

## Re: Metal Storm

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To: sci-military-moderated@moderators.isc.org

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Sharon wrote:

- > *I'm a reporter working on an article about Metal Storm, the Australian*
- > *company working on an all electronic gun. I would be interested to hear*
- > *from anyone who has followed the company, invested in the company, or*
- > *who is simply an expert on this (general) area of technology. Please*
- > *feel free to contact me at SWeinberger@accessintel.com*

I wouldn't call myself an expert on the company and its products, but I've been following reports on the development of MS with interest for some years now and have formed some conclusions about its practical merits.

In general, it is difficult to see many applications where it has a clear advantage over existing technologies. I have described it as 'a solution looking for a problem'. Its major selling point is an extremely high rate of fire, but this is in fact of little practical use.

The application for which its high rate of fire is currently being advocated is the naval Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) as a last-ditch weapon to knock out incoming anti-ship missiles. However, the major concern about CIWS is that unless they knock out the missile at long range, it (or its debris) will have such momentum that they will still fly on to strike the ship. So missiles are now being favoured over guns for this purpose as they have a longer engagement range.

Even by gun standards MS does not lend itself to long-range shooting because the basic configuration – with rounds stacked on top of each other – is best suited to short, fat rounds which are not good for long-range performance. It also does not lend itself to sustained shooting because once the barrels are empty there's a long pause while they are reloaded.

There is one application which shows promise, however; that is for

grenade launchers attached to rifles or used by themselves. The USA is working on a 25mm shoulder gun which uses an automatic loader. At one time they wanted to combine the automatic grenade launcher with a rifle, but the total weight was too high. With MS, you avoid the need for the complex and heavy (and space-wasting) autoloader so the weight can be much less. So I think that the MS proposal for combining their grenade launcher with the standard Australian rifle is very interesting and potentially has a lot of merit. Ironically, a high rate of fire is irrelevant in this application.

Tony Williams

Military gun and ammunition website: <http://www.quarry.nildram.co.uk>