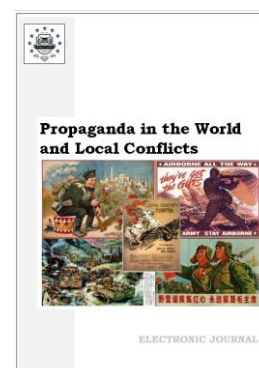


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Published in the USA
 Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts
 Issued since 2014.
 E-ISSN 2500-3712
 2022. 9(1): 43-45

DOI: 10.13187/pwlc.2022.1.43
<https://pwlc.cherkasgu.press>



Weapons of Propagandists

75-mm German Reactive Propaganda Mortar Mine (from the Experience of Using during the Second World War)

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Abstract

The work considers the experience of using a 75-mm reactive propaganda mine during the Second World War, Germany first used this ammunition on the Eastern Front in 1944.

The author used as materials, the documents of the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (Podolsk, Russian Federation), introduced for the first time into scientific research. Methodologically, the work is based on such principles as the principle of historicism, consistency and objectivity. Due to this, the paper was constructed using the maximum number of sources on the stated topic, systematized in chronological order, which allowed us to summarize the information and come to the appropriate conclusions.

In conclusion, the author notes that during 1944, on the Eastern Front, Germany used 75-mm reactive propaganda mines against the advancing soviet units. The work of such ammunition was recorded on the Narva direction against Soviet troops in June 1944, as well as against the 1st Shock Army of the Red Army in December 1944. It is difficult to judge the effectiveness of such attacks, but the fact of the use of such ammunition has been documented.

Keywords: German propaganda, reactive propaganda mortar mine, 1944, World War II.

1. Introduction

At the beginning of June 1944, on the Narva direction, east of the Tyrval region (TsAMO RF. F 2298. Op. 0000001. D. 0002. L. 131), the Germans used a new type of propaganda ammunition – a 75-mm reactive propaganda mine. Soon one of this ammunition (unexploded) was picked up and carefully studied by Soviet specialists (TsAMO RF. F. 217. Op. 1221. D. 3784. L. 513).

In December 1944, the same information was received from other areas of the front. So, in the zone of the 1st Shock Army on December 7, 1944, at 2.10 am, the enemy fired agitation shells the combat positions, firing more than 30 shells with methodical fire. According to the general arrangement, the projectile was classified as a reactive one. The caliber is about 75 mm. The shell was a remote device. The remote device of the shell was not studied, since the fuse worked at high altitude. The expelling charge was insignificant, since the leaflets ejected from the cylinder remained intact. This explanation of the new propaganda ammunition was given by Captain Skomoroshko, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence of the 137th Army Cannon-Artillery

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Brigade. The officer also added that “the use of these shells on our sector of the front was not previously noted” (TsAMO RF. F. 9960. Op. 1. D. 8. L. 107).

2. Materials and methods

The source base of the research was the documents of the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense (Podolsk, Russian Federation) introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. There were used documents from five archival funds, namely: funds 217, 243, 1074, 2298, 9960.

Methodologically, the work is based on such principles as the principle of historicism, consistency and objectivity. Due to this, the paper was constructed using the maximum number of sources on the stated topic, systematized in chronological order, which allowed us to summarize the information and come to the appropriate conclusions.

3. Discussion

The theme of campaign ammunition is not new in historiography. At different times, this topic was dealt with by such authors as: S.N. Nikitin in his work “Propaganda Ammunition (Based on the Experience of World War I and World War II)” (Nikitin, 2020).

This discussion also focuses in the work by Yu.F. Katorin “The Flagship of the Soviet Political Agitation Squadron” (Katorin, 2017), although here the means of delivery of campaign materials was not a shell, but an airplane.

V.G. Krys'ko also paid attention to propaganda ammunition in his work “Sekrety psikhologicheskoi voyny (tseli, zadachi, metody, formy, opyt)” (Krys'ko, 1999). We also find materials on the use of campaign ammunition in the work V.A. Nesterenko “A Few Words about the Third Reich Propaganda Operations in 1944” (Nesterenko, 2015).

