschreck (a German built weapon based very heavily on the American bazooka) from inception through the end of the war and beyond. He covers both types clearly and lays out how each was used by the Germans, and details the changes to both as the war progressed. For example, one interesting fact I didn’t know was that the Germans developed seasonally adjusted propellant charges for the Panzerschreck, as the propellant was very sensitive to temperature. The aforementioned color illustrations and black and white photos were also excellent and many give good details that will be useful to modelers. These weapons were built in huge numbers, particularly the Panzerfaust, and were important in that they gave the beleaguered

German infantrymen a better way of defending themselves from enemy tanks. (Until these weapons were deployed, individual infantrymen typically had to either place a charge directly on the tank or use other, near-suicidal methods.) The Panzerfaust was also useful against concrete, masonry, log, and sand structures, due to its large high-explosive warhead. Overall, these weapons were far from perfect (as shown in the book), and the local situation had to be bad for them to be used at all. But they gave the infantrymen a fighting chance, so to speak, when faced with enemy armor. I recommend this book. Four stars.

I like the Osprey series of books and have a number of them. The price is right and they contain the right amount of information for me for intended use which is just general information and curiosity. If you are looking for an in depth study or are a collector, you will need to look elsewhere for reference material. If you want some general information with good pictures and close up drawings, then you will be pleased with these books. I gave them a five star because I get exactly what I was looking for. I love the Panzerfaust and really enjoyed getting this book.

Very well written, with attention to context and details. The description of the desperate circumstances necessitating close quarters anti tank weapons and the inexperienced hands the weapons were often thrust into is gritty. The organization of the weapon teams and how the ammunition was doled out in the late stages of the war brings home the desperation and scarcity of even defensive equipment for the German Army. It was fascinating how the author recounts even the colour scheme and labelling of the panzerfausts at the various stages of the war.

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