

Weapons of world war 1 essay sample



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World War I introduced many of the weapons in our world today. Many of these weapons caused great destruction yet at the same time saved ours and many other countries. This essay describes in detail just a few of these powerful weapons.

Tank

The tank is a heavily armoured track-laying vehicle. It consists of an armour plate of about fifteen centimetres; mount cannons ranging from seventy-five to a hundred and twenty-two millimetres stored in the structure on the top of the tank called the turret. This turret rotates all the way around, 360 degrees, enabling the tank to fire in any direction. Tanks travel on two endless belts on either side these are known as tracks. These tracks contribute to the good mobility of tracks even in harsh conditions. A tank can weigh between fourteen to fifty-four tones. It has the cross mobility and speed up to 97 km/hr. A tank can climb and descend slopes up to thirty degrees. The tanks main role was to supply firepower whenever needed.

Originally the tank was made of steel however later on the new models were made armour as it seemed better suited and more efficient. Gasoline was the fuel first used for the running of the tank however like the armour diesel seemed better suited after a while. Each tank usually consists of a crew of three to five men and they generally carry weapons such as cannons, machine guns (both light and heavy) and missile launchers.

Tanks are classified light, medium and heavy. Light tanks are used for what is called reconnaissance, a survey to locate the enemy. While heavy tanks are mostly used in battle to penetrate the enemy.

At the beginning of World War I neither side possessed the tank. However trench warfare seemed to continue indefinitely with the most powerful weapon being the machine gun so Britain approved of the tank. To keep the secrecy the vehicles were shipped to the battle zone in a crate marked water tank, and this is where the name, tank, originated.

The tank was first used by Britain right in the midst of World War I in the battle of Somme, September 15 1916. The results were very disappointing. In November 1917, however, four hundred British tanks penetrated German lines near Cambrai capturing eight thousand enemy soldiers and one hundred guns.

Seems like the tank wasn't such a disappointing weapon after all!

Machine Gun

The first basic machine gun was developed in the 1500's. It consisted of several guns together in a bundle or sometimes spread in a row. The first successful machine gun, however, was a quick-fire gun and it appeared in the civil war (1861-1865).

A machine gun is a heavy hand held weapon. Ammunition is fed into the gun with a cloth or metal belt or from a cartridge called a magazine. Gun barrels range from size but are normally between 5.5 millimetres and 30 millimetres. Machine guns can fire from 400 to 1600 rounds of ammunition per minute. Machine guns are fired very rapidly and must be cooled by water and air.

Machine guns can be fired from both aircraft and ground. The ground weapon most used in World War One was the 7.62 millimetre M60 machine gun. This was a major infantry weapon. It was air-cooled and gas operated. It fired six hundred rounds per minute. The Browning machine gun replaced this gun.

There were many different types of aircraft machine guns introduced in World War One some of these include: Vickers, Maxim, Hotchkiss, Colt-martin Lewis. All these guns were used by mounting them on aeroplanes.

The World War I outbreak introduced many more different and much more powerful types of machine guns. Some designs from World War I include the Dreyse MG-13 (1918) a water-cooled machine gun modified to reduce weight. The Mauser machine gun, model 34 was also a design from World War I. It had a quick-change barrel and was belt fed. It had great firepower.

Flamethrower

The Flamethrower is a rather dangerous weapon that was introduced by the Germans in World War I. Man operates this weapon. Two tanks of fuel are strapped to the operator's back. Connected to these tanks is a long flexible tube with a nozzle on the end. A tank of compressed air provides pressure to squirt fuel through the gun. The Flamethrower shoots a stream of burning fuel through the nozzle similar to the way a hose squirts water.

The Flamethrower consists of many parts; a fuel container filled with oil, a cylinder containing a gas propellant (usually carbon dioxide) under high

pressure, a discharge tube with an adjustable nozzle and an ignition device. When ready to fire this weapon weighs about 30 kg.

Although the Flamethrower succeeded in frightening the enemy it was limited as a weapon. It had short range, and limited mobility. But if the fire reached the enemy the results were extremely destructive.

Submarine

A submarine is a vessel designed for both on the surface and under water operations. The submarine dates all the way back 2000 years. Although they weren't as technical or effective back then. Aristotle described a type of submarine chamber used in 332 BC. Sailors of Alexander the Great used this submarine.

The first successful use of the submarine was in 1620 by a Dutchman named Cornelis Drebbel. Around about 1975 an ex Yale student invented a small submarine known as the turtle. This submarine is very different to the ones we know today. The turtle is a one-man egg-shaped submarine driven by two hand crank screw propellers.

In 1850 the Germans, under careful supervision of the Barbarian Baveri, constructed the Sea Devil. This submarine supposedly made 130 diving's and had a large crew of about 14.

The first successful attack using the submarines was in the Civil War. Confederates built four submarines to use against the union fleet.

After the Civil War two designers concentrated on the further development on submarines. It was these two men who worked out the idea of submerging by negative energy, the same technology we use today.

Submarines had a little bit to do with why the United States was pushed into World War I; the Germans unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans were caught sinking allied ships, bombing merchant and passenger ships, killing both Britain and American citizens.

The success of submarines, particularly in World War I is what led the Germans to depth charges.