

# SALW Guide

Global distribution and visual  
identification



## MG 3 / MG 42

Fact sheet

<https://salw-guide.bicc.de>

## MG 3 / MG 42



The MG is a short-recoil operated, air cooled, belt fed weapon which fires from an open bolt. The barrel is quick-removable, and can be replaced in less than six seconds by a properly trained crew. The action of the weapon is

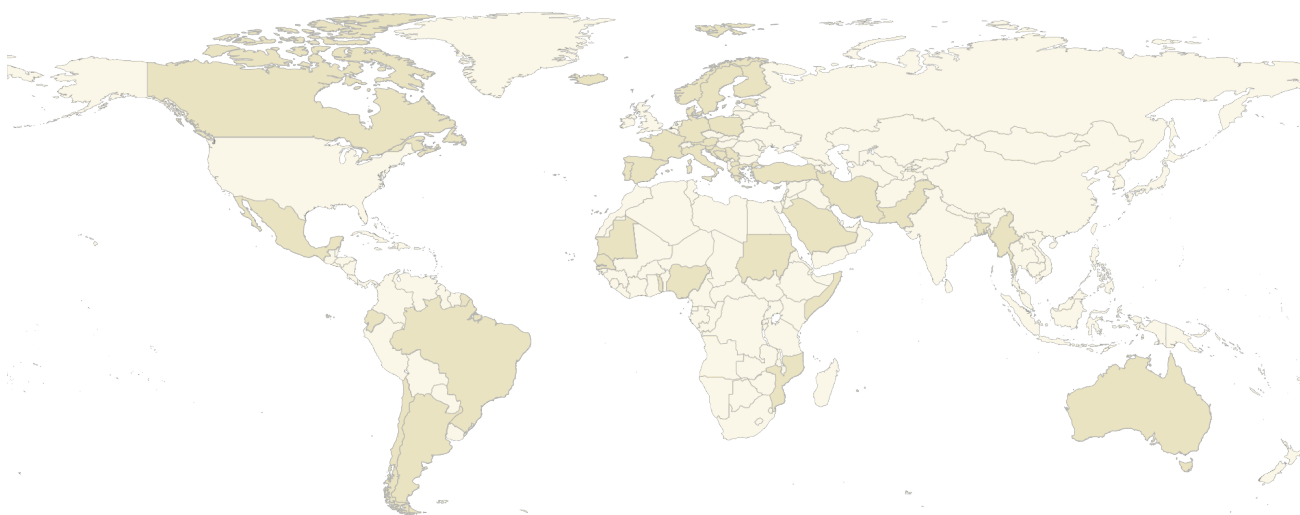
operated by the recoil of the locked barrel, assisted by a muzzle booster which uses pressure from the muzzle blast to increase the recoil impulse. This is a simple and solid system. Variants: MG 1: Rheinmetall variant of the MG 42, most notably rechambered to fire 7.62×51mm NATO. MG 1A1 (MG 42/58): As MG 1, but with sights properly calibrated for the new round. Sights refitted to existing MG 1s. MG 1A2 (MG 42/59): MG 1A1 variant; product improved with longer ejection port, heavy bolt and friction ring buffer. MG 1A3: MG 1A2 variant; product improvement of all major components. MG 1A4: MG 1 variant; for fixed mount armor use. MG 1A5: MG 1A3 variant; MG1A3s converted to MG1A4 standard. MG 2: Designation for all wartime MG 42s rechambered to 7.62×51mm NATO. MG 3: MG 1A3 variant; product improved with AA rear sight. MG 3E: MG 3 variant; reduced weight model (roughly 1.3 kg lighter), entered into late 1970s NATO small arms trials. MG 3A1: MG 3 variant; for fixed mount armor use.

## Technical Specifications

<b>Category</b>	<i>Light Machine Guns</i>
<b>Operating system</b>	recoil-operated, roller locked
<b>Cartridge</b>	
<b>Length</b>	mm
<b>Feeding</b>	belt fed

## Global distribution map

The data on global distribution and production is provided primarily by the *BwVC*<sup>1</sup>, but also from national and regional focal points on SALW control; data published by think tanks, international organizations and experts; and/or data provided by individual researchers on SALW. It is not exhaustive. If you would like to add to or amend the data, please use the website's feedback function.












