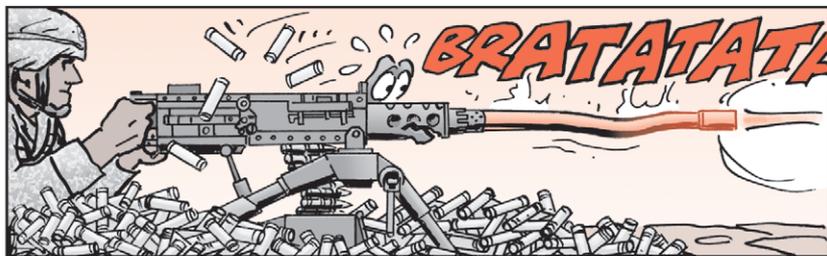
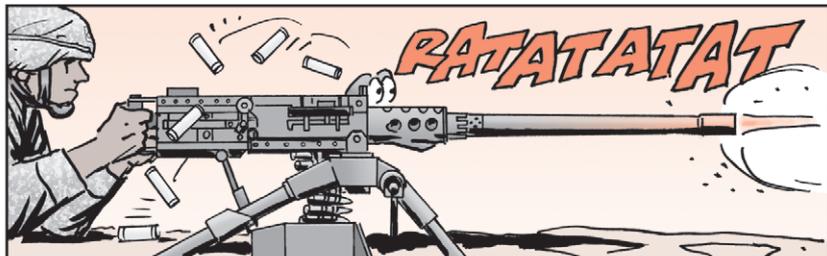


# COLOR CHANGES? CHANGE BARREL!

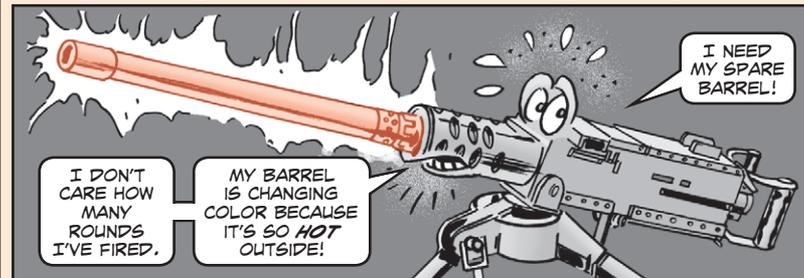


Dear Editor,

As members of the Ft Polk MATES, we support units when they go to the range to fire their machine guns. We find many Soldiers don't realize that the standard has changed for changing the M2 machine gun barrel during firing. The result is ruined barrels.

The standard used to be to change the M2 barrel at the end of a day of firing, no matter how many rounds were fired. That's still true if you're firing single shot. But if you're firing slow fire (40 or fewer rounds per minute), you should change the barrel every hour. If you're firing rapid fire (200 rounds per minute), change the barrel every half hour.

But anytime you see the barrel change color, you should immediately change the barrel. That goes for any machine gun. We've seen M2 barrels actually turn orange from the heat. By then, the barrel is already ruined.



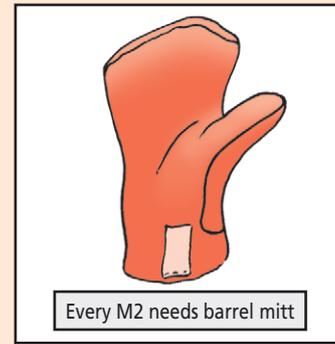
I DON'T CARE HOW MANY ROUNDS I'VE FIRED.

MY BARREL IS CHANGING COLOR BECAUSE IT'S SO HOT OUTSIDE!

The M2 barrel becomes too hot to handle with your bare hand or a glove. That's why every M2 needs the barrel mitten, NSN 8415-01-092-0039. Be careful what you lay the hot barrel on. It can melt or burn plastic or cloth.

Barrels, especially M2 barrels, are not cheap. Don't ruin a barrel by firing and firing without giving the barrel a rest. Take the spare barrel to the field and use it.

SFC Charles Woodham  
SSG John Doolittle  
MATES  
Ft Polk, LA



**Editor's reply:** Excellent points. Besides ruining the barrel, firing and firing through the same barrel can also cause cookoffs, damage the bolt, and ruin headspace, which can cause the machine gun to explode. Here are the firing limits on the M240 and M249:

**M240:** Change the barrel every 10 minutes during sustained fire (100 rounds per minute) and every two minutes during rapid fire (200 rounds per minute).

**M249:** During both sustained fire (40 rounds per minute) and rapid fire (100 rounds per minute), change the barrel every 200 rounds.

When it's hot outside, change the barrel sooner. And, remember, blanks heat up the barrel just as much as live rounds.

