

## 7.62x51 BLANK CARTRIDGES

When Australia adopted the 7.62x51 cartridge in 1956 it originally had no blank suitable for use in the then new SLR. To fill the need Australia purchased some

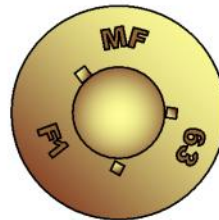
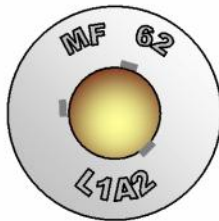
from Germany and set about manufacturing them under license. The first production blanks from Small Arms Factory began in 1961 and they were known as Cartridge L1A1 Blank. Right from the start of production problems were experienced with plastic blanks. The difficulty was that the plastic envelope changed shape after firing which altered the centre of balance which in turn effected ejection. This problem was particularly bad in fully automatic weapons such as the GPMG and the Bren. The

British got around the problem by introducing a brass-bodied blank, but Australia persevered with the plastic version.

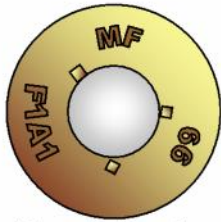
When I say persevered I mean

just that. Australia's blanks run to seven different models. The first change occurred in 1962 when Australia changed the original brass base to one of Aluminium and changed the model number to L1A2. The next change occurred in 1963 when Australia altered the shape of the base so that it was almost a direct copy of the German blank. Australia also reverted to brass as a base material. At this time

Australia began using the letter "F" to identify items made in Australia. This has been the preferred prefix ever since. The new model was the F1.



The next change occurred in 1966 when Australia changed the shape of the base again but this time retained brass as the material. The model number was changed to F1A1.



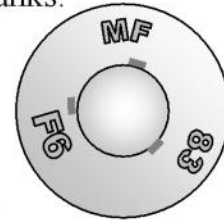
Another change was instituted in 1968 when a return to the

Aluminium base was made but no change in model number being applied. This blank seems to have worked reasonably well as it was retained in service until 1982

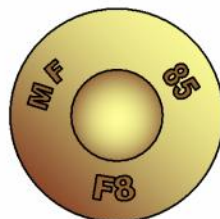


when the base shape was changed and the model number altered to F6.

This model remained in service until the 7.62 was being phased out in favour of the 5.56mm. This model also brings to an end the line of plastic blanks.



Australia did some work on a full-bodied brass blank which we adopted in 1985 and designated F8.



The model changes shown above were all related to changes in the metal base attached to the black polyethylene envelope. Some minor changes were made to the projectile shaped end of the envelope but nothing of any significance.

One further blank may be encountered and this is the Bi-Centennial blank which was a modified blank having a pyrotechnic insert placed in the end of the cartridge to enhance the flash effect thus making the visual spectacle somewhat brighter. It is easily recognized by the addition of a small, clear plastic dome in the projectile end.



Australian Centenary blank used around Australia during the various military displays. The blank was modified by the addition of a small pyrotechnic element to the projectile portion; this gave a brighter flash to enhance the public spectacle.

Another odd item to be found is a hybrid blank as shown below.



At some time Australian must have carried out some trials on a hybrid blank, which combined the brass case with the plastic projectile portion. It obviously never came to anything as this rare item is the only one seen so far.

The propellant used in Australian blanks was unique in that it was T shaped thus giving a very large surface area for its size. It is for this reason that it should not be used in any other cartridge as it will give very dangerous pressures. The original designation was AR 4001.



Brass and plastic blanks in linked belts.