

Machine Gun News



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The Mini Uzi



The Mini Uzi is smaller and lighter than the "maxi" Uzi, and it features a vastly improved folding stock, higher rate of fire, and an effective muzzle brake machined right into the end of the counterbored barrel.

By Al Paulson

Many professionals who don't like using the Uzi are quite fond of the Mini Uzi. Some even prefer it to the Heckler & Koch MP5K. This article will evaluate the design and performance of the Mini Uzi, and a companion article in this issue will evaluate an outstanding Uzi suppressor.

Israel Military Industries (IMI) has been producing the Uzi since 1951, and Action Arms has been importing the Uzi since 1980. Probably no submachine gun has become as recognizable to the public at large since the Thompson. Stunning Israeli military successes have conjured up a mystique that exceeds the weapon's ability to deliver. Don't get me wrong, it's an excellent weapon capable of Sterling performance. Yet by the 1970s, when

working professionals (as opposed to bureaucrats) selected a submachine gun, there was a good chance another weapon would be adopted for a particular application. This trend accelerated with the growing need for reduced size and weight in the burgeoning realms of executive protection, counterterrorism, drug enforcement and SpecOps.

IMI responded to this need in the early 1980s with the Mini Uzi, which featured significantly reduced size and weight, a vastly improved folding stock, higher rate of fire, and an effective muzzle brake machined right into the end of the counterbored barrel.

The first thing one notices when actually handling the Mini Uzi is that it's a lot more concealable than the "maxi" Uzi. While the Mini is only 2 inches shorter than the maxi with folding stocks extended, the

Mini is 4.3 inches shorter with the stocks folded (see Tables 1 and 2). And the Mini comes with a 20-round magazine that barely protrudes from the bottom of the magazine well. Those two factors provide a package that is as concealable as an Ingram M10 submachine gun while providing superior ergonomics. The best system I've seen for concealed or prolonged carry of the Mini Uzi is the superb shoulder harness used by the Mossad (Israel's intelligence service). This rig is available from Alukas International Armament. AIA also markets a loading tool for Uzi magazines, the outstanding ML-09 loader made by Tryn Development.

The first thing one notices when firing the Mini Uzi is its high cyclic rate. While design specs specify a rate of 950 rounds per minute, some guns produce rates as high as 1,200 rpm with some ammunition. The high cyclic rate produces a substantial muzzle blast, which tends to be a bit distracting at first. Angled slots in the barrel, which serve as a muzzle brake, direct gas up and to the right. This design reduces muzzle climb for right-handed shooters, but it causes the gun to walk markedly to the left for left-handed shooters. Unlike many designs, the Mini Uzi's muzzle brake does not direct a lot more gas back into the shooter's face since the slots are directed slightly forward. With experience, the muzzle brake and improved stock of the Mini enable the shooter to increase the speed of target acquisition and obtain improved hit probability over the full-sized Uzi (with folding stock) at typical engagement distances. In the experienced hands of a right-hander, the Mini outperforms the maxi.

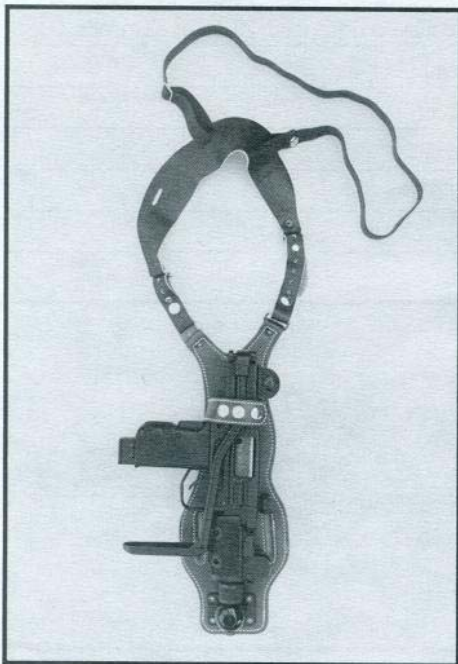
The Mini's stock provides a lot of this performance advantage, for the maxi's folding stock leaves a lot to be desired. The maxi's stock is very slow to unfold. And its design prevents a quick, consistent, comfortable cheek weld which is essential for rapidly obtaining a repeatable sight picture. The Mini's stock provides similar cheek weld and rigidity to the maxi's wooden stock, while stowing in a smaller space than the maxi with the folded metal stock.

