

# Deadly Weapons of the Great War

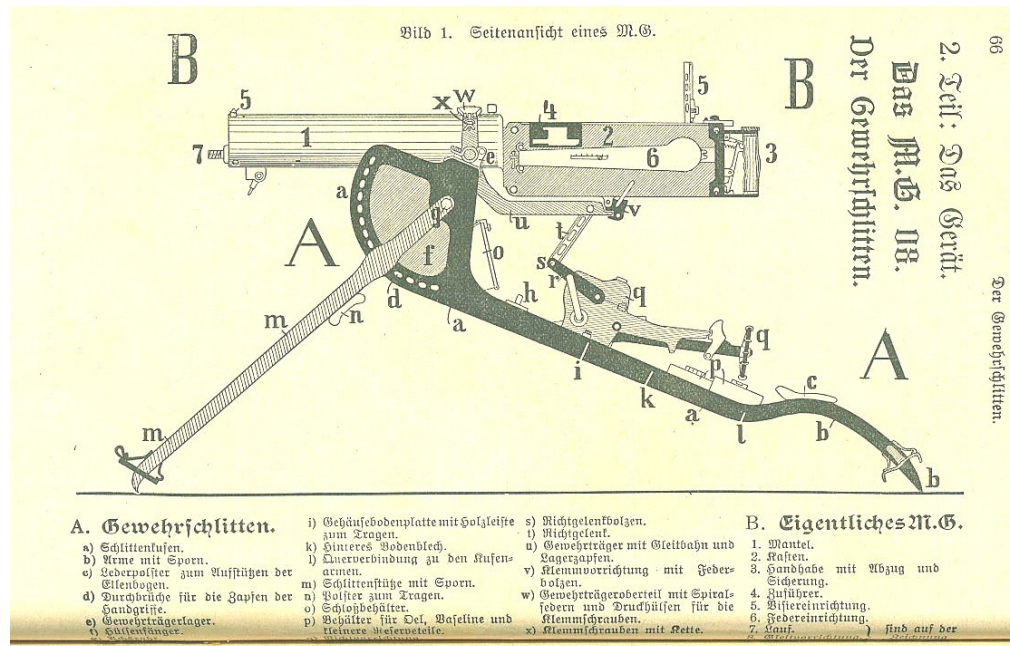
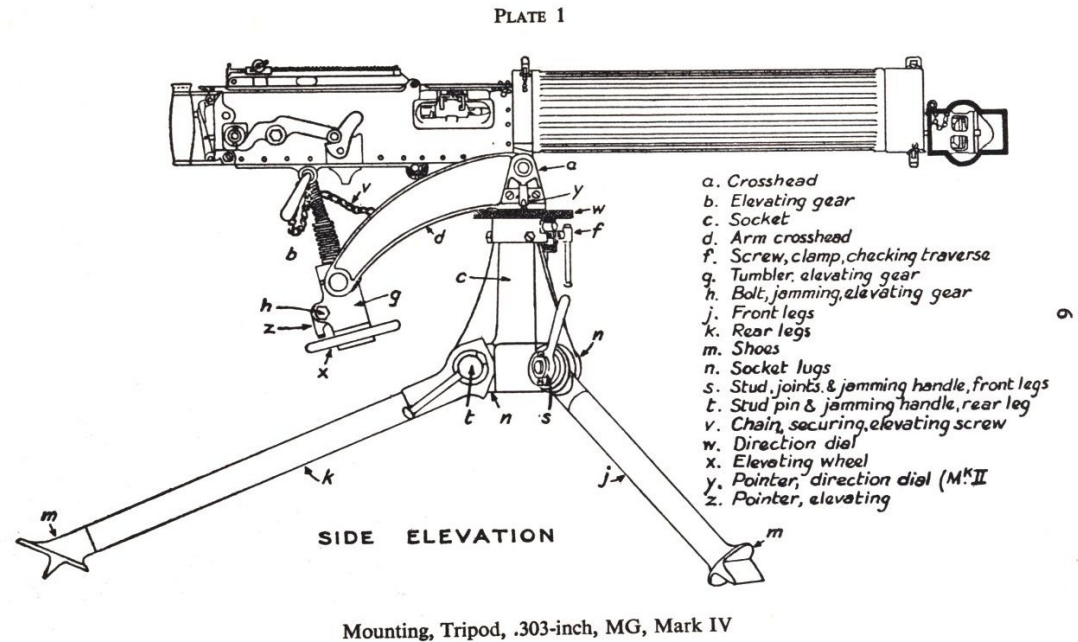
(Gorham Modern American History)

## The Machine-Gun

The **Maschinengewehr 08** (MG-08) was the standard German machine gun of WWI. It fired 450-600 rounds of 7.92mm bullets per minute. Due to overheating, the barrel was encased in a larger cylinder of cool water.

The **British Vickers .303** (7.7mm) had a reputation for reliability. Ian V. Hogg, in *Weapons & War Machines*, describes an action that took place in August 1916, during which the British 100th Company of the Machine Gun Corps fired their ten Vickers guns continuously for twelve hours. Using 100 barrels, they fired a million rounds without a failure.

Machine guns required a crew: gunner, ammo feeder, and men to carry extra ammunition, the gun and spare parts.



"September -. The attack is violent on the outside; we remain close together, man to man, inundated by the shell from the French artillery. It is a fire of hell." ~ German soldier, Battle of the Marne, 1914

**Artillery.** Responsible for more deaths than the machine gun, artillery was the deadliest weapon of WWI. The increased lethality was due to improvements in materials, gun design, range and ammunition. Time-fused shells and impact-detonated shells exploded irregular pieces of shrapnel in all directions at high speed. Toxic gas shells were also fired. Some giant guns could hurl projectiles so far that crews had to take into account the rotation of the earth when plotting their fire. Among smaller field guns, the French 75mm cannon (below) developed a reputation among their German opponents as the "Devil Gun." Crewed by several men and drawn by a team of six horses, French commanders claimed the *soixante-quinze* won the war. **OTHER DEADLY WEAPONS:** better rifles, mortars, flamethrowers, poison gas. (Tanks and military aircraft NOT PERFECTED YET.)