## Global distribution list

The **MG 3 / MG 42** is found in **44** countries according to our data.

Argentina (ARG)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Australia (AUS)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Austria (AUT)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bangladesh (BGD)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brazil (BRA)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Canada (CAN)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauritania (MRT)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mexico (MEX)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Montenegro (MNE)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mozambique (MOZ)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myanmar/Burma (MMR)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nigeria (NGA)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Norway (NOR)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>1</sup>. *Bundeswehr Verification Center*

Cape Verde (CPV)		U
Chile (CHL)		U
Croatia (HRV)		U
Cyprus (CYP)		U
Denmark (DNK)		U
Ecuador (ECU)		U
Estonia (EST)		U
Finland (FIN)		U
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MKD)		U
France (FRA)		U
Germany (DEU)		U
Greece (GRC)		U
Iceland (ISL)		U
Iran (IRN)		U
Italy (ITA)		U

Pakistan (PAK)		U
Poland (POL)		U
Portugal (PRT)		U
Saudi Arabia (SAU)		U
Senegal (SEN)		U
Serbia (SRB)		U
Slovenia (SVN)		U
Somalia (SOM)		U
South Sudan (SSD)		U
Spain (ESP)		U
Sudan (SDN)		U
Sweden (SWE)		U
São Tomé and Príncipe (STP)		U
Togo (TGO)		U
Turkey (TUR)		U

## Explanation of symbols



Country of origin



Licensed production



Production without a licence



*Government:* Sources indicate that this type of weapon is held by Governmental agencies.



*Non-Government:* Sources indicate that this type of weapon is held by non-Governmental armed groups.



*Unspecified:* Sources indicate that this type of weapon is found in the country, but do not specify whether it is held by Governmental agencies or non-Governmental armed groups.

It is entirely possible to have a combination of tags beside each country. For example, if country X is tagged with a G and a U, it means that at least one source of data identifies Governmental agencies as holders of weapon type Y, and at least one other source confirms the presence of the weapon in country X without specifying who holds it.

**Note:** This application is a living, non-comprehensive database, relying to a great extent on active contributions (provision and/or validation of data and information) by either SALW experts from the military and international renowned think tanks or by national and regional focal points of small arms control entities.

## Visual Identification

Characteristics  Markings

*MG 3 / MG 42*  
131/lv-01-300w.jpg  
left view, mounted on a bipod

*MG 3 / MG 42*  
131/lv-02-300w.jpg  
left view, mounted on a tripod

*MG 3 / MG 42*  
131/rv-01-300w.jpg  
right view

## Ammunition

The following ammunition can be used by the **MG 3 / MG 42**.

No information available.

# Annex

## Tagging of Sources

We believe that our Guide should be as transparent as possible without endangering the confidentiality of our sources. Rather than name the exact source for each unit of data, we have created tags so that users can at least know whether the data comes from a primary or secondary source, and by which medium it can or has been found. All incoming data is validated and then tagged by the project team at BICC before it enters our database.

Sources are tagged according to the following criteria:

### 1. Primary Sources:

These are presentations of facts. They are proof of an SALW event (e.g. a transfer, sighting, misuse, etc.) because the source was created at the time of the event itself. Primary sources are usually original documents such as transfer authorizations, firearms legislation, or academic journals presenting results of a study on SALW holdings in a particular country, for example. However, they can also be information offered by a person with direct knowledge of an SALW event or who has documented an SALW event at the time that it happened.

### 2. Secondary Sources:

These are interpretations or evaluation of facts. Secondary sources contain commentary and analysis of SALW events that are documented in primary sources.

