

## PRODUCT REVIEW

# M79

BY RICHARD LUTZ

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## 40MM GRENADE LAUNCHER



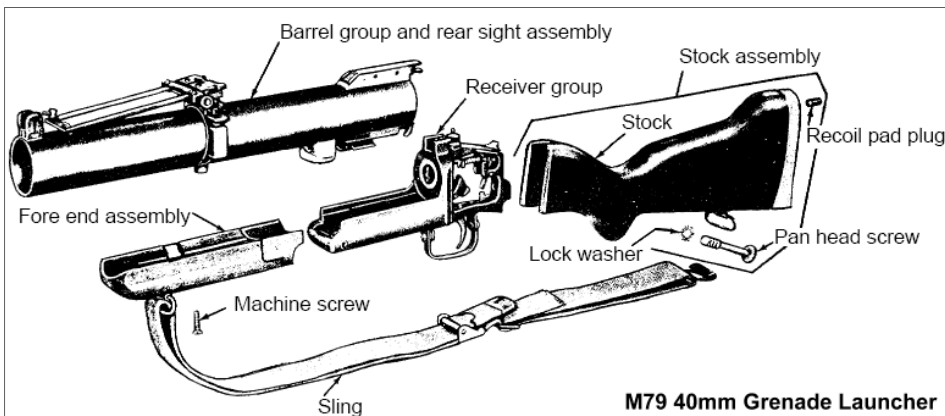
The American M79 grenade launcher (c. 1961) was developed as a replacement for the inaccurate rifle grenades like those used during WWII, that were slow to use and inaccurate, which would fill the gap between hand thrown grenades and mortars.

They were first used in the Vietnam War and proved to be reliable, accurate and easy to

use, but left grenadiers vulnerable to enemy fire in firefights as they would not be able to carry a rifle, only a pistol like the M1911A1, which resulted in the development of the M203 grenade launcher (c. 1969) which was to be mounted underneath an M16 rifle. This was ill-advised as rifles with an attached grenade launcher are too heavy. It is far better to issue soldiers a lightweight rifle and a small, lightweight grenade launcher than a rifle with an attached grenade launcher which is difficult to use efficiently in ideal conditions, much less if one is exhausted or injured, due to

its weight and compromised ergonomics. Thus the M203 is best deployed as a stand-alone grenade launcher. Guard, it continued to be used on a limited basis by soldiers who favor it over the M203 (and the M320 that is replacing the M203 in the US Army) as it is more accurate.

The best 40x46mm rounds are the M433 HEDP, which will penetrate 2" of armor plate, a 12" pine log, a 16" concrete block, or a 20" sandbag; and the M397A1 HE.



M79 40mm Grenade Launcher

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its weight and compromised ergonomics. Thus the M203 is best deployed as a stand-alone grenade launcher. Although the M203 officially replaced the M79 as a front line weapon in 1969 and was largely relegated to use by reserve forces like the National

Guard, it continued to be used on a limited basis by soldiers who favor it over the M203 (and the M320 that is replacing the M203 in the US Army) as it is more accurate. The best 40x46mm rounds are the M433 HEDP, which will penetrate 2" of armor plate, a 12" pine log, a 16" concrete block, or a 20" sandbag; and the M397A1 HE. On impact a small charge in the nose of the M397A1 grenade is detonated, which raises the grenade 5 feet into the air before an impact delay fuze detonates it. This is intended to prevent obstacles on the ground shielding the enemy from fragments.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The M79 remains a viable stand-alone single-shot grenade launcher but is too big to allow a grenadier to carry a rifle, thus is not as desirable as smaller and lighter grenade launchers fitted with a folding or collapsible stock.

### RECOMMENDED ACCESSORIES

#### Handbook

Practical Guide to the Operational Us of the M79 Grenade Launcher. [Blackheart International]

#### Log Book

Firearm Usage & Maintenance Log Book. [Blackheart International]

#### Cleaning Kit

Grenade Launcher Cleaning Kit. [Brownell's]

#### Ear Plugs

EarPro EP3 or EP4 Sonic Defenders. [SureFire]

### KEY SPECIFICATIONS

Cartridge: 40x46 mm grenade  
Weight: 2.93 kg (6.45 lbs)  
Length: 731 mm (28.78)  
Feed System: breech-loaded  
Grenade Velocity: 76 m/s  
Effective Range: 350 m



### HOT TIP

Moving vehicles are best engaged within 100 meters to ensure a high hit probability.