The Mini's folding stock is made of heavy steel rod, rather than stamped sheet

The Mini is only 2 inches shorter than the maxi with its folding stock extended.

metal like the maxi. A downward jog just behind the hinge on the Mini's folding stock forces a rapid, proper cheek weld. To open the stock from the folded position, simply grasp the butt plate and swing the stock assembly to the rear until a lug on the stock slides into a notch on the hinge, rigidly locking the stock in the open position. The shooter experiences no wobble while firing the gun from the shoulder. To fold the stock, place the weapon on safe, point the weapon in a safe direction, grab the receiver just forward of the rear sight with the weak hand, and push the butt plate away with the strong hand until the stock's lug slides out of the notch in the hinge. The stock now swings easily back to the folded position, where the same lug and notch arrangement locks the stock in place. No buttons or other devices need be manipulated to deploy or fold the stock.

The Mini's sights have the same basic setup and sight picture as the maxi, although the Mini's L-type flip aperture rear sights are calibrated for 50 and 100 meters, rather than 100 and 200 meters like the maxi. The Mini's rear sight is adjustable for windage, while its front sight adjusts for elevation with a well-engineered spring detent and ratchet assembly. The full-sized Uzi uses an eccentric, threaded front sight to adjust for both windage and elevation. This somewhat awkward arrangement is reminiscent of the system used by the Carl Gustav Model 45 submachine gun.



This shoulder harness is reportedly used by the Mossad (Israel's intelligence service) for concealed or prolonged carry of the Mini Uzi.



The Mini retains the maxi's grip safety and excellent actuator ratchet, making it a very safe submachine gun to handle in terms of accidental discharge. The grip safety can make the gun unsafe for people with small hands in a tactical environment, however, since they may have difficulty operating the grip safety.

Fortunately for bureaucrats and trainers—and unfortunately for users—the Mini retains the maxi's ghastly selector switch, which has sharp edges and requires far too much force to manipulate. From

front to back, the selector settings are A for automatic, R for repeat (semiautomatic) and S for safe.

This stiff selector switch is a more serious liability with the Mini than it is with the maxi. Semiautomatic fire is essential for effectively engaging targets at a distance with a submachine gun. Yet tactical requirements may not allow enough time or tolerate the distraction of manipulating such a stiff selector. The full-sized Uzi can deliver single shots with the selector set on A; the Mini Uzi cannot. Three-round bursts are the lower limit with the Mini.

Unless, of course, the Mini has been fitted with a special heavy bolt that lowers the Mini Uzi's cyclic rate from 950 to 750 rounds per minute. The heavy bolt incorporates 12 ounces of tungsten inserts to slow down bolt travel. Most shooters perform better on full auto with this heavy bolt installed in the Mini Uzi. The heavy bolt improves the mini's controllability and lowers the number of rounds per burst. So the modified gun provides improved hit probability plus more bursts per magazine. These are two substantial advantages, whether the Mini Uzi is used in the tactical or sporting environments.

A closed-bolt modification can also be encountered, which increases accuracy when firing on semiautomatic. Both optional bolt packages can be installed or exchanged by simply opening the top cover, replacing the old bolt with the new one, and securing the top cover. No other changes or adjustments are necessary. The only eccentricity to either of these (continues)

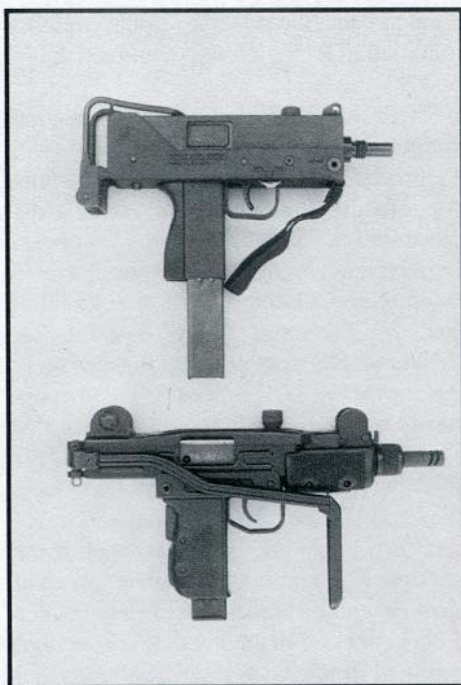


The weapon is drawn by unsnapping the restraining strap, pivoting the gun rearward, and pulling the barrel from the rotating plastic ball.

bolt options is that the closed-bolt variant seems to require hotter ammunition to function reliably. Samson black-tipped carbine ammo or other hot submachine gun ammo works flawlessly. Generic American 9mm ammo tends not to function reliably with the closed-bolt option.

