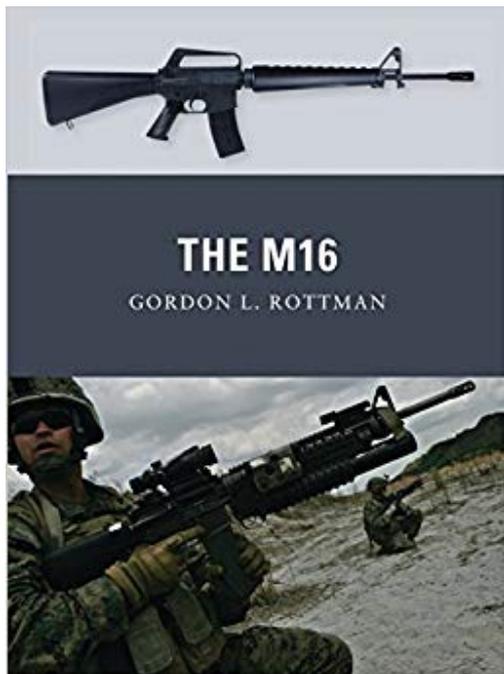


The M16 (Weapon) by Johnny Shumate, Alan Gilliland, Gordon L. Rottman



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The M16 was first introduced in 1958 and was revolutionary for its time as it was made of lightweight materials including special aluminium and plastics, which had previously not been used in mainstream weapons. It was first adopted by US Special Forces and airborne troops in 1962 before it was issued to Army and Marine units serving in the Vietnam War (1955-1975). Its use spread throughout the following decades and a number of variants including submachine and carbine versions were also fielded. It was not only the rifle itself that proved revolutionary. The 5.56x45mm cartridge was also ground-breaking and was eventually adopted as the standard NATO cartridge. As a result it is now amongst the three most used combat cartridges in the world while over 10 million M16s and variants have been produced making it one of the most successful American handheld weapons in history. But despite its undeniable success the M16 is not without its detractors. Indeed, the "black rifle", as it is known, is one of the most controversial rifles ever introduced with a long history of design defects, ruggedness issues, cleaning difficulties and reliability problems leading to endless technical refinements. The story is not over either. The M16 is still in production to this day ensuring that its use in future conflicts as well as its impact on world affairs is assured. This volume, written by a Vietnam Special Forces veteran, provides a technical history of the M16 and the struggle to perfect it together with an assessment of its impact on the battlefield drawing on over a decade's combat experience with the rifle.



Reviews of the [The M16 \(Weapon\)](#) by Johnny Shumate, Alan Gilliland, Gordon L. Rottman

- **Shezokha**

Typical of the Osprey series, this concise monograph is well illustrated using drawings, charts, diagrams, and artwork. Rottman covers the development of the AR-10 and AR-15 by Eugene Stoner, the acceptance of the .556 caliber weapon as the standard American military rifle, and follows up with the M-16's role in the development of modern small arms systems in use around the world. I was a little disappointed that he did not offer more detailed analysis of the "Black Rifle" controversy whereby haughty brass hats at first denied there problems, then shifted the blame to the grunts whose lives depended on them instead of investigating design flaws and poor decisions by the ordnance experts that were the real causes of the scandal that cost least a thousand Marine lives before corrective action ensued.

- **Yozshugore**

Gordon Rottman delivers another great Osprey Weapon book on the M-16 Rifle which includes the M-4 and other military and police force variants.

The M16 rifle came of age in the Vietnam War and has been used by the US military in one form or another into OEF. This volume on provides a history of development, use of the weapon and its impact. This was the weapon which I cared for and used in the Infantry battalions I served with the 1980s as a company grade officer. I became very familiar with this weapons and was thankful that this volume was produced.

I have over 500 Osprey titles and enjoy reading and benefit from the information contained in the volumes. I consider this volume to be a welcome addition to my library.

- **Yla**

This is a great book on the M16-series of weapons, discussing not just the M16 itself but its immediate predecessor (the M14) and various offshoots. It also discusses the 40mm grenade launchers used in conjunction with the basic M16 rifle.

The book is filled with photos and original artwork, which makes it a handy reference. It also includes a discussion of early issues with the weapon, dispensing many foolish myths regarding the poor design of the M16. In fact, there were problems with the initial ammunition batch provided to troops in Vietnam but the "fact" that the M16 is a bad rifle has been perpetuated for decades.

He discusses many practical points of the M16 but he misses one, or at least doesn't belabor it. As

teenage soldier I recall that the most frustrating feature of the M16A1 was the retaining ring for the handguards. I was not alone in this. When you totally disassembled the M16A1 it was easy enough to get those handguards off but God help you when you had to get them back on again. The first one would go on after applying some pressure but it seemed almost impossible to get the second one on with the first pushing down on the ring. There just didn't seem to be enough give. I watched soldiers clean their rifles and end up spending more time on the handguards than on the rest of the rifle. The handguards on the M16A2 were a pleasant surprise!

Still, this is a great book and I look forward to keeping it on my shelf.

- **Siralune**

This is a great account of the history of the development and operations of the M16. A great book for researching various model numbers used in the US inventory and good info on various ammunition loads for those models. This is the second book I've read from this author

- **Vishura**

Once again Gordon Rottman and Osprey present a great book. This is the short version of all the M16 books out there including the Black Rifle. It has new pics, great short to the point history, faces the trials and tribulations of the M16 well and has a true user's opinion in Rottman. I have many books on the M16 but this is one of my favorites. Osprey is the place to start for a beginner on any military history subject. Definitely a winner!!!

- **Azago**

Very informative and a fun read. I enjoyed this one more than the volume on the M14 in this series (which is also a very solid read). This book is a great history of the design, selection, and adoption of the various versions of the AR-15 platform in the military. I highly recommend it for all enthusiasts.

- **Sironynyr**

Very good follow up to the History Channel's History of the Gun DVD.

Great Reference Book

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