4. Results

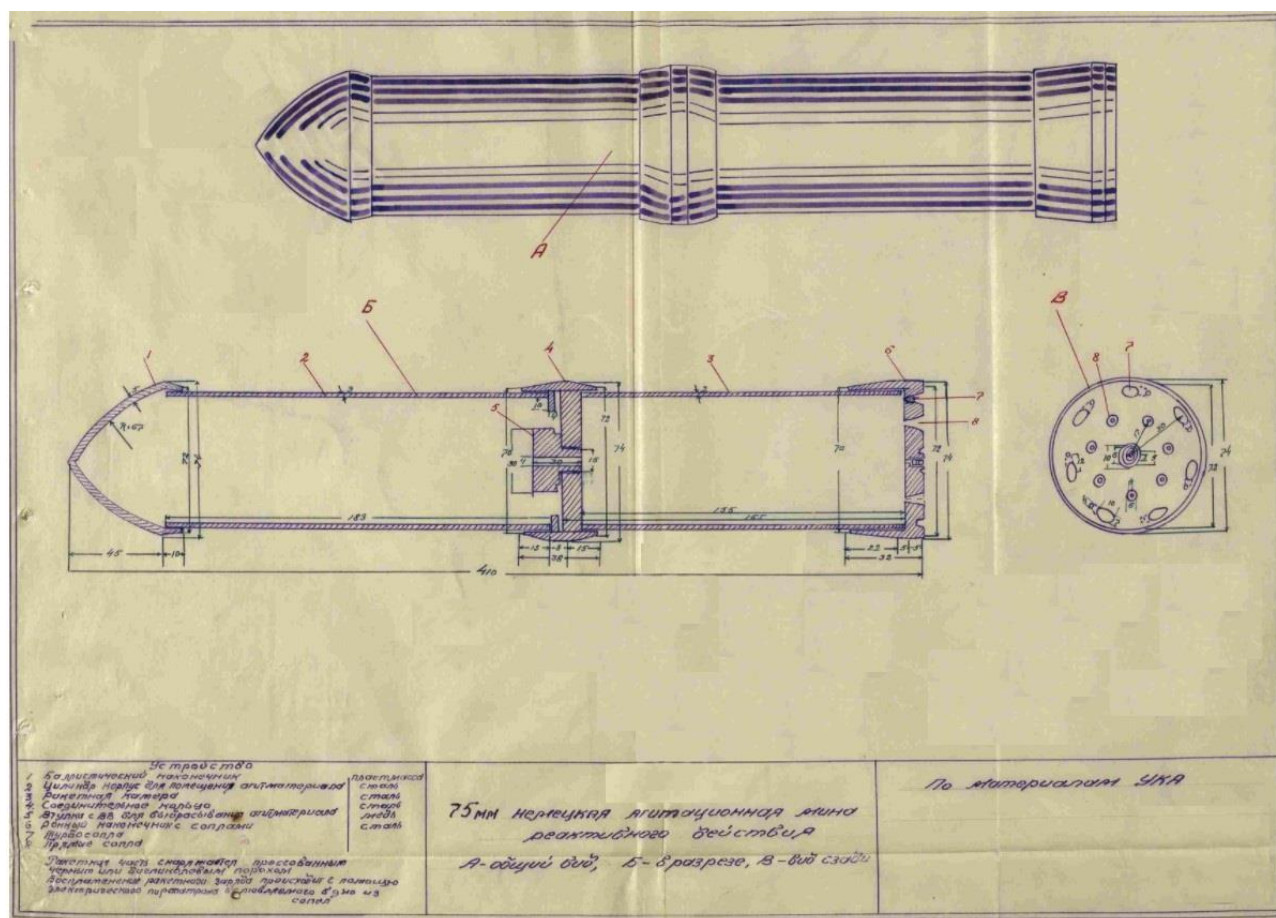


Fig. 1. 75-mm German Reactive Propaganda Mine (TsAMO RF. F. 243. Op. 2900. D. 2062. L. 32)

Notes:

A – General view; Б – in cut; В – back view.

Structure:

1. Ballistic cap;
2. Cylinder body for placing agitation material;
3. Rocket chamber;
4. Joint ring;
5. Bush with explosive substances for ejection of campaign material;
6. Ron tip with nozzles;
7. Turbo nozzles;
8. Straight nozzles.

The rocket part is equipped with pressed black or biglycol powder. The ignition of the rocket charge occurs with the help of an electric squib inserted into the bottom of the nozzles.

Brief description

1. The flight range of the mine is approximately 2.5 km. Having a purpose – propaganda, the mine, in addition to the charge, contains a remote tube, which, when burned, gives a weak explosion in the air, during which leaflets are thrown out. Part of the mines, not bursting in the air, fell to the ground. After a mine explosion, the case is completely preserved.

2. The mine system is similar in device to the mine of the 158.5-mm chemical mortar of the “Long-range” sample, except for the size: the length of the case, body and bottom is up to 38 cm, the diameter of the mine is 6.5 cm. The upper part of the mine (case) is equipped with leaflets, the lower part of the mine (body) is equipped with a large charge of the receiver tube. The bottom in the center has a capsule and two rows of holes on the sides designed to rotate the mine during its flight. The possibility of the use of fragmentation rocket mines by the enemy is not excluded (TsAMO RF. F. 1074. Op. 0000001. D. 0186. L. 159).

Summing up, Soviet experts noted that the use of agitation, reactive mines of small caliber is new in their application in this area (TsAMO RF. F. 217. Op. 1221. D. 3784. L. 513).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to note that during 1944, on the Eastern Front, Germany used 75-mm reactive propaganda mines against the advancing soviet units. The work of such ammunition was recorded on the Narva direction against Soviet troops in June 1944, as well as against the 1st Shock Army of the Red Army in December 1944. It is difficult to judge the effectiveness of such attacks, but the fact of the use of such ammunition has been documented.

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