

PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank Mk I) - Infantry Weapons



The PIAT was the standard rocket-propelled system for British infantry in World War 2.

History: The PIAT Mk I (or Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank Mk I) system was the principle anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launcher for the United Kingdom throughout World War 2. The system was highly respected for its armor-defeating capabilities but suffered from being excessively heavy and needing a two man crew to operate effectively. Nevertheless, the PIAT proved to be more effective than her American (Bazooka series) and German (Panzerfaust series) counterparts, with the PIAT sporting a grenade capable of defeating contemporary armor of the time and a launcher capable of launching multiple munitions types.

The PIAT differed from the aforementioned systems in that it relied on a large and powerful spring-type action to launch and ignite the rocket propellant of the inserted grenade. The weapon was operated by two personnel in a similar fashion as was the American Bazooka, with a firer and a loader. The firer or loader would drop the grenade into the open-top "trough" located to the front of the main spring - which generally required the use of two men to cock. The firer would then aim and fire the weapon at enemy armor, activating the large spring of the PIAT, which in turn would activate the grenade's rocket propellant - a basic point and shoot exercise. The PIAT was also designed to fire smoke and high explosive rounds, differing it all the more from other rocket propelled grenades of the time. Though classified as an anti-tank weapon, the PIAT (like most RPG's in this class) found considerable use in clearing out structures and also served as armament on armored carriers.

The PIAT served throughout the war with countless British forces and saw some use in the post-war years before being replaced altogether. The system proved to be easy to manufacture, which gave it a distinct edge in war time production and was relatively basic to operate - both advantageous when considering the amount of armor on the battlefield during the Second World War. The PIAT anti-tank system replaced the "Boys" anti-tank rifle in British Army service.

Basic Information:

Designation: PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank Mk I)
Type: Anti-Tank Rocket Launcher
Manufacturer: Various - UK
Country of Origin: United Kingdom
Operation: Spring Launcher; Repetitive Use
Caliber: Not Available
Service Year: 1941

Dimensions:

Overall Length: 3 ft 0 in (0.99 m)
Weight (Empty): 32.0 lbs
Weight (Loaded): 35.0 lbs

Performance:

Rate of Fire, Cyclic: Not Available
Magazine: 1
Maximum Range: 110 yards

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