Sources are also tagged according to the dominant medium of delivery:

**A. Written** - the source is based on written words.

**B. Oral** - the source is based on spoken words.

**C. Visual** - the source is based on seen events or optical images.

These criteria make our tags two-dimensional. While the process of classifying sources is a primarily subjective one, the project team at BICC has developed the following table to serve as an example of possible sources within each category.

**Table: Examples of sources on SALW distribution**

	Primary	Secondary
--	---------	-----------



<b>Written</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact books</li> <li>• Weapons Transfer authorizations</li> <li>• End-user certificates</li> <li>• Transcripts of interviews, legal proceedings, speeches/ presentations, meetings, conferences or symposia</li> <li>• Newspaper articles</li> <li>• Written correspondence (e.g. letters, emails, text messages, etc.)</li> <li>• Blogs</li> <li>• Peer-reviewed journal articles</li> <li>• Treaties, constitution, laws</li> <li>• Records of organizations (e.g. annual reports)</li> <li>• Surveys, questionnaires</li> </ul> <p>Etc...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wikipedia</li> <li>• Literature reviews</li> <li>• Training or safety manuals on gun control, ammunition, physical stockpile security management)</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings, conferences, symposia</li> <li>• Indexes (e.g. Global Militarization Index)</li> <li>• Newspaper articles</li> </ul> <p>Etc.</p>
<b>Oral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with experts, including radio or telephone</li> <li>• Legal proceedings</li> <li>• Speeches or interventions by experts or national representatives in government or international meetings</li> </ul> <p>Etc ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeches, panel presentations, etc. on data provided by experts</li> </ul> <p>Etc...</p>
<b>Visual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artifacts (e.g. the weapons themselves, ammunition)</li> <li>• Photographs of weapons, ammunition, etc.</li> <li>• Videos (e.g. YouTube, those recorded by mobile phone)</li> <li>• Television documentaries, news reports</li> </ul> <p>Etc ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentations on results found by experts</li> </ul> <p>Etc...</p>

**Table: Example tags**

<b>Source (sample)</b>	<b>Type of source</b>	<b>Medium of delivery</b>
IHS Jane's Weapons Infantry (2015-2016)	primary	written
Panel discussion of weapons use of non-state armed groups	secondary	oral
Documentary on paramilitaries in Colombia	primary	visual

## About the Guide

The Interactive Guide on **Small Arms and Light Weapons** is an open access tool, designed to build knowledge on how to identify different types, makes and models of commonly used SALW in organized violence; to collect data on the global and country-specific spread of these SALW; and to describe some of their visual and technical specifications.

The guide is not an exhaustive list of all SALW that are used around the world.

Global SALW control relies on, among other things, data and knowledge of the weapons themselves. Our aim is that the Guide will be used to support national reporting duties on SALW holdings; facilitate and ameliorate the collection of data on SALW; and increase general knowledge of global distribution of SALW.

The interactive Guide was developed by **BICC** in close cooperation with the **Bundeswehr Verification Center** (BwVC), and with the generous support of the *Federal Foreign Office, Germany*.

## Contact

### **Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC) gGmbH**

Joseph Farha  
 Project Coordinator  
 Pfarrer-Byns-Str. 1  
 53121 Bonn  
 Germany

E-Mail: joseph.farha@bicc.de  
Internet: www.bicc.de

**Zentrum für Verifikationsaufgaben der Bundeswehr (ZVBw) - Bundeswehr  
Verification Center (BwVC)**

Global Arms- and Proliferation Control Division  
Major Laurentius Wedeniwski  
Selfkant-Kaserne  
Rue de Quimperle 100  
52511 Geilenkirchen  
E-Mail: LaurentiusWedeniwski@bundeswehr.org

## Overall project coordination

Joseph Farha  
Project Coordinator  
Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC)

**Responsible for all content (including photos):**

Zentrum für Verifikationsaufgaben der Bundeswehr (ZVBw) - Bundeswehr Verification Center.  
Major Laurentius Wedeniwski: Small Arms and Light Weapons Guide (2016).

**Responsible for design, editorial and technical implementation:**

Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC) gGmbH.  
Technical management: Joseph Farha  
Programming: Rolf Alberth