

Ammo: 5.56x45mm NATO

Overview

The 5.56x45mm NATO is the primary intermediate cartridge for US Forces. It is characterized by low recoil and high velocity. However, its effectiveness relies on **fragmentation** and **penetration**, both of which vary wildly between the variants listed below.

Modern Combat Rounds

M855A1 EPR (Enhanced Performance Round)

* **Visual ID:** Bronze/Silver Exposed Tip * **Role:** Standard Issue (Current) The “EPR” is the modern solution to the shortcomings of older 5.56mm rounds. It features a lead-free slug with a hardened steel penetrator.

- **Pros:** Best-in-class general penetration; “barrier-blind” (maintains trajectory through glass/wood); consistent lethality against armored AI.
- **Cons:** Higher chamber pressure; slightly more recoil than legacy rounds.

Mk318 Mod 0 (SOST)

* **Visual ID:** Open Tip / Lead Cliff * **Role:** Carbine / Urban Optimized Developed for the USMC to improve performance in short-barreled weapons like the Mk18. It is designed to fragment on impact while the rear “solid” portion continues through cover.

- **Pros:** Optimized for CQB; excellent “stopping power” on unarmored targets.
- **Cons:** Ballistic coefficient is lower than M855A1; performance drops off past 300m.

Mk262 Mod 1 (OTM)

* **Visual ID:** Black Ring / Open Tip * **Role:** Long Range / Marksman A heavy 77-grain Match round. While it lacks a steel penetrator, its mass allows it to retain energy at much longer distances.

- **Pros:** Highest damage-per-shot in the 5.56 family; extremely stable in high-wind conditions; effective out to 700m.
- **Cons:** Lower muzzle velocity; poor performance against heavy plating.

Legacy & Specialty Rounds

M193 (Ball)

* **Visual ID:** Plain / No Tip * **Role:** Cold War / High Velocity The original 55-grain round for the M16A1. It relies on extreme velocity to “shatter” (fragment) upon impact.

- **Pros:** Very high muzzle velocity; devastating against unarmored “insurgent” type targets.
- **Cons:** Virtually zero penetration against modern body armor; loses effectiveness rapidly from short barrels.

M855 (Ball)

* **Visual ID:** Green Tip * **Role:** Legacy Standard (Pre-2010) The “Penetrator” round used for decades. It features a small steel insert.

- **Pros:** Plentiful in most missions; decent mid-range performance.
- **Cons:** Infamous for “over-penetration” (passing through targets without damage); struggles against modern Level IV plates.

M995 (AP)

* **Visual ID:** Black Tip * **Role:** Specialized Anti-Armor Utilizes a tungsten carbide core specifically designed to defeat hardened targets.

- **Pros:** Can penetrate heavy body armor and light vehicle skin (unarmored trucks/technical rails).
- **Cons:** Very low “flesh damage”; rare availability.

Tracers & Signalling

Type	Matching Round	Notes
M196	M193	Red/Orange tip. Legacy tracer with shorter burn time.
M856	M855	Standard red tracer. Consistent burn.
M856A1	M855A1 (EPR)	Modern tracer. Features “Dim Trace” to prevent blinding the shooter.

Ballistic Comparison Table

Round	Weight	Velocity	Armor Pen.	Soft Damage	Ideal Range
M193	55 gr	Extreme	Very Low	High	0 - 200m
M855	62 gr	High	Low	Medium	0 - 300m
M855A1	62 gr	High	High	High	0 - 450m
Mk318	62 gr	Medium	Medium	Very High	0 - 250m
Mk262	77 gr	Moderate	Low	Extreme	300 - 700m
M995	52 gr	High	Extreme	Low	0 - 400m

Deployment Summary

- **General Infantry:** Standardize on **M855A1 (EPR)**. It is the most reliable round for 90% of Arma 3 engagements.
- **Point-men / Breachers:** Use **Mk318** for superior performance through doors and windows.
- **Designated Marksmen:** Use **Mk262** for a flatter, more predictable trajectory at long range.
- **Historical Scenarios:** Use **M193** for Vietnam/80s era kits, but aim for the head or unarmored limbs.

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