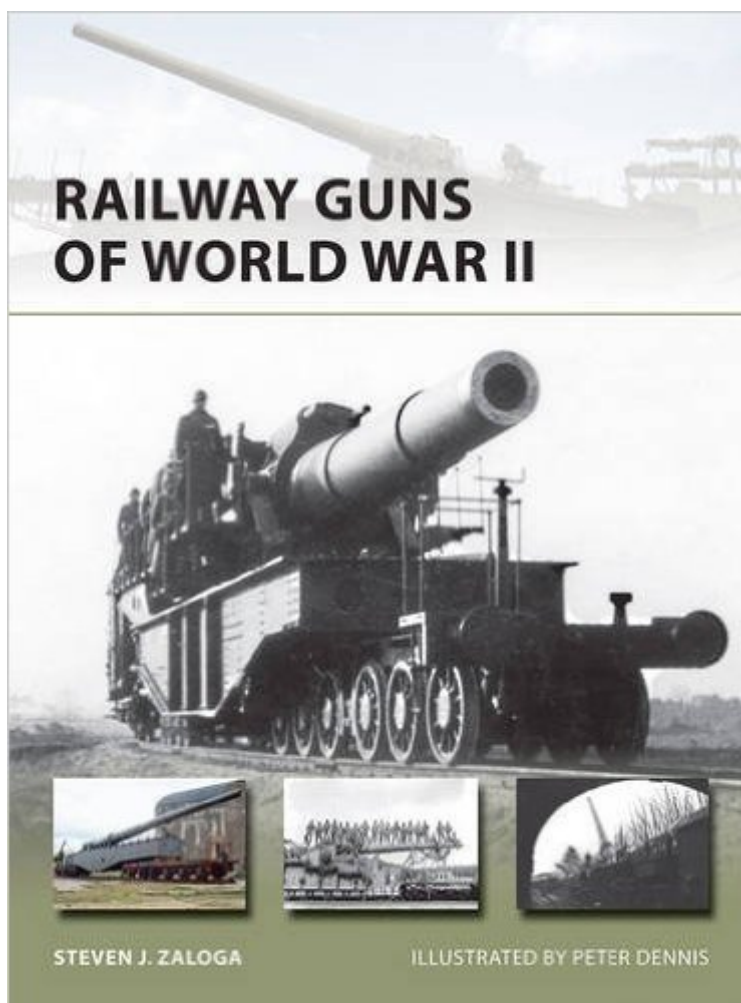


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Railway Guns Of World War II (New Vanguard)



Synopsis

World War II marked the zenith of railway gun development. Although many of the railway guns initially deployed at the start of the conflict were of World War I vintage, Germany's ambitious development program saw the introduction of a number of new classes, including the world's largest, the 80cm-caliber Schwerer Gustav and Schwerer Dora guns, which weighed in at 1,350 tons and fired a huge 7-ton shell. This book provides an overview of the types of railway guns in service during World War II, with a special focus on the German railway artillery used in France, Italy, and on the Eastern Front, analyzing why railway guns would largely disappear from use following the end of the war.

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Customer Reviews

Railroad artillery of the Second World War represented a marginal â despite some spectacular use, they decided few, if any battles â but fascinating weapons system that, despite the rise of the internal combustion engine and heavy-duty tractor vehicles between the wars, were still in the arsenals of all the major (especially German and Russian) and some of the smaller (especially Finland) combatants. This Osprey New Vanguard-series monograph is a survey, covering the use of railroad artillery by all the combatants (usually starting with how they adapted First World War hardware) and used it in combat. Because of its scope, this does not lead to an in-depth treatment of any single gun or user, however well known or charismatic (e.g., Anzio Annie), but this meshes

well with the survey treatment. This is a subject that does not have a lot of available coverage in English. While, like all the monographs in this series, it has no footnotes and only a single page for sources, what makes this among the most effective is that it draws on research both in archives in both the US and Europe but also the author's knowledge of and use of the extensive existing literature, much of it in monograph form and unlikely to be readily available even at a first-class reference library. In short, this is a felicitous combination of a skilled author, an interesting if off-beat subject, and effective coverage given the limited scope and format of the series that enabled, rather than hindered, the survey. The illustrations – photos and the usual Osprey colour drawings – are definitely a plus in this volume.

Steven Zaloga has here put together #231 of the Osprey New Vanguard series which focusses on the railway guns of World War 2. This book follows the basic premise of all this long running series of books in that it is quite concise, provides a basic overview of the topic at hand and then a step by step observation of some of the details. These books are great for the armchair military buff as they are usually replete with plenty of black and white photographs and a number of colour plates. This volume is no different, plenty of photographs being spread about through the book and the illustrations coming from Peter Dennis. The volume moves from a mere extended paragraph of an introduction and then delves straight into a discussion of French railway guns, thence onto the Belgians, the Germans, the Italians, the Soviets and thence to Finland, Japan, Britain and the US in that order. Tables of information are useful in terms of numbers and some of the technical data. Also some of the national entries contain some information regarding the use of the weapons in actual combat. The author isn't wearing rose-coloured glasses in terms of his subject matter and discussion of some of the costs in terms of money and manpower are discussed. As are the chronic accuracy issues these large weapons seemed to suffer from. These New Vanguard books are great for modellers and the like given the number of photographs and drawings. And the question posed by this volume is will we be seeing a similar volume on railway guns of World War 1. It is to be hoped so as they would provide an interesting triptych when combined with the volume on Armoured Trains. If you have an interest in the subject at all but are not wanting to get one of the more specialised volumes on the market (check the bibliography) then this is a good work to get.

Pretty good for a 48 - page book. It discusses German, French, Soviet / Russian, US, and British railway artillery and that of some relatively minor countries such as Finland, Italy, and Belgium.

Perhaps not too surprisingly, the most detailed discussions are on German and French railroad artillery. There is also some fairly detailed discussion Russian / Soviet railroad artillery. The text covering British and American railroad artillery was pretty shallow, I thought. The coverage of Russian / Soviet artillery offers much new information that I had never read before, although photos of the major large caliber (305 mm) guns was sparse. My biggest disappointment was that the large caliber 340 mm, 370 mm, 400 mm, and 520 mm heavy French railroad artillery only received a few sentences of discussion and little information was offered on the performance characteristics of the either guns or the mountings. Very little information was provided on the American and British 14 - inch, 16 - inch, and 18 - inch artillery. Fortunately, other books exist that provide more detailed discussions of those guns.

A nice little overview of the Rail guns used in WW 2. I liked other books in this series, this one is no exception. From the giant DORA, an GUSTOV, to the famous Anzio Annie type the author covers the weapons by nation and type. Well written and illustrated, this book is a good edition to any WW 2 library.

Much less information than I hoped for. This thin book covers the railway guns of every nation. If it had been just on Germany it might have been about right. The drawing comparing the Dora to a K5 and a Tiger I was interesting.

An excellent overview of all of the railroad guns used by all of the different nations in WWII. This is not an in-depth study of any particular gun, but a series of profiles of what each country had or built in the way of railway guns for WWII. This will not be that useful to people that have accumulated large amounts of specific data, but for someone just getting into railway guns, it is and EXCELLENT introduction, and will give a clear path to research for any particular railgun they may be interested in. I became interested in the German 28cm K5(E). guns built by Krupp and Hanomag, and this provided a LOT of explanations and information that I could use to begin my research.

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