About the time IMI introduced the heavy and closed-bolt options for the Mini Uzi, they also began to market a select-fire version of their successful semiautomatic pistol. Called the Micro Uzi, the new submachine gun provided a higher cyclic rate in an even smaller package (see Table 3). While this little buzz saw requires a higher level of shooter skill, it can still perform well at moderate handgun distances. The Micro makes an interesting addition for one member of an executive protection team, but for other applications where con-

The Mini Uzi is nearly as compact as an Ingram M10 submachine gun while providing superior ergonomics and hit probability.



cealability is not paramount—the Mini Uzi will be a better choice.

Even when size and weight have no bearing whatsoever on the selection process, I believe the Mini Uzi is frequently a better tactical choice than the full-sized Uzi, especially with the heavy-bolt option. Unfortunately, neither the heavy-bolt nor the closed-bolt option ever reached full production. That may be part of the reason why the full-sized Uzi remains the most popular variant with the law-enforcement community.

The tradeoffs for sport users are somewhat different. All factory-built Mini Uzis

Table 1. General characteristics of the Uzi submachine gun.

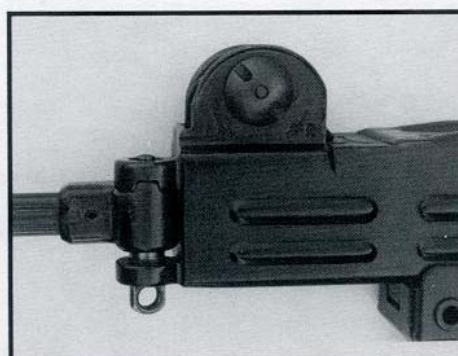
Caliber	9x19mm
System of operation	blowback, open bolt, selective fire
Cyclic rate	600 rpm
Weight, wood stock	7.9 lb (3.6 kg)
Weight, metal folding stock	7.7 lb (3.5 kg)
Feed device	double-row, double-position feed, 25 or 32 rounds
Length overall, wood stock	25.6 in (65.0 cm)
Length overall, metal stock extended	25.6 in (65.0 cm)
Length overall, metal stock folded	18.5 in (47.0 cm)
Barrel length	10.2 in (26.0 cm)
Front sight	adjustable post
Rear sight	L-type flip aperture for 100 and 200 meters

Table 2. General characteristics of the Mini Uzi submachine gun.

Caliber	9x19mm
System of operation	blowback, open bolt, selective fire
Cyclic rate	950 rpm
Weight	5.95 lb (2.7 kg)
Feed device	double-row, double-position feed, 20, 25 or 32 rounds
Length overall, stock folded	14.2 in (36.0 cm)
Length overall, stock extended	23.6 in (60.0 cm)
Barrel length	7.76 in (19.7 cm)
Front sight	adjustable post
Rear sight	L-type flip aperture for 50 and 150 meters

Table 3. General characteristics of the Micro Uzi submachine gun.

Caliber	9x19mm
System of operation	blowback, open bolt, selective fire
Cyclic rate	1,250 rpm
Weight	4.3 lb (1.95 kg)
Feed device	double-row, double-position feed, 20, 25 or 32 rounds
Length overall, stock folded	9.8 in (25.0 cm)
Length overall, stock extended	18.1 in (46.0 cm)
Barrel length	4.6 in (11.7 cm)
Front sight	post
Rear sight	open notch



The Mini's L-type flip aperture rear sights are calibrated for 50 and 100 meters, and are adjustable for windage.



The Mini's front sight adjusts for elevation with a well-engineered spring detent and ratchet assembly.

are dealer samples. Individuals can acquire semiautomatic carbines that have been remanufactured into Mini Uzis. But without the heavy bolt, most shooters will produce bursts of three or four rounds. Two-round bursts are easy with the full-sized Uzi, and single rounds can be squeezed off with practice. So the net result is that you can drop more plates or punch more paper targets between magazine changes, so you can engage a large number of targets quicker with the full-sized Uzi. Plus there are more transferable maxi Uzis on the BATF registry, which includes both converted carbines as well as the Group Industries clone (the HR 4332).

We'll take a closer look at the development and performance of the full-sized Uzi in a forthcoming issue of Machine Gun News.

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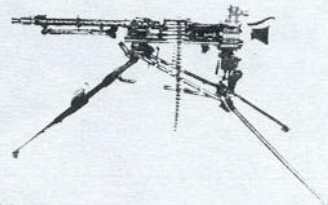
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The Mini retains the maxi's ghastly selector switch, which has sharp edges and requires far too much force to manipulate. Furthermore, people with small hands may have difficulty operating the grip safety. These two problems constitute the major liabilities of the Mini Uzi.