

Navy Mk38 Gun Systems Gaining Co-Axial Small-Caliber Machine Gun



An Mk38 MOD 2 25 mm machine gun fires during a live-fire exercise aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4). The U.S. Navy is installing a co-axial 7.62 mm machine gun on the mounts of its Mk38 chain gun systems. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Conor Minto)

ARLINGTON,

Va. – The Navy is installing a co-axial 7.62 mm machine gun on the mounts of

its Mk38 chain gun systems, a Northrop Grumman official said.

The Mk52 7.62

mm is gas-operated and uses recoil to eject spent cartridges and advance to the

next round. A misfired round is safely ejected forward of the barrel as well, Jarrod

Krull, communications manager for Northrop Grumman Armament Systems, said in an

interview with *Seapower*.

The Mk38 Mod

2 gun mount includes an 25mm M242 Bushmaster rapid-fire cannon that fires an

explosive round. The mount is automatic, gyro-stabilized and remotely operated,

but retains the optional manual firing of the Mk38 Mod 1. The system has day

and night sensors and a laser rangefinder.

The Mk52 7.62

mm is designed as a defense against small boats, aircraft and unmanned aerial

vehicles for most U.S. surface warships and as a general-purpose gun for the Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships and Mk VI patrol boats.

Krull said the addition of the co-axial Mk52 machine gun gives the gunner another "right-sized" option for countering a small target, such as pirates or terrorists on jet skis.

The Mk52 is very durable, reliable and accurate," according to a Navy briefing slide.

Northrop Grumman is installing the Mk52 guns in the Mk38 under an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract.

The company also is offering the Navy another upgrade of the Mk38 by switching out the M242 Bushmaster cannon for a larger caliber weapon, the Mk44 30mm cannon, the same gun used as a close-in weapon on the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship, the littoral combat ship's surface warfare module and the Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyer. Another option is the stretch version of the Mk44, which would allow use of programmable ammunition, such as air-burst ammunition.

Krull said the Mk38 could even be up-gunned to a 40mm cannon.